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THE Child

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While the contributors whose work appears in this volume are distinguished experts in their fields, their contributions are in no way intended to provide guidance for any medical, psychological, or legal circumstances of specific individuals. The information contained herein is general, based on cumulative data from large populations. It cannot substitute for a personal and specific analysis of a given child. For that, readers must consult trained professionals. Our hope is that the *Companion* will enable readers to contextualize what they learn from professionals and make more informed use of their services. —The Editors

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Contents

List of "Imagining Each Other" Essays vi

About the Editors vii

List of Contributors ix

Introduction: An Invitation to the Many Worlds of Childhood xxvii

A–Z Entries 1

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Index 1059

I

IDENTITY. Identity development can be heard in our answers to lifelong questions such as: Who am I? What do I want to make of myself in the future? How can I attain my dreams despite the obstacles I am facing? To what groups and communities do I belong? Researchers across the social sciences have mapped how our identities can reach across family generations, social networks, institutional settings, national borders, and cultural communities. Recent studies have shown that identities emerge in childhood and are linked to areas of competence, such as career aspirations, self-worth, and intergroup cooperation, as well as to vulnerabilities, such as alienation, prejudice, and intergroup conflict. More broadly, global demographic and social changes are raising interest in identity for a wide range of audiences, while progress in defining identity and mapping its development is sparking productive debate and advancing both understanding and applications.

MEANINGS OF IDENTITY

Two contrasting approaches to understanding identity have proved especially useful. One defines identity in terms of evolving pathways or strands of meaning that reach across generations and historical time. From this viewpoint, we construct a sense of identity from the ongoing interplay among our experiences as individuals, in our social relationships, and within broader institutional opportunities and constraints, such as in education and work. Cultural similarities in identity pathways through the life span can be seen in common rites of passage, such as ceremonies marking infants' naming and adolescents' coming of age, whether an Apache corn maiden ceremony, an Australian Aborigine walkabout, a Jewish bar or bat mitzvah, or a Mexican-descent girl's *quinceañera* on her 15th birthday. Other identity milestones include school graduations, weddings, blessing the dying, and honoring ancestors. Variations can be seen when times of prosperity or war may boost, slow, or halt children's progress along their identity pathways.

The second approach to understanding identity focuses on the social categories that mark divisions between social groups. From this viewpoint, our identities are defined by relatively stable and mutually exclusive sets of social categories, such as those used in census counts, which mark boundaries between social groups. For example, in ancient China, Persia, Greece, and Egypt, census officials counted free men and slaves to plan for who could serve in the military and pay taxes, while often excluding women, children, and the elderly. It is now common among modern census systems to seek to count all men, women, and children, using demographic categories to define identities in terms of age, gender, and social class (based on education and income). Variations in the use of these social categories among nations can be seen as some also count and categorize residents by their national origin, home languages, and ethnic heritage.

In parallel with these two approaches to defining identity are two contrasting yet complementary scientific theories about the nature of our identities and the key forces that shape them. An example of the identity pathway approach is the ego identity theory of Erik H. Erikson, who saw identity development as a life span intergenerational project that reaches across histories of individuals, families, cultural communities, and societies. An example of the social-category approach can be seen in social-identity theory, first proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, which defines personal and social identities in terms of group and intergroup affiliations and conflicts that shape each person's sense of self-esteem. The next sections consider how each of these theories has stimulated important progress on five issues: mapping core dimensions of identity, how identities emerge in childhood and adolescence, what other dimensions are closely related to identity development, how both resources and barriers shape identities, and what factors account for individual variations in identity development.

