

# The Influence of Social Identity on Evaluation Practice

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AES Conference  
10 September 2008



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Creative  
Leadership

[www.ccl.org](http://www.ccl.org)

# In this mini workshop you will learn:

- The influence of social identity on evaluation practice
- To apply a technique for exploring aspects of social identity
- Ways to increase cultural adaptability in order to improve evaluation practice



# Social Identity (SI)

*“The individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership.”*

Henri Tajfel 1972

- Personal Identity: Who am I?
- Social Identity: Who are we?



# Social Identity

Social identity involves three internal processes:

- Categorization
- Identification
- Comparison

It is helpful to articulate, discuss, and reflect upon these processes.



# The Challenge and Promise of SI

Our Social Identity, and that of others, has the power to *bind* or to *blind* us.



# SI Basics

- We all have multiple identities
- It's human nature to want to "fit in" as well as to be unique
- Some identities are visible, others are less apparent
- Some identities are accepted, some are taboo
- Aspects of your social identity may be connected with images of evaluation of which you are unaware
- You continually gain, lose, or change certain aspects of your identity, while others are fixed



# Conversations about SI can be Difficult

- Identity Threat
- Intergroup Anxiety



# Individual Activity

- Select 5 or 6 categories that represent aspects of yourself that best define who you are. These should be categories that are salient to you.
- If there is a category important to you, but no card for it –write the category down.
- Reflect on why you selected these categories. If it would be helpful – journal, draw, etc.



# Social Identity Categories

- Where you were born
- Your physical characteristics
- Your family role
- Your religious or spiritual affiliation
- Your health status or history
- Your occupation, profession, or career
- Your hobbies
- Your current employment status
- Your age or the generation you belong to
- Your political affiliation
- Your ethnicity or race
- Your vocation
- Your tenure in your organization
- Your socioeconomic status or class
- Your educational experience
- Your Gender
- Your educational level or degrees/certifications you have
- Your marital status
- Your level in your organization
- Your role in your community
- Your family, ancestry, or tribe
- Your place of residence
- Specific life experiences
- Your national culture
- Your beliefs about social issues



# Individual Reflections

- What aspects of your social identity are salient for you?
- Why are those categories important to you?
- What are your early experiences becoming aware of those aspects of your identity?



# Given or Chosen?

## ***Given identity.***

These are the attributes or conditions that you have no choice about. Categories of your given identity may include your birth-place, age, gender, birth order, physical characteristics, certain family roles, and possibly religion.

## ***Chosen identity.***

These are the characteristics that you choose. Categories of your chosen identity may include your occupation, political affiliation, place of residence, family roles, and possibly religion.



# Visible/Invisible and Public/Private Self

- Which categories are visible? Which are not?
- Which do you openly share? Which do you want to keep somewhat private?
- What “identity symbols” are important to you?



# Group Activity

- How do aspects of your identity help you build connections with other people?
- How do aspects of your identity create barriers between you and other people?
- What aspects of your identity do you think contribute to you being, or being seen as, an effective evaluator?
- What aspects of your identity do you think get in the way of being, or being seen as, an effective evaluator?



# Developing SI Awareness

- Role reversal
- Journaling
- Mentoring or Coaching
- Case Methodologies



# Applying SI to Evaluation Practice

## Your SI

- How aligned is your SI with other stakeholder groups?
- How might your SI influence your role in data collection, interpretation, and communication approaches?
- What strategies can you use to compensate?

## The SI Context

- What SI dynamics are among stakeholder groups?
- What impact might SI may have on data collection, interpretation, and communication approaches?

