

# **Personal Identity: Societal Norms, Cultural Traditions, and Personal Experiences**

## **Introduction**

Imagine a tapestry woven from disparate threads of knowledge. We create our own unique tapestry, using the societal, cultural, and experiential threads that have been given to us. Each of our unique identities is weaved into this fabric of history. The search for one's own identity is a perennial theme in the annals of humankind, entangled as it is with cultural, social, and individual threads. Academics have been discussing the importance of self-discovery ever since the early publications of academics like Erikson and Hall. The complex web of social norms, cultural norms, and unique life experiences from which a person's identity is woven. It's a mirror that reflects the influences coming from within and without. This article analyzes the complexity of one's identity, examining the various manners in which a person's upbringing, family background, and life experiences all play a part. The intricate history of our development and the many ways through which our surroundings have shaped us may be pieced together through an investigation of these threads.

## **Societal Influences**

The norms of society have a significant impact on a person's sense of self. Conventions in society provide a framework within which individuals function. Common concepts and symbols, as claimed by Berger and Luckmann (1966), affect our perspectives and our understanding of the world. Gender norms and societal expectations shape how we should act, look, and communicate with one another. To some extent, these assumptions shape our sense of who we are and how we evaluate our place in the world (Norman, 2015). Additionally, people's outward appearances tend to be consistent with prevailing cultural norms. People actively control their public perception in order to conform to social standards, as discussed by Goffman's theory on how people think of self

within society (1959). Either at work, in a social context, or at home, we often put on a mask or alter our behaviour to fit in with expected norms. This "performative" facet of identity shows how social norms affect how we talk about and see ourselves (Barmaki, 2021).

## **Cultural Traditions**

Our identities are richer, more nuanced, and more colourful thanks to our various cultural traditions. Various symbols and rituals within cultural traditions are highly significant to both people and groups. Culture, as defined by Geertz (1973), may be seen as a set of shared worldviews that are communicated, maintained, and expanded through symbolic practices. Whether they be religious icons, traditional dress, or creative manifestations, cultural symbols serve as significant instruments for connecting individuals to their heritage and communicating their identity to others. Understanding one's heritage through these symbols might help people feel grounded and secure in the midst of uncertainty and change (Isaac, 2018).

Turner (1967) argues that rituals are symbolic behaviours that both reflect and shape a culture's fundamental ideals. These ceremonies symbolize more than just the individual ideas and goals of its participants. Taking part in cultural rituals helps people feel more connected to their community and reinforces the values and beliefs shared by its members. For example, religious rituals, cultural rituals, and stages of passage all play significant roles in the development of an individual's sense of self. Participating in these observances helps one feel closer to their ancestry and strengthens their feeling of cultural pride. By building on the theories of Geertz and Turner, we can see how cultural traditions form the foundation of who we are and how they enrich our lives. Individuals can fortify their sense of identity and deepen their connection to their cultural heritage by an investigation of and engagement with these practices. Participation in cultural rituals and ceremonies has been shown to increase not just an individual's sense of self-worth but also

their capacity to appreciate the value of cultural diversity in today's more interconnected globe (Graham, 2022).

## **Personal Experiences**

Personal experiences, in addition to societal and cultural ones, serve as the last touches that paint our own portraits. Who we are is largely determined by the stories we tell ourselves, which in turn are formed by our unique life experiences. McAdams (1993) argues that the narratives we create about our lives have a significant impact on who we become as individuals. These tales help us make sense of our feelings, beliefs, and objectives, giving our lives greater significance. Recounting these stories allows us to make decisions about our lives and develop a consistent identity (Singer, 2004).

Traumatic events alter one's sense of themselves and the world surrounding them in significant ways. According to Herman's research on trauma as well as recovery (1992), traumatic experiences can permanently alter one's sense of self. Those who have experienced trauma frequently have difficulty integrating their traumatic past with their current sense of self. Individuals who have experienced trauma often view themselves differently than they did before the event (Zaleski *et al.*, 2016).

In order to fully grasp the nuances of identity creation, first-hand accounts from one's own life are crucial. Personal identity arises from a combination of individual experiences, society standards, and cultural traditions, as demonstrated by Malala Yousafzai's tale. She chose to continue her study despite external obstacles because of who she was on the inside. Reflecting the complex interplay between individual experiences and society and cultural norms, the anguish she went through ultimately hardened her determination. The point presented by Malala's story

(Yousafzai, 2023) is that personal narratives are crucial to understanding the process of identity construction.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, each person's sense of self is woven together with great care from threads of cultural norms, family history, and life events. Our own decisions and the world around us come together in this intricate and singular design. Through the investigation of social expectations, cultural history, and personal narratives, it becomes obvious that our sense of self is a varied mirror of how we communicate with the world. The incredible path Malala Yousafzai has travelled is illustrative of this complex tapestry because it reveals the strength that emerges from the interaction of individual experiences, society standards, and cultural traditions. When all the pieces of our identities come together, we have a full story that supports our theory that who we are is a reflection of the decisions we've made and the world around us.



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DISSERTATION HELP

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