

Psychology 2200

Developmental Psychology I: Fundamentals

Identity Development

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learning objectives

- explain why people of different ages sometimes have a hard time relating by referencing Erikson's developmental model
- describe the process of forming an identity and the two challenges that go with it
- explain Marcia's (1980) process of identity formation that solves the two challenges
- consider whether Marcia's model is well-supported by existing evidence
- present Schwartz' caution about exploring too much



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Erikson's theory

| | psychosocial stage | age (y) | accomplishment | stagnation |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|---|--|
| 1 | basic trust vs. mistrust | 0-1 | gain trust that the world is friendly | lack of trust in friendly world |
| 2 | autonomy vs. shame & doubt | 1-3 | able to choose and decide for themselves | doubt own decision making |
| 3 | initiative vs. guilt | 3-6 | sense of purpose, ambition, and responsibility | over-controlled, too much guilt to take initiative |
| 4 | industry vs. inferiority | 6-11 | capacity to work and cooperate with others | feelings of incompetence |
| 5 | identity vs. identity diffusion | adolescence | forms a personal identity | confusion about adult roles |
| 6 | intimacy vs. isolation | young adulthood | establishing intimate ties with others | cannot form close relationships, remain isolated |
| 7 | generativity vs. stagnation | middle adulthood | giving to the next generation | feeling of absence of meaningful accomplishment |
| 8 | integrity vs. despair | old age | feeling that life was worth living as it happened | fear of death |

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Erikson's theory

- lifespan view of development
- 8 characteristic crises
- resolution or stagnation
- development is ordered
- soft stages: development is cumulative ("baggage")
- 5th challenge is about forming an identity
 - occurring primarily in adolescence and early adulthood



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who am I? identity

- identity = all responses to the "who am I?" question (past, present, future)
- more formally: a person's self-definitions, usually specifying who you are/were, what you value, and the directions you plan to pursue in life
- typical categories
 - core values & moral ideals
 - political leaning
 - occupation
 - sexual orientation
 - ethnic-group membership
 - religious beliefs



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committing in an uncertain world

- Erikson less interested in **what** people become
- more interested in the **process** of forming an identity
- **challenge #1:** to commit to an identity
 - Is commitment a good thing?
 - A. always
 - B. usually
 - C. sometimes
 - D. rarely
 - E. never
- Why commit to an identity?
 - because you have to (quality of achievement)
 - feeling of ownership
 - reduces problem of having to make choices
- **challenge #2:** to commit to the right identity for you



Erik Erikson

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identity processes

- Marcia (1980): optimal identity development involves a process of {committing then exploring}... that repeats
- developmental trajectory: commit then explore then commit again
- exploration climaxes in adolescence
- ideal identity = committed then explored then committed again

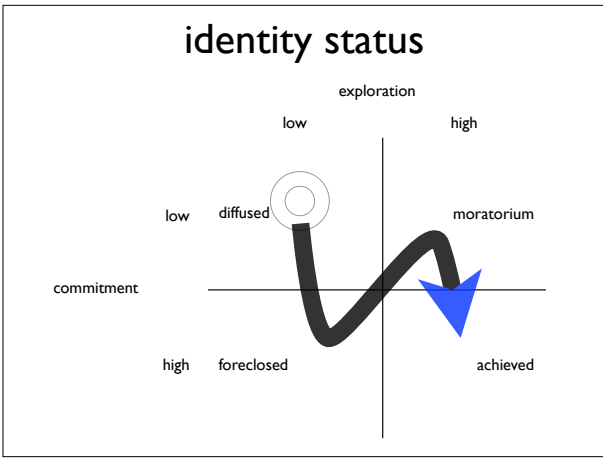
| commitment | exploration |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| making a decision | questioning |
| sticking with what you are doing | discussing |
| confident in decision/preference | reflecting upon |
| feeling that you won't change | looking for more information |

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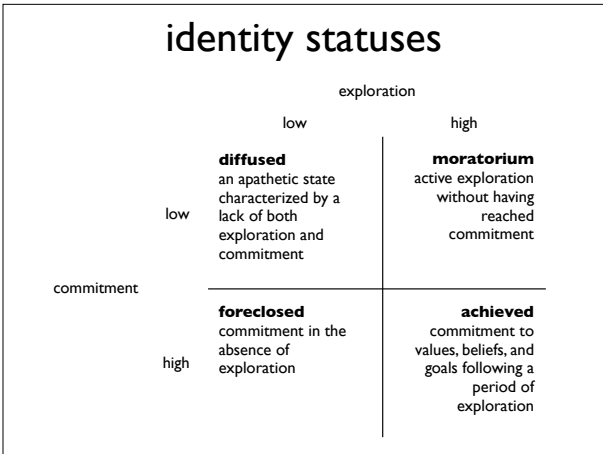
Marcia's claims

identity statuses follow a developmental trajectory
 diffused ⇨ foreclosed ⇨ moratorium ⇨ achieved
 height of exploration (moratorium) is adolescence
 achieved is the ideal status