IDENTITY AS A LIFE-SPAN AND INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT

Erikson wrote about identity development as the lifelong interplay of conflict and connection across individuals, relationships, and communities. He saw identity development as one's growing sense of both personal and historical continuity over the life span. Erikson mapped identity development as reaching across eight stages of the life span. For example, he proposed that identity first emerges as infants experience themselves as distinctive persons, when they begin to recognize and trust their caregivers. Identity continues to develop as young children form a dual sense of both autonomy and connection with their caregivers, and then as school-age children learn to evaluate their growing skills and achievements through the eyes of their families and cultural communities. Adolescents' cognitive growth allows them to look ahead to consider their future careers and relationships, and middle adulthood is marked by the capacity to give back to youth of the next generation. Mature identity is attained when adults can see their lives with a sense of personal and cultural coherence. These examples of Erikson's eight stages show the interweaving of cognitive, emotional, family, and cultural processes. This interweaving involves periodic reevaluation and reorganization of skills and identifications into new frameworks that provide continuity from the past to the present and to anticipated futures.

In linking the past to future identity development, Erikson was especially interested in constraints stemming from poverty, race, and political and economic forces. In *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968), Erikson traced the central role of conflict in forging a positive identity, whether among privileged youth participating in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Native American youth from the Dakota Sioux community on their vision quests, or African American youth confronting racism. As a clinical psychologist, Erikson drew evidence for this theory from his clinical interviews and case studies and from his collaborations with developmental psychologists based on standardized measures and large-scale longitudinal studies. Erikson also traced how adolescents who have difficulties integrating their past, present, and future are vulnerable to depression and other mental health issues.

Erikson was a pioneer in seeing the central role of culture in shaping the dual significance of work and family life for identity development. For Erikson and the many researchers who have built on his work, identity development during adolescence and early adulthood reflects exploration and commitment among life choices within the range and across domains valued in one's cultural community, such as schooling and careers as well as relationships with families and peers.

Studies of identity development in many cultural settings have shown that career identity is particularly important for young people and appears to be a key predictor of overall identity development. It also appears to emerge early compared to other domains, and fostering it may facilitate development in other domains. Recent longitudinal research shows that youth may not go through a single process of exploration and then commitment to their life pathways. Instead, individuals may move through cycles of exploration and commitment that may be repeated over time.

Among dimensions related to identity development, research consistently points to the enduring importance of family communication. Rather than identity exploration being driven only by adolescents' desire for autonomy or independence from their parents, studies of conversations between youth and their families reveal the importance of both individuality, seen in expressing one's own point of view, and connectedness, seen in expressing openness and respect for others' viewpoints. This link has been found among European American and Haitian immigrant youth in the United States, among Belgian youth, and among Tunisian immigrant adolescents in Italy.

Both cultural parallels and differences have been found in adolescents' communication with their families and friends about identity-related topics like education, careers, dating, sexuality, and marriage. When college students from Vietnam, the Philippines, Mexico, and China were compared with European American students, students in all cultural groups expressed more individuality—such as personal opinions or disagreements—with their mothers, siblings, and peers than with their fathers. Still, for youth whose cultural traditions consider open disagreement with their fathers as disrespectful, communicating can take more indirect forms, such as asking their mother or sister to convey sensitive messages to their fathers. Researchers know less about these issues among youth who do not attend college from these cultural communities.

Both challenges and resources shape how youth develop their identity pathways. Economic challenges can constrain identity exploration and commitment. Interviews with youth from lower-income families in New Zealand, Canada, and the United States have revealed that during economic downturns, compared to better economic times, fewer youth actively explore or choose their educational or career pathways. In immigrant families, cultural traditions may create both challenges and resources. For example, parents who have immigrated to the United States may expect to continue their tradition of choosing mates for their children, and conflicts may arise when daughters compare their parents' expectations for them with what their American peers are doing. Scholars have described how Vietnamese and Hmong parents emphasize the importance of their children successfully attaining career and educational goals for the benefit of the family. In contrast, Khmer (Cambodian) American parents may hold traditional beliefs in the power of their children's individual destinies for their educational success and see them as individuals with distinctive capacities and goals, so parents' roles are to discover these dispositions as they guide their children. These findings show important variations in the interplay of individuality and connectedness across Southeast Asian communities, which are often viewed as similar in their endorsing collectivist values.

