**Personal and Social Identity**

Socialisation – process by which individuals learn the ways of a society or group so that they can function within it. This is a learning process brought about by interaction with other people and with the reality of the social world around them.

Personality – an organised system of behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, and values characteristic of an individual.

Sense of self – The development of a sense of self or self image depends greatly on social interaction. Both Cooley and Mead emphasise the self as a social product.

Charles Cooley - referred to the self as the ‘looking glass self’ which consists of:

* Our perception of how our behaviour appears to others.
* Our perception of their judgements of this behaviour.
* Our feelings about those judgements.

George Mead – divided the self into 2 parts, the ‘I’ and ‘me’. The ‘I’ is spontaneous, unique, and natural character of each individual, while the ‘me’ is the internalised demands of society and the individual’s awareness of these demands.

Freud – stressed the biological basis and emotional forces of the socialisation process. He believed the personality was divided into 3 parts.

* Id – the reservoir of unconscious biological and psychological drives, especially sexual drives.
* Ego – the mediator between the internalised demands of society and the id.
* Superego – the internalisation of the socially learned ‘shoulds’ and ‘oughts’, the censor and social control mechanism of the personality.

**The role of class and status.**

All societies have some system of social stratification. The three main desirable things are wealth, power, and prestige (the favourable social recognition received from others).

People of the same social status make up status groupings which are called social classes.

Social mobility – being able to move from one social class to another.

Achieved statuses – status gained by the direct efforts of the individual.

Ascribed statuses – in a closed society, status is assigned at birth and is fairly well impossible to change.

**Power and authority.**

Personal power – the power individuals have to control the circumstances of their own lives.

Social power – the capacity to control or influence the actions of others, regardless of their desire to cooperate.

Legitimate power – when power is used in a way that is generally recognised as socially right and necessary.

Illegitimate power – when power is used to control others without the support of social approval.

Authority – legitimate power that is institutionalised, and those given the right to use legitimate power are said to be in a position of authority.

**Gender**

Historically, the sexes have been accounted for by biological differences. Sex role divisions within society were said to be based on biologically based differences in ability, motivation, and interest.

Recently, most social scientists have questioned the idea of ‘natural’ masculine and feminine roles, arguing that socialisation is the main cause of sex role differences.

Every society makes some distinction between social roles appropriate to men and women, although the context varies considerably from one society to the next.

**Sexuality**

There is much support for the idea that sexual behaviour is largely learned – sexual beliefs, practices, relationships, desires follow social patterns rather than natural ones.

Sexuality also varies in cultures over time. Western societies have become increasingly sexually permissive over time. This may be the result of a decline in the age of puberty and a rising marriage age for most people.

**Ethnicity**

Ethnicity is a largely shared sense of being, a set of social and cultural attributes that have developed through common experiences and tradition.