

# **SOCIALIZATION**

## **PERSPECTIVES**

# Socialization

- Is the learning of knowledge, skills, motivations, and identities as our genetic potential ....(nature),

- **interacts with our social environment (nurture).**

# Socialization Perspectives

- All of the various scholars agree that socialization is needed for culture and society values to be learned
- It is also agreed the socialization occurs because it is *internalized* (becomes part of you).

# Functionalist Perspective

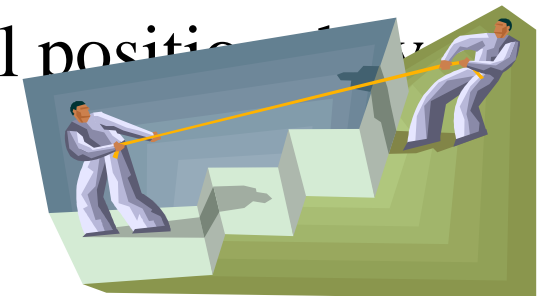
- **Functionalism** stresses the importance of groups working together to create a stable society
- For example, schools and families socialize children by teaching them the same basic beliefs and values



# Conflict Perspective

- Conflict perspective views socialization as a way to **maintain the status quo** (keep things the same)

- For example, children are socialized to accept their family's social class which helps preserve the current class system
- People learn to accept their social status before they have enough self-awareness to realize what is happening
- Because they don't challenge their social position, they don't upset the class structure

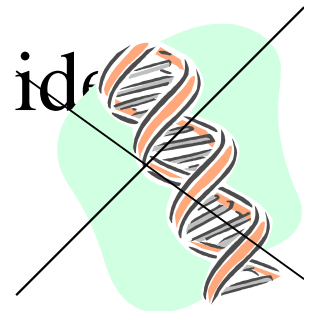


# SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONIST Perspective

Maintain that human nature is a product of society

- **Symbolic Interactionism** uses several key ideas to explain socialization

- The Self Concept
- The looking-glass self
- Significant others
- Role taking (imitation, play, & games)
- The generalized other



# Symbolic Interactionists

- Charles Horton Cooley & George Herbert Mead developed the Symbolic Interactionist Perspective in the early 1900s. They challenged the idea that biology determined human nature



# Interdisciplinary Child Research

1. Psychology-focuses on mental functioning, internal influences, subjective feelings.
2. Sociology-family is affected by social structural and cultural conditions.
3. Social Psychology –middle ground...Learning, cognition, psychoanalysis.

# Socialization Theorists

- **Freud, (social Psych)**
- **Piaget,**
- **Sears,**
- **Bandura)**
- **Cooley, Mead (SI)**
- **Parsons and Bales (SF)**

# **CONTINUUM of SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

- **From Nature to Nurture**

1. PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY (Freud and Erikson)
2. COGNITIVE THEORY (Piaget)
3. LEARNING THEORY (Sears)

# Child Research

- The sociological study of the child **began in the nineteenth century**.
- It coincides with the development of the **Reformers** who criticized the capitalists who exploited child labour.

## P. Aries.

- In fact, a key sociological theory of Childhood is by P. Aries.
- His book, Centuries of Childhood, argues that prior to the 19thc children were viewed as 'miniature adults'

# The founders

- Early studies of the child include:
  1. **Georg Simmel**
  2. **Fredrick Leplay** in 19th c
  3. **R. Park** and **Burgess** in the early twentieth.

# **The course of socialization**

**The child develops a self  
or awareness of ideas and  
attitudes about one's  
personal and social  
identity.**

# AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION

- SOCIETY DOES NOT SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE
- VARIOUS AGENTS CARRY OUT THE TASK OF INDUCTING THE CHILD INTO AN **ON-GOING SOCIAL ORDER**



# **Key Agents of Socialization**

1. FAMILY
2. TEACHERS
3. PEERS
4. CHURCH
5. MASS MEDIA

# Key Socialization agents include:

- ▶ **family**
  - ▶ **School**
  - ▶ **peer groups**
  - ▶ **mass media**
- Ethnic  
community  
religion**

# **The family –primary agent**

1. **Well suited to socialization:**
2. **Its members are intimate**
3. **Face-to-face contact,**
4. **Parents are usually highly motivated to socialize their children**
5. **Siblings are key socializers as well**

# **FAMILY**

- 1. Families are not always efficient agents of socialization.**

**2. Parents may reproduce negative modeling they experienced as children.**

**THUS, PARSONS term:  
DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY**

# **The school** **-secondary agent**

**Serves to introduce students to the adult world**

**SCHOOL is A SECONDARY  
SOCIALIZATION AGENT**

**School teaches them what it is like to work in an impersonal setting**

**Teaches orderliness, conformity etc.**

# School

Universal standards of achievement

The school has a 'hidden curriculum'

The antithesis of the family.

# **CHURCH: Another secondary agents**

- Religious leaders
- Lay people
- Institution's-values and beliefs



# Weber on Religious Value Orientations

- **Roman Catholic**-communal fatalist\
- **Protestant**-intense inner worldly especially Calvinism
- **Judaism**-like Protestantism – more communal
- **Islam**-devotion and obedience to religious codes

# Peer groups

- **Peers** are people of similar age and status)
- **Unique** in that they are **not controlled** by adults (informal socializers)
- **Significant** guides to action in rapidly changing societies

# Peers are important

**Parents' experiences are  
insufficient guides to  
action in an era of rapid  
change.**

Peers can be positive or negative socializers

## **The mass media –**

- **Early theorists viewed media as a passive, impersonal means of receiving and transmitting information –**
- **Newer theories**
- **emphasize two way socialization.**

# Media Effects

- **Strong socializing influences whose effects are difficult to measure**
- **The mass media can control and create perceptions**

# **Media Effects**

- 1. Teaches what is important in society**
- 2. Selecting and stressing particular topics,**
- 3. Constructs views, interpretations, and themes.**

# MEDIA LITERACY

- MASS MEDIA IS GROWING IN IMPORTANCE
- OVERTAKING PARENTS?
- INVOKES A NEED FOR **MEDIA LITERACY**

# Summary

- Taken independently, these theories describe only a **portion of the realities** of the socialization process.



- They should not be  
seen as mutually  
exclusive from one  
another.

- It is clear that socialization involves a variety of socialization agents; primary and secondary
- Society does speak with one voice