Beyond group patterns in how experiences shape identity pathways, researchers have also looked at individual variations within cultural groups. Scholars have been particularly interested in mapping under what conditions low-income, immigrant, and ethnic-minority youth can build upwardly mobile identity pathways. It is well known that youth whose parents have gone to college are more likely to

develop college-based career identities, compared to youth whose parents have not attended college. Still, under some conditions, the challenges of immigration, poverty, racism, or other obstacles can motivate youth to work to succeed on behalf of their families and give back to their communities. For example, in college preparatory programs for students from low-income and immigrant families, most parents have not had a college education, and they dream their children will have a better life and become doctors, teachers, and lawyers. Studies of upwardly mobile students most often name their parents as their most important resource in helping them stay on track to college, not in spite of their modest educations but because of them. These findings provide further evidence of the interplay of challenges and connections in identity pathways.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITIES OVER TIME AND PLACE

Just as Erikson's writings have led to new discoveries of how identity pathways link individuals, social relations, institutions, and cultural communities over time, social scientists have also made surprising discoveries about how youth develop their personal and social identities. Scholars using social-identity theory agree that children and adults use social categorizing and recategorizing of their social identities as one way to maintain their self-esteem. These patterns of thinking can shape intergroup prejudice and conflict as well as cooperation. Our motivation to claim and express social identities depends on our needs for both uniqueness and inclusion. Our personal identities include features that mark us as different from others, like family roles or personality traits, while our social or collective identities mark our membership and sense of belonging in social groups.

Among the core dimensions of a personal or social identity is its salience, which can be seen in how readily we use that particular social category, among other identities, in perceiving and thinking about our selves and our experiences. In contrast, the centrality of a social identity measures its personal importance for our self-definition compared to other social categories. Salience and centrality of our identities may shift over time and across settings, but we also learn to see ourselves in stable and consistent terms and even create situations that support our views of ourselves. Likewise, children's many social identities become more or less salient to them in different settings. For example, in a classroom with many boys, a girl's gender identity may be particularly salient to her, but in a high-priced store, her family's income or social class may become more salient to her.

Early studies of social identity by Tajfel and Turner involved observing artificial groups of college students and adults in brief laboratory situations, but more recent studies have involved children and adolescents and used interviews, surveys, and observations of everyday settings. Interviews and observations have been particularly useful in understanding children's early awareness of their social identities and their spontaneous labeling and conversations about social categories with their families and peers.

Compared to Erikson's age-related account of identity development, social-identity researchers have not found a single timetable for when personal and social identities emerge. Still, evidence indicates that preschool children's early categorizing and social comparisons, seen in their concepts of gender and race (both marked by socially recognized features), appear to form the foundation of later-emerging social identities regarding their social class, religion, immigrant status, and ethnicity. By middle childhood, the salience of identities can be measured by asking children to choose labels of their identities, rank their salience, and explain their meanings. Children most often choose identity labels for their gender, ethnic heritage, and family roles. Older children choose more labels than younger ones, indicating growing differentiation of social and personal identities.

Continuities in the salience of social identities and their links to well-being over time have been found in long-term studies. For example, students who began college with highly salient ethnic identities, as shown in their speaking Spanish, being more recent immigrants, and maintaining stronger ties to families and ethnic peers in their home communities, reported that they more often joined ethnic student organizations on their college campus, experienced more positive esteem, and saw their campus as less threatening during their first year at college compared to students whose ethnic identities were less salient to them. Changes in social identities over time have also been found. For example, many immigrant adolescents in the United States shift from using national labels to describe themselves, such as Vietnamese or Mexican, to using more general or panethnic labels, such as Asian or Latino.