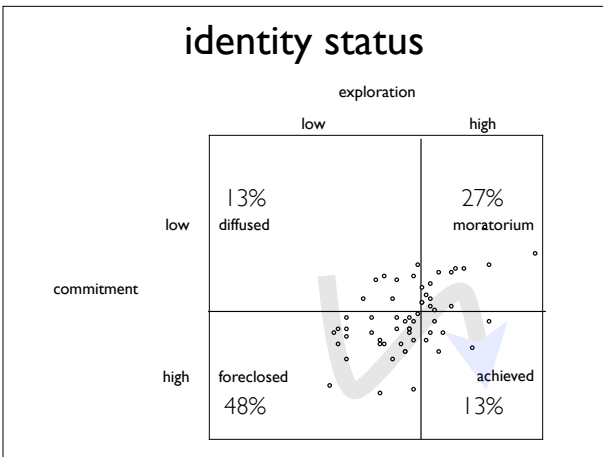
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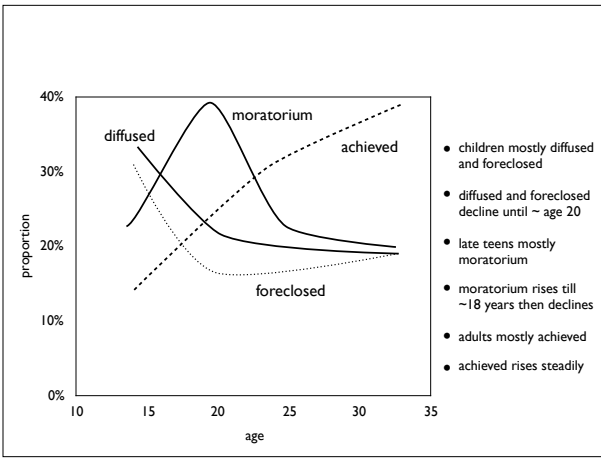


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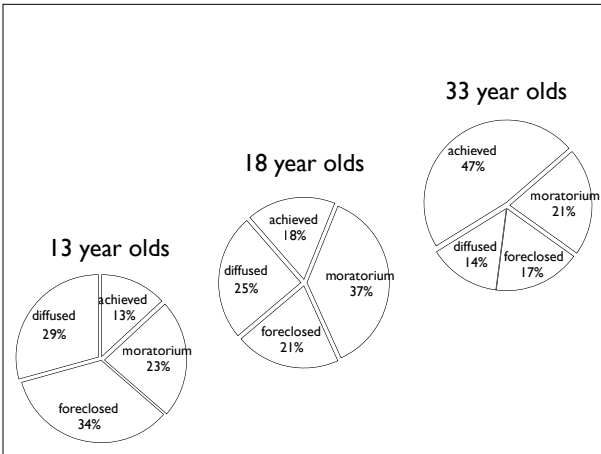
Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia (2010) meta-analysis

- questions
 1. What is the prevalence of each status and how does this change with age?
 2. Is the **developmental** model supported by evidence? Do people tend to progress more than they tend to regress?
- meta-analysis of 124 studies

