

Identity

CONTEXT MATTERS

Personal identity

- Identity = everything you mean when you say 'I'
- Your sense of self
- Complex and conscious ways we live in society
- How it related to other people, to the world, to culture, to your body, structure
- External and internal perspective on identity

Essentialist view on identity – the enlightenment (1700's)

- Unique
- An individual possession
- Pre-exists the social
- Stable
- The essence of who we are
- Rigid, separate, and distinctive
- **Sociology critiques this view**
- Non-essentialist view on identity

1. Subject positions as socially produced

- Exist before we are born
- Don't freely 'choose', immediate categories / social labels
- Condition our identity/ sense of self
- Needs to be recognised by others

2. Primary subject positions we have in society are understood as oppositional

Organised in binary pair

- Man/woman
- White/black
- Heterosexual/homosexual
- Able-bodies/disabled

3. Oppositional subject positions are relational

- Subject positions are not *self-sufficient* – they are created through the play

Come to identify with a subject position

This is a process of identification

Based on a sameness/ difference distinction

