

## WEEK 2

### Concept of Identity – social, ethnic, personal

(Explanations highly simplified, without references )

Identity encompasses the memories, experiences, relationships, and values that create one's sense of self. This amalgamation creates a steady sense of who one is over time. Identity encompasses [the values people hold](#), which dictate the choices they make.

Social identity can be defined as an individual's knowledge of belonging to certain social groups, together with some emotional and valuational significance of that group membership -> the sense of belonging is one of the basic human needs.

We all wear a number of social identities (roles) – as children, parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, doctors, etc...in other words, we are accepted and respected by others in the role we claim to be.

Ethnic identity is closely related to social identity. A person must be accepted by other members of their ethnic group as one of them. This is a problem for Aboriginal people who were taken away from their tribes when they were small children (stolen generation). Even if they find the tribe they were taken from, the tribe may not accept them because they do not know the language, stories and rituals that are basic for the function of the members in the tribe.

Immigrants to Australia, US and other countries may face a similar problem in spite of their attempt to live like the locals. In Australia, there used to be a derogative word of reference to them ->wogs.

### Personal identity

Personal identity is the concept you develop about yourself that evolves over the course of your life. This may include aspects of your life that you have no control over, such as where you grew up or the colour of your skin, as well as choices you make in life, such as how you spend your time and what you believe. You demonstrate portions of your personal identity outwardly through what you wear and how you interact with other people.

Personal identity is closely related to self-esteem which may be threatened in interaction with other people. Your self-esteem may suffer if you say or do something that is normal in your group but unacceptable in the group you find yourself, i.e. you want to 'be one of them' but you cannot function the way they do.

### Contact and non-contact cultures

#### Contact/collectivist culture

High degree of physical contact or proximity (touch, embrace, stand close to one another) x

European cultures -low contact, need of more personal space

Collectivist culture – the face of the group more important than the face of any individual in that group (cooperativeness, self-denial, attitudes towards language - fewer words, more vagueness).

Kinship – obligation to extended families

(being rude to one's mother is worse than e.g. job loss or illegitimate pregnancy)

Aboriginal culture – no particular value placed on privacy in the camp -> social life still very public

#### Non-contact /individualistic culture

Individual more important than the group (competitiveness, and self-reliance)

#### Non-verbal communication

-70% of interpersonal communication (even western culture)

-less systematized than verbal, ambiguous

-culture bound

#### Gestures

-inseparable part of Aboriginal communication, words semantically imprecise, meaning derived from the speaker's body language

- Aboriginal dances are inseparable part of communication

#### Eye Contact

-inseparable part of non-verbal communication

Listening and speaking – contact cultures -> direct eye contact (looking at the speaker) only intimates and equals, otherwise may be considered rude/ threatening

Non-contact cultures – avoiding eye contact may be interpreted as lack of interest or humiliation.

(Adler,R.B., Rodman,G.: Understanding Human Communication , Oxford 2003)

## READINGS

Discovery of Australia by Cook, colonisation, convicts.

(More info week 5)

Cook arrived in Sydney Cove in 1770, saw rich flora, (Linné on board)

In Britain- enclosure acts passed in parliament -> gentry owned big farms run on scientific findings, small and poor farmers could not compete, went to cities to find a job in a factory. However, not all of them were successful. The situation worsened with the further developing industry, i.e introduction of new machinery. Lots of people lost their jobs, had no property, often had to steal or starve. Prisons were overcrowded. Penalty for stealing goods of or above one shilling was death. Despite the evidence, judges opted for a different penalty – transportation. Convicts first transported to America, after the American War of Independence (1775-1783), the possibility of convict transportation was lost. Australia was chosen to replace the lost American colonies. The First Fleet with more than 1000 felons and their goaler landed at Sydney Cove 26 January 1788. The first governor and commander-in-chief was Arthur Phillip.“

In spite of Phillip's order to „live in amity and kindness with them (Aboriginals), “many convicts and marines stole from the Aborigines their fishing tackle, their women and sometimes their lives, just as the British government....had stolen their land.”(CHA 55-56).

“ The abyss of incomprehension which separated the two races was graphically illustrated in May 1791. Phillip decided to make an example of a convict caught in the act of stealing fishing tackle from Dar-in-ga, the wife of Colbee. The man was severely flogged in the presence of many Aborigines who had been made to understand the reason for his punishment, but “there was not one of them that did not testify strong abhorrence of the punishment, and equal sympathy with the sufferer”.<sup>26</sup> Aborigines never could understand people who, in cold blood, deliberately inflicted pain on a fellow human being. Unlike nearly all other people on the earth, they never engaged in any form of cold-blooded torture. As the eyewitness, Tench, put it, the fiasco showed that the Aborigines were “not of a sanguinary and implacable temper. Quick indeed of resentment, but not unforgiving of injury.”<sup>27</sup> Their humane and conciliatory temper, like their social organisation and the inferiority of their weapons, remained a fatal weakness in their efforts to resist the implacable and bloodthirsty European invaders.” The temper of North American Indians, for instance, was very different and their resistance to white conquest correspondingly more sustained and somewhat more successful.” (CHA 56-57).