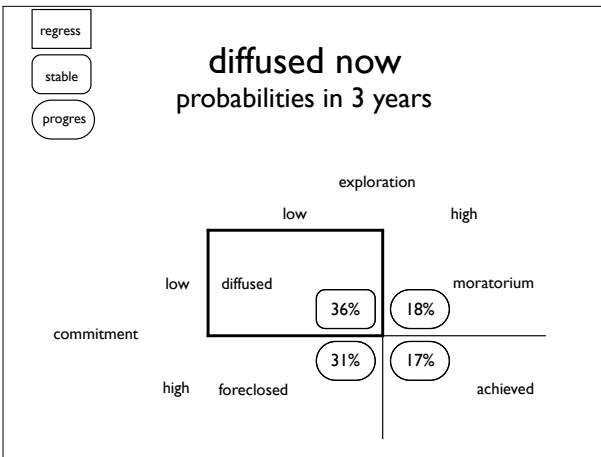
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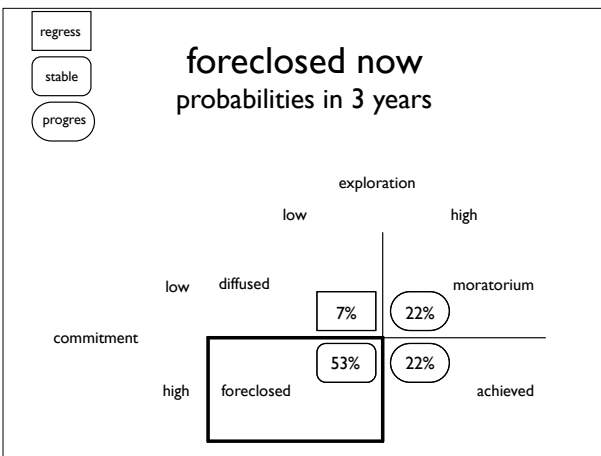
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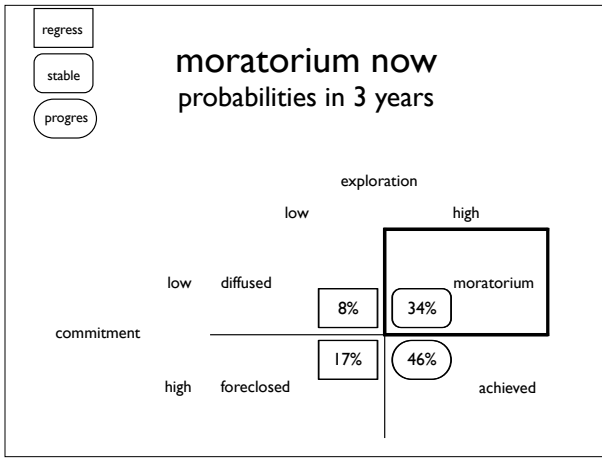
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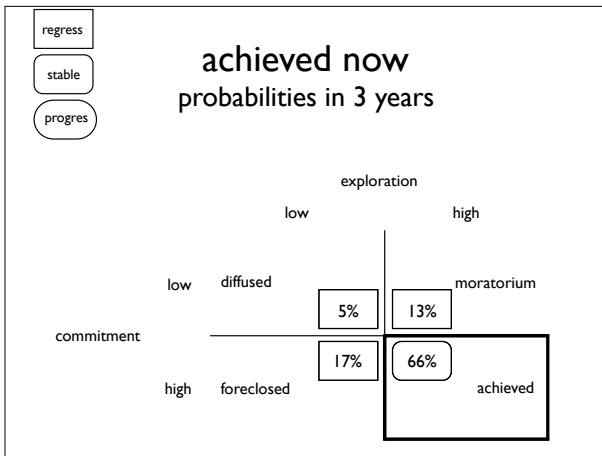
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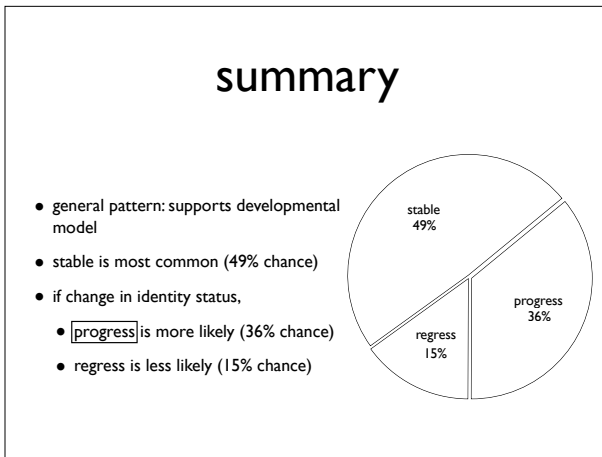
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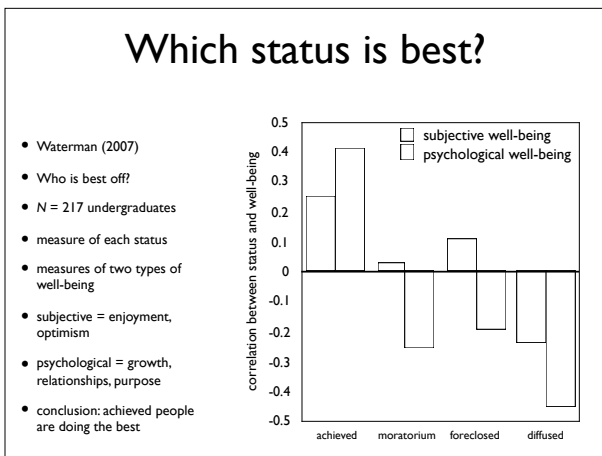
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Erikson, Marcia:

“explore then commit”

Schwartz

“careful: exploration is costly”

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synthesis

we have too many options



Schwartz

vs.



Erikson/Marcia

explore options before you choose

SYNTHESIS

Don't sweat the small stuff.
Reserve exploration for only very important matters because exploration is important but comes with costs.

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