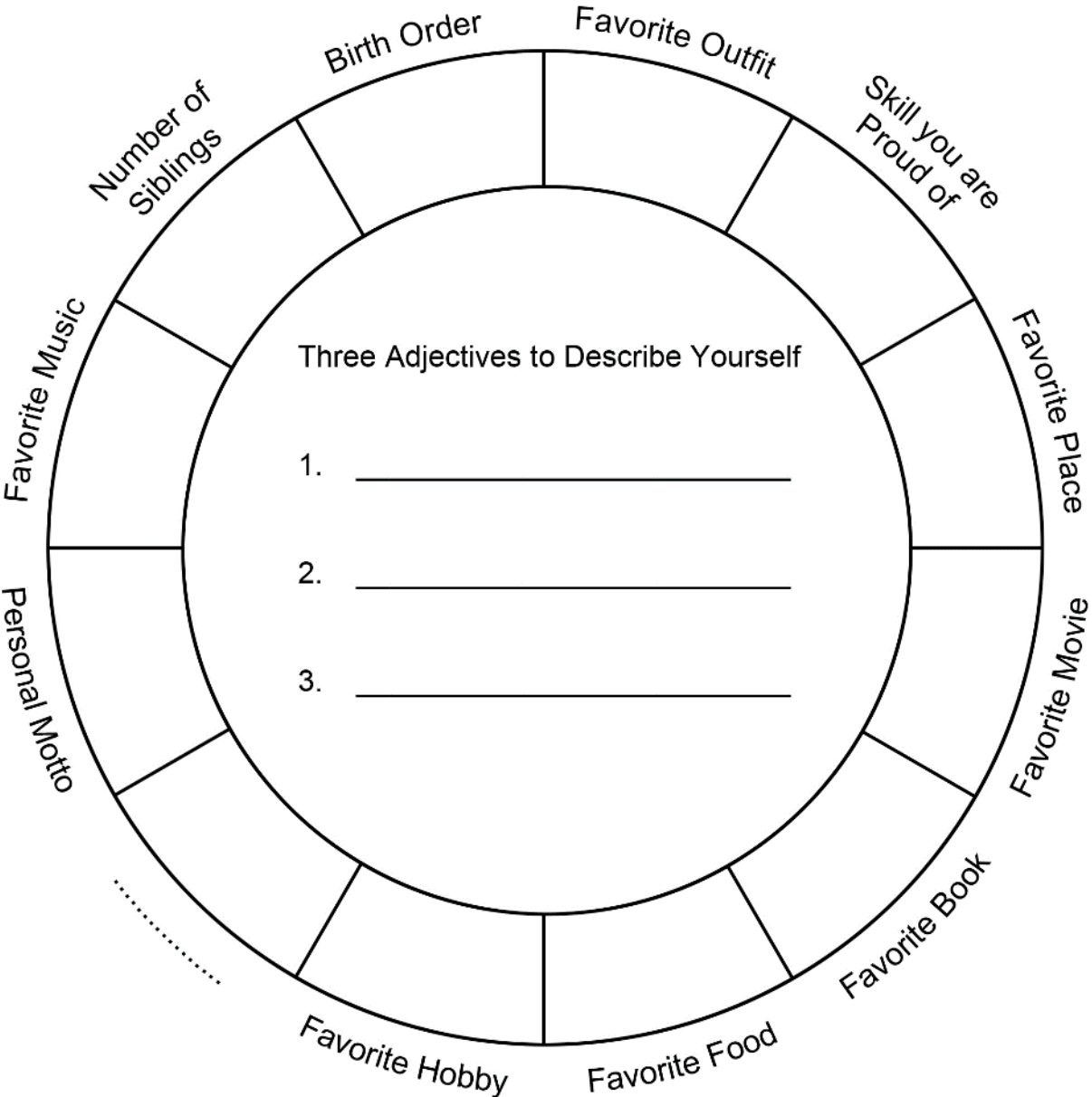


Exercise 3: Personal identity wheel (45-60 min.)

This third exercise is meant to break with the often-used categories of social identity that we have seen in the social and research identity wheels (ethnicity, class, gender etc.), and to see which others forms of (self-)identification are possible, such as with locations, food, subcultures or hobbies. These aspects can also be of importance to how you position yourself in society as well as how you are perceived by others. They can be of importance to how you give meaning to your social surroundings, and can be of importance in research settings. For example: maybe you are a fan of poetry and you share this interest with your research participants.



The diagram is a circular 'Personal Identity Wheel' divided into 12 segments. The segments are labeled as follows, starting from the top and moving clockwise: Birth Order, Favorite Outfit, Skill you are Proud of, Favorite Place, Favorite Movie, Favorite Book, Favorite Food, Favorite Hobby, Favorite Music, Personal Motto, Number of Siblings, and Favorite Music. The center of the wheel contains the text 'Three Adjectives to Describe Yourself' followed by three numbered lines for writing: 1. _____, 2. _____, 3. _____.

3a) Individual exercise (+- 15 min.)

Fill in the boxes by writing down or drawing an answer and describe yourself in the middle of the wheel in three additional ways. By using different colours – or another creative form – make visible what identities are most/least important to you.

This part can also be done by students in preparation to a seminar.

3b) Group discussion (15-30 min.)

Discuss your wheels with each other in groups of 2 or 3 persons:

- What aspects have you discovered of each other that you were not aware of yet?
- Are there aspects of you that you could express through filling out this wheel, that you were not able to show in the previous wheels?
- What interests do you share and which not? (How) does this influence the way in which you engage with each other, or how you can understand each other?
- What aspects can be of importance in a specific research setting? Can this work to your advantage, or disadvantage?

3c) Plenary discussion/recap (+- 15 min.)

The goal of this exercise is not so much to discuss the specific aspects that are mentioned in the wheel, or to replace the categories of the social and the research identity wheels by new categories from the personal identity wheel; but to think about ways in which we identify and differentiate amongst each other. The social and research identity wheels gave the 'usual' categories of identification, and even though these are relevant and important when it comes to contemporary forms of inequality and power, these are at the same time quite limited/limiting. The personal identity wheel can provide an addition to these in such a way that the different categories can exist alongside each other.

- Question to the group(s): What insights did you gain through (filling out) this personal identity wheel?

The identity aspects of the social and research identity wheels are categories that are being used generally and they can provide individuals with worthy ways of self-identification. At the same time through the reproduction of these categories, negative side-effects can occur, namely the sharpening and strengthening of these labels and differences. A possible concern with the social and research identity wheels is that they tend to fix identities. Ethnicity, sexuality or religion do not necessarily have to be the strongest sources of self-identification, yet the categories in these previous wheels do suggest this. To some, these categories will be important and valuable, to others this might not be the case. With this personal identity wheel it is possible to find other ways to look at the many forms of (self-)identification.

- Question to the group(s): In what ways can "categories" from the personal identity wheel influence fieldwork and knowledge production?