Module 4 Socialization and Social Control

Lecture 20
Socialization: Part II

In this lecture, we shall discuss some of the intricacies involved in the processes of socialization.

Becoming a Social Being

Socialization refers to the ways in which people learn to conform to their society's norms, values, and roles.

Primary socialization refers to the ways in which the newborn individual is moulded into a social being.

Secondary socialization occurs in later childhood and adolescence as a child is influenced by adults and peers outside his or her family.

Adult socialization occurs when a person learns the norms associated with specific adult statuses.

There are a number of unresolved issues in the study of socialization:

- The relative strength of biological and social influences (nature versus nurture).
- How does a person develop a sense of self?
- How do social environments affect socialization?
- How does gender socialization occur?

Nature and Nurture

Sigmund Freud believed that the personality develops in infancy as the child is forced to control his or her bodily urges.

Freud’s model of the personality is divided into three parts: The original, unsocial zed urges arise out of the id. The norms, values, and feelings taught through socialization belong to the superego, and the ego is one's conception of oneself in relation to others.

Freud believed that the ego is formed as a result of conflict between the infant's basic biological urges and society's need for a socialized person.

Behaviourism takes the opposite view from that of sociobiology. Behaviourists believe that all behaviour is learned.

By training a dog to salivate at the sound of a bell, Ivan Pavlov demonstrated that conditioned reflexes could be developed.
John B. Watson showed that emotions such as fear could also be conditioned.

Feral children are children who have been raised in isolation. Studies of such children show that the absence of parental love and nurturance damages the individual's ability to become a social person.

The Need for Love

Studies that compare children reared in orphanages with those reared in traditional families show that the former are more likely to develop emotional problems.

Harry Harlow showed that infant monkeys reared apart from other monkeys grew up to be aggressive, violent, and incapable of nurturing their own infants.

Today most sociologists agree that while genetic and other biological traits establish broad boundaries for individual achievement, the environment in which a person is raised can cause her or his potential to be realized more or less fully within those boundaries.

The Social Construction of the Self

Interactionist theories of personality formation focus on how the self is “constructed” through social interaction.

Charles Horton Cooley developed the concept of the “looking-glass self”-the reflection of ourselves that we think we see in the behaviours of others toward us.

George Herbert Mead believed that the self could emerge only through the use of language. Culture, therefore, is at the centre of the formation of the self.

- Mead believed that role taking, the ability to look at social situations from the standpoint of another person, develops in three stages: the preparatory, game, and play stages.

- A significant other is an important person in an individual's environment; the generalized other is a composite of all the roles of significant others.

In playing the roles for which they have been socialized, people adhere to the rules of interaction known as “face work”. They seek to present a positive image of themselves, their “face”, and to avoid being embarrassed or "losing face."

Jean Piaget studied children’s notions of morality. Lawrence Kohlberg built on Piaget's research in devising his theory of stages of moral development in children.

In Kohlberg's theory, preconventional morality is based on the desire for reward and the fear of punishment; conventional morality is based on an understanding of right and wrong as embodied in social rules or laws; and postconventional morality is based on a sense of relativity and moral principles.
Carol Gilligan has demonstrated the propensity of females to base moral choices on considerations of caring as well as justice or law.

Social Environments and Early Socialization

The environment in which a person is socialized has a powerful effect on his or her personality and behaviour.

Urie Bronfenbrenner summarizes the conclusions of numerous studies with these propositions:

- In order to develop normally, a child needs the enduring involvement of one or more adults in care of and joint activity with the child.
- This requires public policies that provide opportunity, resources, encouragement, and time for parenthood.

Agencies of Socialization

As we have already discussed in the last lecture that agencies of socialization are the groups of people, along with the interactions that occur within those groups, that influence a person's social development. Within these agencies one finds a great deal of anticipatory socialization, in which the individual plays at a role that he or she is likely to assume later in life.

The family is the primary agency of socialization.

- Schools are the most important agency of socialization outside the family. Conflicts may arise between parents and school personnel over what should be taught in schools.
- Scout troops, churches, and leagues of all kinds are among the agencies of socialization found in many communities.
- Peer groups (interacting groups of people of about the same age) tend to be the dominant agency of socialization in middle and late adulthood. When children's peer groups are faced with conflict and social change, they often organize themselves in gangs.
- The mass media are also an important agency of socialization. The effect of television viewing on children and adolescents is a subject of intensive research.
Socialization through the Life Course

A person’s core identity, the part of the self formed in early childhood, does not change easily later in life.

The roles people play during their life course can be influenced by social changes, changes in a society’s culture, the impact of new friends, and occupational mobility.

In any new activity the newcomer or recruit must learn a new set of norms associated with the roles of the organization.

Sometimes people undergo resocialization to correct patterns of social learning that they and others find detrimental.

Erik Erikson emphasized the role of identification in the formation of the personality. Identification occurs when individuals choose adult role models and attempt to imitate their behaviour.

Gender Socialization

Gender socialization refers to the ways in which we learn our gender identity and develop according to cultural norms of masculinity or femininity.

Gender identity is an individual’s own feeling of whether she or he is a woman or a man, or a girl or a boy. It is important to:

- Understand the meaning and implications of socialization as the process of “creating a social being”, emphasizing differences between "the social construction of the self" and the biological view of personality.

- Identify socialization as a lifelong process in which the individual continually changes, but understand that various stages of socialization differ in the extent to which the family or other institutions act as socializing agencies.

- Understand the ways in which a society’s culture becomes internalized in the individual.
References


**Questions**

1. Describe Freud’s model of personality.
2. Explain the process of construction of ‘the self’.
3. What are the different agencies of socialization?
4. How is socialization through life course achieved?