

### Identity

➤ An image we have of ourselves as a person:

- **Social** → Identities attributed to us by our membership of certain categories (such as gender).
- ↕
- **Personal** → Identities that mark us out as a distinct individual set apart from others.

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### Social Identity

➤ **Collective identities** – those we share with others.

➤ **Examples:**

- Nation
- Region
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Class
- Age

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### Roles

- Another important source of **social identity**.
- **Examples:** Mother – Father.  
Student – Teacher.  
Employer – Employee.  
Doctor – Patient.
- **Link** between the individual and the social world.
- **Locate** and **position** the individual in the social world.

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### Personal Identity

- Our **unique characteristics** - what separates us from others.
- **Common sense:** sees personal identity as fixed and purely individual.
- **Sociologically:** personal identity develops through primary and secondary socialisation:
  - **Learning** who we are through social interaction.

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## 3. Identity

## Charles Cooley

➤ **Looking-glass self:**

- Images of ourselves reflected in the reactions of others...
- Identities created through social interaction and social relationships:
  - I know who I am by understanding how others see me.

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## 3. Identity

## Erving Goffman

- Seeing ourselves in relation to how others see us.
- Focus on how identities are:
  - **Presented** and **managed** in everyday life.
  - **'Masks'** we put on to **negotiate** everyday situations.
- Identities change as social contexts change.

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## 3. Identity

## Identity or Identities?

- Do we have:
  - **Single** or **"true"** identity?
  - **Multiple identities?**
    - In different situations we assume **different** identities.
      - ➔ **School?**
      - Home?**
      - Supermarket?**
      - Club?**

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## 3. Identity

## Identities: Key Points

- Arise from social life and social interaction
- Need to be sustained through the reactions of others.
- Can easily be fractured and damaged (spoiled identities).

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