

SOCIOLOGY 1101

Socialization

Socialization – A Definition

- Socialization – the process by which an individual learns how to interact with others and becomes a member of society
- Socialization is a complex, lifelong process
- We are all products of our social experience

What does socialization teach us?

- Language
- Culture (norms, values, beliefs, etc.)
- Understanding of others
- Understanding of ourselves as a social being or a “social self”
- Emergence of the “social self”

Definition of the Self

- Self – the dimension of personality composed of an individual’s self-awareness and self-image
- The Self is inseparable from social experience

Theories on socialization

- George Herbert Mead – the development of the “Social Self”
- Charles Horton Cooley – the development of the “Looking Glass Self”

George Herbert Mead

- Argued that “the Social Self” developed out of social interactions with others
- Social interaction involves seeing ourselves as others see us or taking the role of the other
- Taking the role of the other involves a constant interplay between the “I” and the “Me”

George Herbert Mead

- 3 Components of the Social Self:
- The “I”- the subjective element of the self; involves the direct experiences of the self; develops without language
- The “Me”- the objective element of the self; involves how we look at others and see ourselves; develops with language
- The “Mind”- taking the roles of others; the interplay between I and Me

George Herbert Mead

- Taking the Role of the Other
- Significant other – when children take the perspective of those who are most important in their lives; performed through the use of language and symbols in imitation, modeling or simple role playing after parents

George Herbert Mead

- Generalized other – when children take the roles of several others at once; performed through the participation of children in complex games or sports activities; children learn the shared expectations of an entire social group or society as a reference point for evaluating themselves

Charles Horton Cooley

- “The Looking Glass Self” – pertains to the self-image that we have based on how we suppose others perceive us; we imagine ourselves in the same way that others see us; others represent a “mirror” in which we can see ourselves

Types of socialization

- Primary socialization – socialization that occurs without the subject’s knowledge of it
- Secondary socialization – socialization that is purposeful and obvious
- Anticipatory socialization – socialization that prepares people for future roles and statuses

Types of socialization

- Reciprocal socialization – when children socialize parents like parents socialize children
- Resocialization – the process of unlearning old norms, roles, and values, and learning new ones required in a new social environment

Types of socialization

- Total institution – a place where people are isolated from the rest of society for a set period of time and their lives are almost completely controlled by officials who run the institution
- Resocialization occurs in total institutions
- Examples include prisons, asylums and the military

Agents of socialization

- Agent of socialization – an institution or group that prepares an individual for social life and society

The Family

- The most important agent of socialization, because it stands at the center of children's lives
- Provides for basic needs, and teaches children skills, cultural values, and attitudes about themselves and others
- Passes on to children a social position (places them in society in terms of race, ethnicity, religion and class)
- Socializes children into gender roles

The School

- Schooling enlarges children's social world to include people with social backgrounds different from their own
- Formal schooling teaches children a wide range of knowledge and skills
- School is the child's first experience with bureaucracy
- Socializes children into gender roles

The Peer Group

- Provides young people the experience in developing social relationships on their own and establishing an identity apart from their family
- Provides the opportunity to discuss interests not shared by adults
- Provides a sense of belonging that eases the anxiety of breaking away from the family

The Media

- Spreads information on a mass scale, and functions to connect people
- Influences our attitudes and behavior through the images and messages it conveys
- Mirrors our society's patterns of inequality and rarely challenges the status quo
- Reflects the values of the dominant culture