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, & game)
  - 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.
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