

Forming Identity via Conflict

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To form identity requires that people experience conflict so that their boundaries and ideas can be significantly clarified. The beginnings of forming identity via conflict are with the mother/father to child roles during the child's upbringing. Adolescence marks the beginning for forming identity. As the child grows into their new identity, they begin to form their own interests based on this identity. So it begins with conflict styles, then forms identity, then forms interests and desires on this newly created identity. This has enormous impact on what specific professions a person will undertake as well, as their identities must match their profession so they can streamline who they are with what their goals will be. As well, many conflicts in the professional world are not as reliant on interests and scarce resources as they are perceived to be, but are based almost entirely on individuals' and groups' collective identities.

Brief Review of Literature

According to Seibt (2011), the only real way to solve identity based conflict is to integrate the people until there is no difference in identity by, "in-depth and long-term interactions of the conflicting groups that include identity-transforming practices of counseling, reconciliation, and trust-building" (p.229). To integrate means to remove specific cultures and identities, as it is noted with the phase identity transforming. To transform identity though is quite problematic, as identities are formed during conflict resolution during adolescence of the individuals and groups. It is also noted that, "the development of concepts and models suitable for the analysis and management of identity-based conflicts displays a striking temporal lag" (p.229). This pertains to understanding what the central tenant to the conflict consists of, which

is well hidden as identities are mostly ignored. Too much attention is given to the perceived source of conflict such as resources, land, power and influence regarding the ability to make decisions in favor of either conflicting party. Certain cultures show these identities in formation with their attitudes towards education and their future professional development.

Using an identity or lack of identity significantly eases the conflict that may arise in discerning what type of professional future an individual has. Making sure that the identity integrates to the groups' identities and conflict styles is paramount. According to Osteen (2011), "core values reflect what is unique to the profession and are presented as fundamental guidelines of the profession" (p.423). This being said which profession adopts which type of conflict style is the root issue. Do people avoid talk of differences? Do they confront? Do they talk about issues that are not the main concern to feign addressing the issue? "The members must identify with it (the profession) and its mission" (p.423).

Specific identities are formed early on via conflict management. Missotten, et. al. (2011) states that, "Adolescents have to make important choices...to choose an education that fits their interests and capacities, and they have to engage in long-term friendships and intimate relationships" so that their identities can be preserved. This all begins with the conflict styles that are harbored during adolescent years. Are the conflict styles information-oriented, normative in that they are positively associated with compliance or diffuse-avoidant where withdrawal and avoidance of conflict engagement occur (p.972)? This all depends on the parent and how they imbue the child with their own conflict management skills, and has a direct impact on how the child will form their identity and what type of career they should undertake.

Future Research

It would be interesting to take specific professions and form a study to determine what kind of conflict management style they were raised by. Some professions do not like when conflict spills over into the public's awareness. Many other types of professions allow for instantaneous conflict resolution such as serving in the military, you want to know if the enemy is close by, and not making the information instantly available to your troops is detrimental to the overall ability for there to be mission accomplishment. It should be well known that certain professions do not communicate with one another, as their identities and conflict styles are not suitable for integration, which is the essence of solving conflicts where the difference in identities are the main issue. It would be interesting to see how many avoidant conflict resolution styles are adopted by geologists and astrophysicists, which would explain why their research is not integrative and comprehensive.

References

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