Adolescent Development

48.212: Dr. Jeffrey Leitzel
Ch. 8: Identity

Outline/Overview
- Self-concept
- Five factor model of personality
- Self-esteem
- Identity achievement/statuses

Changes in Self-Conceptions
- Movement toward complex, abstract and psychological self-conceptions
- Realization: personality is expressed in different ways in different situations
- Differentiated self-concept
  - Actual self
  - Ideal self
  - Feared self
The multiple selves of a 15 year old girl.

Dimensions of Personality

- The Five-Factor Model “BIG FIVE”
- Five critical personality dimensions
  - Conscientiousness: responsible
  - Agreeableness: kind or sympathetic
  - Neuroticism: anxious or tense
  - Openness to Experience: curious
  - Extraversion: outgoing and energetic

Dimensions of Personality

- Big Five traits
  - Influenced by combination of genetic and environmental factors
  - Highly stable over time
  - Strong links between early temperaments and adolescent personality
- Adolescence is NOT a time of rebirth in terms of personality
Self-Esteem

- Self Esteem
  - How an individual feels about him or herself
- No dramatic drop in self-esteem
  - Baseline self-esteem
- Adolescents’ feelings about themselves fluctuate day-by-day
  - Barometric self-esteem
- Measures
  - Global – Rosenberg
  - Domain specific - MSEI

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

- Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. I certainly feel useless at times.
10. At times I think I am no good at all.

Gender Differences in Self-Esteem

- become smaller over course of adolescence
- more pronounced among white and Puerto Rican teens
- less pronounced among African American teens
Ethnic and SES Differences in Self-Esteem

- African American girls, compared to white and Hispanic girls
- Low self-esteem among Hispanic American teens – why?
- Middle-class youngsters have higher self-esteem than their less-affluent peers

Erikson: Identity versus Identity Diffusion

- Identity results from mutual recognition between young person and society
- Forges an identity, but at the same time, society identifies the adolescent.
- As alternatives increase, establishing a sense of identity is more difficult
- Likelihood of prolonged identity crisis is greater today than in the past

James Marcia’s Identity Statuses

- Made commitments?
- Exploration?

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Marcia’s Identity Statuses

- Initial instability
- College facilitates exploration
- Immediate work after H.S. can speed process
- Negative Identity

Research on Identity Development

- Establishing identity generally does not occur before age 18
- During college years vocational plans solidify but not religious and political commitments
- College may prolong psychosocial moratorium
  - especially in political and religious beliefs

Identity status?

*When asked if she had ever reconsidered her political beliefs, Hillary answered, “No, not really, our family is pretty much in agreement on these things.”*
When asked if he had ever had doubts about his religious beliefs, Ramon said, "Yes, I guess I'm going through that right now. I just don't see how there can be a God and yet so much evil in the world."

When asked how willing she would be to give up going into her chosen occupation if something better came along, Darla responded, "Well, I might, but I doubt it. I've thought long and hard about law as a career. I'm pretty certain it's for me."

When asked about his attitude toward nontraditional gender roles, Joel responded, "Oh, I don't know. It doesn't make much difference to me. I can take it or leave it."