I. Socialization From Infancy to Old Age

A. Socialization and the Self
1. Over our lives, we develop a sense of self: a perception of being a distinct personality with a distinct identity.
   a. Self-identity: An organization of perceptions about who and what kind of person one is.

B. Socialization: the process by which people learn the skills, knowledge, norms, and values of their society, and by which they develop their social identity.
1. A lifelong social experience by which individuals develop human potential and learn the patterns of their culture
2. Culture is internalized and a sense of self develops.
   a. Socialization begins at birth and does not end until death.
   b. At birth, are minds are like a blank slate or tabula rasa, which needs to be filled with social knowledge.
3. It is the foundation of the personality -- a person's fairly consistent patterns of think, feeling, and acting
   a. In the 19th century, and in some circles today, there was an intense debate regarding the relative importance of nature (biology) and nature (socialization) in the shaping of human behavior
      • Most modern sociologists see nurture as more important than nature -- both?
      • Anyone see Trading Places? Should I show it tomorrow?
4. Research on the effects of social isolation has demonstrated the importance of socialization
   a. Radically undersocialized children -- story at beginning of book, feral children
C. Understanding Socialization
1. Freud and Piaget
   a. Freud -- Psychoanalytic Theory
      • Theorized on the elements of personality
      • Shaped by two opposing forces: Eros -- the life instinct (sexual energy/libido) and Thanatos -- the death instinct
      • Three basic components of the personality
        • Id: human being's basic drives
        • Ego: person's conscious efforts to balance innate pleasure-seeking drives with societal demands
        • Superego: the presence of culture and rules within the individual

   b. Piaget -- Cognitive Development
      • Four aged linked stages of cognitive development (Freud had two major ones -- oral and anal stage)
        • Sensorimotor Stage: individuals experience the world only through sensory contact
        • Preoperational Stage: first use language and other symbols
        • Concrete Operational Stage: first perceive causal connections in their surroundings
        • Formal Operational Stage: use of highly abstract thought to imagine alternative outcomes to situations

2. G.H. Mead
   a. The self and society are one in the same
      • We become aware of ourselves when we become aware of society
      • We find out about ourselves by learning about society
      • We learn to play roles by “taking the role of the other”
      • Children play roles by pretending to be others (ex. doctor, house, cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians, etc.)
      • As we take on social roles, we discover the significance of the ones being assigned to us.
        • And this can only occur by interacting with others
      • Significant Others: People who you deal with intimately and who’s attitudes are decisive for the formation of who you feel you are inside
      • Generalized Other: Roles you play are not only relevant to your intimate circle of friends/family, but relate to the expectations directed towards you by society at large
        • Higher level of abstraction in the social response
        • Only when we are capable of conceiving these societal expectations do we clearly see ourselves – conceive of ourselves.
• “Self and society are two sides of the same coin”
  • Identity is not given – you aren’t born with it
    • It is bestowed upon us each time society recognizes it in us and calls it to our attention

3. More Mead: Discussed role taking and the importance of children’s play.
   a. Play is where socialization and development occur in children, which transfers over to adults.
   b. **Role Taking**: Assuming the role of another person and then judging themselves from the viewpoint of the other person.
   c. He distinguish between specific and abstract roles.
      • Begin by taking roles of specific others (people important to them)
        • By doing this, they learn the values, norms, and behaviors associated with the roles.
        • They live the role of the other through themselves.
        • They share **gestures**, which are symbols whose meaning is shared by the group members.
      • They learn to take the role of abstract entities too – the role of the **generalized other**.
        • The ability to do this is the mark of full social development.
        • We learn the values and norms of society through this.
      • We learn to take the role of the generalized other through three specific stages in childhood:
        • **Imitation**: This is when children have no independent identity (can’t take others roles), they just imitate the behavior of others without understanding it.
        • **Play**: They pretend to be someone else, they take roles of specific others.
        • **Game**: Play games that require multiple roles and complex behaviors determined by what others do.
          • Rules and roles exist and conformity is required.
      • There are two aspects of the self: the **me** and the **I**.
        • The “**I**” is the creative and spontaneous acts of the self, the self as subject.
        • The “**me**” is the deliberate aspect of self, the self as object.
          • It evaluates the ongoing thought and action of the **I**.
          • It consists of internalized attitudes of others.
In a modern society such as ours, socialization is done from a number of sources other than our family:
- Schools, peer groups, and mass media teach us the norms, values, and beliefs we learn.
- These may not always agree with what our family has taught us.
- It is also important to realize that not everyone in society receives the same socialization, and some don’t even receive the minimal amount to function in our society (ex. lower class, African-Americans, etc.).
- This can result in deviance and crime as well as poverty, lower education, etc.