Important related dimensions include the status of the social group in the wider community. Researchers have shown how children and adolescents develop and navigate potentially stigmatized social identities, such as being from a low-income family, having physical disabilities, being a sexual minority, being an undocumented immigrant, or being an adopted child. Children's developing awareness includes learning what settings are safe or risky for revealing these identities and how to conceal stigmatized identities. As children's social identities become overlaid with their growing political awareness of being part of high- or low-status groups, they learn to mark or mask outward signs of their identities across their social worlds.

Resources and challenges associated with social identities can be seen in children's feelings of belonging to social groups or feelings of alienation from them. More hopeful views of the future appear to predict how strongly youth identify with school-oriented groups, as opposed to holding more marginal or oppositional identities. Studies in the United States and other nations indicate that low-income, immigrant, and ethnic-minority families and their children, particularly boys, may initially hold high hopes for school success and upward job mobility. However, experiences of discrimination and exclusion can lead youth to hold bleak views of their future and form oppositional identities that affirm their feelings of solidarity with alienated peers while defending against failure in school and work.

Some government policies are designed to enhance or impede the formation of children's social identities. For example, recent studies in the United States and Canada have shown how heritage-language instruction can enhance the personal and collective esteem of indigenous, majority, and mixed-heritage children. However, now-discredited policies in these same countries imposed identification with the majority culture upon indigenous and immigrant children by sending them involuntarily away from their families to boarding schools that allowed only English to be spoken; similar programs forbid linguistic-minority children from speaking their home languages at school. Thus, schools and programs can highlight or obscure the salience of social identities for children and promote or devalue the social groups to which they belong.

Studying individual variations—including unusual cases—can reveal important influences on identity development. One study followed an unusual group of European American and Mexican American high school girls, all from low-income families, as they forged high-achieving academic identities and college pathways despite the many hardships that they and their families faced. Compared to their working-class peers who did not plan to attend college, these exceptional girls were more active in extracurricular programs and organized sports. These girls were aware of how they differed from their wealthier peers and understood how failing in school would limit their future opportunities. They had learned from mistakes of their siblings and drawn support from middle-class peers and older siblings and parents, who encouraged them to work hard at school.

NEW DIRECTIONS

In sum, social scientists, policy makers, and the public have come to define identities both as interwoven personal, social, and cultural pathways and as social categories. New work from the perspective of both theories looks at the changing constellations of multiple identities across multiple settings. And rather than only tracing these developing identities as separate elements that mark education and career goals, ethnicity, race, gender, and social class, scholars are now mapping how these identities intersect along children's pathways. The impact of these advances on social policy can be seen in changing school and national census questions, where students and families who were once

asked to "check one box" are now asked to "check all that apply." Finally, new research increasingly reaches across national, cultural, and disciplinary lines. It engages children and youth as research partners in understanding identity development and fostering the impact of this understanding toward the well-being of children and youth in multicultural societies.

Catherine R. Cooper, Rachael Behrens, and Nancy M. Trinh

SEE ALSO: Adolescence; Development, Theories of; Erikson, Erik H(omburger); Ethnic Identity; Personal Boundaries; Self Development; Self-Esteem; Stages of Childhood

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ILLNESS. SEE Morbidity

ILLNESS AND INJURY, CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE OF. Notions of illness and injury, like notions of childhood, are neither timeless nor universal. Forms of care and ways of thinking about illness vary, such that children's discernments of illness are culturally situated. The risks to health faced by children also diverge from one society to another. In nonindustrialized societies, perils such as drowning and indoor air pollution (i.e., home stoves that burn coal, wood, dung, or crop residues) are significant problems. Taken in total, the rate of death due to child injuries is higher in nonindustrialized societies than in industrialized nations. In contrast to nonindustrialized settings, in the United States the leading cause of lethal injury to children is automotive accidents, resulting in 1 million physical injuries to children annually, many times accompanied by psychological symptoms of posttraumatic stress. Intriguingly, Americans often overlook the degree of mortality and suffering caused to children by car crashes, perhaps because the automobile is so taken for granted by their society.