

Overall identity diffusion [Analysing Identity: Chapter 2 © Peter Weinreich]

The degree of one's identity diffusion is defined as the overall dispersion and magnitude of one's identification conflicts with others.

$$\text{Overall current identity diffusion: } \Delta_c = \frac{\sum_i G_i K_i^c}{\sum_i G_i} \quad (15)$$

where K_i^c is the person's current conflict in identification with entity E_i (expression 14) and G_i is the person's *ego-involvement with* entity E_i (expression 2). Thus, the magnitude of one's identification conflict with each entity is weighted by one's degree of involvement with that entity so that in assessing the dispersion of conflicted identifications those entities with the greater impact have greater weight. *Internal standardization* follows directly from the standardization of the parameters *empathetic identification* and *contra-identification* with the other, and *ego-involvement with the other*.

Identity diffusion (Δ_c) can theoretically range from zero to unity, though in practice the upper limit is psychologically not a viable state of affairs.

This algorithm holds also for self in various contexts (See *empathetic identification*).

Identity diffusion and remote idealisation (ρ)

In certain rather extreme cases a person may construe one's self-image as split off from one's construal of others, while at the same time idealising them. One's own self-image is then remote from unrealistically idealised appraisals of the others. A parameter *remote-idealisation* refers to this kind of circumstance and is designated as follows:

Remote-idealisation of entity E_i in relation to current self-image E_c :

$$\rho_{c,i} = \theta_{c,i} \cdot f_i^I \quad (16)$$

where $\theta_{c,i}$ (expression 10) is the extent of splitting between the current self-image E_c and the agent E_i , and f_i^I (expression 11) is the degree of self's idealistic-identification with E_i .

The greater the split in construal between self and the other, and the greater the degree of idealistic-identification with the other, the more the remote-idealisation of the other. $\rho_{c,i}$ ranges from zero to unity, from no remote-idealisation to maximum.

The more remotely idealised the other, the less directly contingent is that other's presence in the person's field of activities.

$$\text{Contingency of entity } E_i \text{ in relation to current self-image } E_c: Z_i^c = 1 - \rho_{c,i} \quad (17)$$

in which the greater the remote-idealisation of the other, the less contingent that other is to self. Z_i^c ranges from zero designating no contingency - for complete remote-idealisation to unity at maximum contingency - when there is no remote-idealisation.

Considering further the salience of a person's conflicted identifications with others, the less their contingent presence the less contribution they have to the overall identity diffusion. The above expression for identity diffusion requires this factor of contingency to be taken into account, giving the modified expression below:

$$\text{Overall current identity diffusion (weighted): } \Delta_c = \frac{\sum_i G_i Z_i^c K_i^c}{\sum_i G_i Z_i^c} \quad (18)$$

The impact of the variable Z_i^c is generally quite small. But in exceptional cases when a person remotely idealises several others, its effect is to diminish the contribution of the remotely idealised others to overall identity diffusion. This means that somewhat greater weight is given to the person's conflicted identifications with the remaining others who are not so remotely idealised.