

Module 2: Topic 1

How we are shaped by the environmental context we live in:

1 | Self as Product of Modern Society

According to **Gerry Lanuza**, modernization offers us endless opportunities to **delocalize** ourselves or detach ourselves from the limitations posted by the society before (*racism, discrimination, etc.*). Modern society has given us the freedom to choose our own identity.



2 | Self as a Necessary Fiction

Friedrich Nietzsche was not a sociologist but another philosopher, but he also had an inclination to a sociological perspective. He viewed the self as the **sum of an individual's actions, thoughts, and feelings** (*a representation*) that we project to other people. Moreover, he believed that everyone needs some **necessary fiction** in life to keep us from the chaos of changing world. This refers to our *firmly held beliefs or opinions about what feelings and behaviors mean at a given time*. These may be right or wrong, but nonetheless vital to unify oneself.

3 | Post-Modern View of the Self

In postmodern societies, our self-identity continuously changes due to the demands of a **multitude of social contexts**, new information technologies, and globalization. It means the self is a **narrative**; a text written and rewritten and that we can freely choose what identity we want to have for **self-cultivation**.

(E.g. Global migration produces multicultural identities due to pluralized selves.)

4 | Self as Artistic Creation

The self is viewed as an active, strategizing agent that negotiates for the definition of oneself. Artistic creation of oneself means giving one's life a **form** and **meaning** that **does not simply follow established norms**. Whether one is an artist or not, art is found in everyone's life expressed in their personal and non-conforming style of living.

5 | Self Creation and Collective Identity

Self creation is also influenced by our collective identity. Collective identity refers to one's way of defining himself/herself in **relation to others** and the outside world, i.e., **identities** that are **socially influenced** (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004).

6 | Self Creation and Struggle for Cultural Identity

Pluralized selves and collective identity greatly contribute to one's sense of self. But sometimes, one's cultural identity could also fuel some issues concerning one's sense of personal identity and feelings of belongingness.

(E.g. Lorna went to Canada to continue her studies. She expressed how much she enjoys learning new things but there are times when she still feels like she can't fully connect with the people around her.)

Sociologists study human societies and all the processes involved in their interaction that contribute to their development by examining the dynamics of its components such as communities, institutions, populations, age groups, and races (Form & Faris, 2020). Now let us discuss some of the **sociological viewpoints** presented by different sociologists that try to uncover how we are influenced by our environment.

Sociological Self

George Herbert Mead and the Social Self

George Herbert Mead is well-known for his theory of the social self, which is based on the central argument that the **self is a social emergent**.

Theory of Social Self

The social conception of the self entails that individual selves are the **products of social interaction** and not the logical or biological preconditions of that interaction.

Development of the Self

There are three activities through which the self is developed:

1. **Language**
2. **Play**
3. **Game**

Language

Language allows individuals to take on the "role of the other" and allows people to respond to his or her own gestures in terms of the symbolized attitudes of others.

Play

During **play**, individuals take on the roles of other people and pretend to be those other people in order to express the expectations of significant others.

Game

In the **game**, the individual is required to internalize the roles of all others who are involved with him or her in the game and must comprehend the rules of the game.

Mead: the “I” and the “Me”

- **I** – the spontaneous, driving force that fosters all that is novel, unpredictable, and unorganized in the self.
- **Me** – the objective self; the image of self seen when one takes the role of the other.

How Mead Matters to Us Today

We think of ourselves as individuals, to be sure, but we are only able to do so by virtue of being a part of a larger social community.

Self in Families

Sociologists focus on the different institutions and powers play in the society, the most prominent is the **family**.

Influence of Family

The kind of family that we are born in, the resources available to us, and the kind of development that we will have will affect us as we go through life.

Role of the Family

- Family serves as basis of person’s progress.
- One is who he is because of his family for the most part

Module 2: Topic 2 Anthropological Self

Anthropology is the study of people throughout the world, their evolutionary history, and how they behave, adapt to different environments, communicate, and socialize with one another. This lens provides valuable insights into understanding oneself by examining the diversity of human societies, past and present, and exploring how individuals and communities navigate their existence. To effectively do this, anthropologists have employed the concept of **generation** to understand the dynamics of social change over time, analyze how individuals structure and perceive intergenerational relationships within familial settings, explore broader principles of social organization that go beyond the family unit, and discern variations among members within a society (Lamb, 2015).

In 2008, Mark Mccrindle, a social researcher and demographer, first coined the term Generation Alpha to describe the current generation arising. Mccrindle and his colleagues conducted an in-depth study about Gen Alpha and compared and contrasted their social markers, iconic technologies, attitudes toward careers, and more (Mccrindle, 2021). Below is a visual illustration summarizing the results.