D. **Agents of Socialization**: Individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions that provide substantial amounts of socialization during the life course they are responsible for transmitting the culture.

1. They pass on knowledge and act as “role” models (that word right there shows how we model ourselves after others and take roles).
   a. Reward compliance and punish non-compliance

2. Important agents of socialization are:
   a. **Family**: The most important agent because it bears the main responsibility of socializing from birth to adulthood.
      - Development of physical skills and intellectual skills.
      - Gives people their social location in society.
      - Provide social context for learning values
   b. **School**: Teaches formal cognitive skills (reading, writing, and math) and is the first introduction to a formal agent of socialization.
      - Educates the potential work force.
      - Must meet objective standards, abide by standard rules, and conform
      - Reinforcement of values central to society
      - Sharing informal knowledge (sex pop culture, etc.) How many people learned about sex in school (from friends, not taught?)
      - Usually the school curriculum supports the dominant group of society. (Ex. U.S. History is still viewed through the eyes of white men…)
   c. **Peer Group**: Friends approximately the same age and approximately the same social status, influential in shaping our values and behaviors.
      - Provides informal socialization for both child and adult.
   d. **Mentors**: Teachers who act as guides and sponsors.
e. Mass Media: Communications that are disseminated to a large number of people (audience) without direct feedback or other interpersonal contacts between sender and receiver.

- Television is the dominant form.
  - Television usually focuses on sensationalism, sex, violence, and fantasy – distorting reality and desensitizing people to reality.
    Can also encourage the behavior seen on the television.
II. Socialization From Infancy to Old Age
A. Social Structure creates our identity and location within society (Berger).
   1. Location determines what one will do and what to expect in our lives.
      a. We are located in society at the intersection point of specific social forces.
      b. We move within defined systems of power and prestige – and we find that we are trapped in these locations.
      c. Our location in society defines the rules that must be obeyed – the system and our captivity in it.
         • Thus, when a child talks about “growing up,” they mean locating themselves in physical, geographical, and social structures (ex. map, gender roles, etc.) conceived of by strangers.
         • When we, as adults, talk about having common sense, or taking the “common sense view,” this is the growing up view taken for granted – it becomes a matter of fact.
      d. It appears that our reality is the only one, completely taken for granted.
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C. **Socialization and the Life course**

1. Through socialization we learn language, values, rules, and knowledge of our society and culture
   a. The people who rule a society usually take great care in socializing its citizens to follow rules and have the basic knowledge to function in society.
   • Thus, socialization is a key part of the *life course*.

2. **Life Course**: The stages into which our life span is divided.
   a. At each stage in our lives we learn key pieces of information to progress on to the next stage in our lives.
   • What we learn now and in the future is based on what we have learned before it – it has served as the foundation
   b. Life Course:
      • Childhood -- becomes an increasingly separate phase of life with industrialization -- it is becoming shorter
      • Adolescence: a period of social and emotional turmoil -- varies with class position
      • Youth
      • Adulthood
      • Early Adulthood: Working toward goals set earlier in life
      • Middle Adulthood: Greater reflectiveness
      • Old Age/Very Old Age -- mid 60's -- U.S. is currently experiencing an increase in the elderly population
   c. Essential characteristics of each stage of life course are socially constructed -- although linked to biological age
      • Each stage presents characteristic problems and transitions that involve learning something new -- an unlearning what has become familiar
      • Race and gender always modify general patterns relating to age
      • Life experiences vary depending on when they were born
      • **Cohort**: Category of people with common characteristics -- usually age
   d. Keep in mind that all societies socialize their children in some way (but differently).
   
   e. **Primary Socialization**: Socialization that occurs at the early stages of the life course, focusing on *basic knowledge and the values of that society*.
      • Takes place within the family
   
   f. **Secondary Socialization**: Emphasizes synthesis of ideas, creativity, logic, emotional control, and advanced knowledge. It also emphasizes reality and practicality (common “cultural” sense).
      • Takes place within institutions, groups, and organizations
g. Ethnicity and class make a difference in how members of a society are socialized
   - Whites may socialize children differently than blacks of Hispanics or Asians, etc.

h. **Anticipatory Socialization**: Rehearsing before assuming a role (ex. the role of leader, etc.)

i. **Modeling**: Copying of characteristics of admired people (role modeling).

j. *Positive* and *Negative Sanctions* are used to reinforce or remove behaviors in society.
   - **Positive Sanctions**: Indicate approval of role performance
   - **Negative Sanctions**: Convey Disapproval of role performance