Category	Builders Born: 1928-1945	Baby Boomers Born: 1946-1964	Generation X Born: 1965-1979	Generation Y Born: 1980-1994	Generation Z Born: 1995-2012
Slang terms	We prefer overhold if you please	Be cool Have fun Have fun	Be cool Have fun Have fun	Be cool Have fun Have fun	Be cool Have fun Have fun
Social markers	World War II 1939-1945	Moon landing 1969	Stock market crash 1929	September 11 2001	9/11 2001
Iconic cars	Model T Ford 1907	Ford Mustang 1964	Holden Commodore 1978	Toyota Prius 1997	Fiat Model S 2012
Iconic toys	Roller skates	Frisbee	Rubik cube	BMX bike	Folding scooter
Music devices	Record player LP, 548	Audio cassette 1962	Walkman 1979	iPod 2001	Spotify 2008
Leadership style	Controlling	Directing	Coordinating	Guiding	Empowering
Head leader	Commander	Thinker	Doer	Supporter	Collaborator
Learning style	Formal	Structured	Participative	Interactive	Multi-modal
Influence Advice	Officials	Experts	Practitioners	Peers	Forums
Marketing	Print (traditional)	Broadcast (mass)	Direct (targeted)	Online (linked)	Digital (social)

Figure 2.1 The generations defined (Mccrindle, 2021)

This is just one of the many things that we can learn from studying how paradigm shift shape our society and thus lead to our evolution. Our environment highly contribute to our change and development as individuals.

Culture can be defined as the part of the environment shaped by the everyday practices of humans. Moreover, it refers to the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. It draws the line that distinguishes a group of people from another (Oyserman, 2017).

Urie Bronfenbrenner an American psychologist proposed the ecological systems theory which explains the importance of studying a person in the context of multiple environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It tells us that as an individual, we are influenced by (1) our personal interaction with people around us and (2) the interactions of different factors around us.

MICROSYSTEM: refers to everything that has direct contact with you (*family, friends, school, work, etc.*) in your immediate environment and how they individually affect you.

E.g. Hyacinth loves to go out in the afternoon to play with her neighbors.

Smallest and most immediate environment in which the child lives.

MESOSYSTEM: refers to the interaction of your microsystem with each other (*family and school, family and friends, etc.*)

E.g. Your parents expressed that they are not comfortable with your current circle of friends. This may result to you hating your parents or you distancing from your friends.

Encompasses the interaction of the different microsystems which the developing child finds himself in.

EXOSYSTEM: covers all the people, institution, organization that has no contact with you but still affect you (*work of your parents, social media, the implemented rules in your community, etc.*)

E.g. Everyone of us (teachers, learners, parents) got affected when De La Salle Lipa decided to offer borderfree education. We have no direct contact with the Br. President, but his decision has caused a great change in our lives.

Pertains to the linkages that may exist between two or more settings, one of which may not contain the developing

child but affects him indirectly nonetheless.

MACROSYSTEM: is when exosystem works in a wider scope, it is influenced by one's cultural attitudes, beliefs and values.

E.g. Since Philippines is such a family-oriented nation, the restrictions brought by the pandemic aggravated the situation. We really had difficulty at first because we are so used to family gatherings and celebrations.

The largest and most distant collection of people and places to the child that still exercises significant influence on the child.

CHRONOSYSTEM: refers to how we are impacted differently in different periods of our life (time).

E.g. It is more challenging to be separated with our parents when we were younger (grade school) compared to when we are adults and have our own jobs.

Adds the useful dimension of time, which demonstrates the influence of both change and constancy in the child's environment.

Clifford Geertz offered another way of looking at culture by focusing on the role of "thought of symbols" in society.

When someone is described as **cultured**, it means that the person has good manners, is well educated, and knows many things about arts. However,

this lesson encourages us to stretch our definition of this characteristic. Apart from its usage, let us top it with cultural sensitivity as we unravel the vast diversity of culture.

Embodiment

Is often defined as "how culture gets under the skin."

(Anderson-Fye 2012, 16)

Embodiment and Experience

"If embodiment is an existential condition in which the body is the subjective source or inter-subjective ground of experience, then studies under the rubric of embodiment are not about the body per se. Instead they are about culture and experience insofar as these can be understood from the standpoint of bodily being-in-the-world."

(Csordas 1999)

Culture – Clifford Geertz

Culture is "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life."

(Geertz 1973)

Culture as Public

Geertz believes that culture is not something that occurs in the heads of humans. "Culture is public, because of its meaning."

(Geertz 1973)

He utilized **thick description**, which is an anthropological method of explaining with as much detail as possible the reason behind human actions.

Cultural Insight

"A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people."

Mahatma Gandhi

Self – Marcel Mauss

Every self has two faces:

MOI

a person's sense of who he is

PERSONNE

social concepts of what it means to be who he is

Tabula Rasa – John Locke

The implication is that at birth all individuals are basically the same in their potential for character development and that their adult personalities are exclusively the products of their postnatal experiences, which differ from culture to culture.