Socialization and the Life Course

Learning Objectives

- Compare and contrast the theories of child development according to Mead, Cooley, Piaget, Freud, and Chodorow.

- Learn how recent research reveals the ways that parents teach children about the meaning of racial identity.

- Consider the influence of social factors, especially mass media and social media, on gender learning. Analyze a new approach to combating bullying.

4.2 Theories of Socialization

How the Self Emerges

- The most prominent theories about child development emphasize different aspects of socialization.

- **Cognition**: Human thought processes involving perception, reasoning, and remembering.

G. H. Mead and the Development of Self (1 of 3)

- According to Mead, infants and young children develop as social beings by imitating the actions of those around them.

- He believed children achieved self-awareness with the ability to distinguish the "me" from the "I" through a process of play he called "taking the role of the other."

- **Social self**: The basis of self-consciousness in human individuals, according to the theory of G. H. Mead. The social self is the identity conferred upon an individual by the reactions of others.

- Mead believed a further stage of child development occurred at 8 or 9 years old, when children learn to play organized games, which have rules that reflect the values of social life.

- **Generalized other**: A concept in the theory of G. H. Mead, according to which the individual comes to understand the general values of a given group or society during the socialization process.

Charles Horton Cooley and the Looking-Glass Self

- **Looking-glass self**: According to Cooley's theory, the reactions we elicit in social situations create a mirror in which we see ourselves.

- Modern refinements to this theory suggest individuals take action to bring others around to their own views of themselves, rather than passively accepting what others think of them.

OJO Images Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

Jean Piaget and the Stages of Cognitive Development

- **Sensorimotor stage**: According to Jean Piaget, a stage of human cognitive development in which a child's awareness of his or her environment is dominated by perception and touch.

- The main accomplishment of this stage is children's understanding that their environment has distinct and stable properties.

Jean Piaget and the Stages of Cognitive Development

- **Preoperational stage**: A stage of cognitive development, in Piaget's theory, in which the child has advanced sufficiently to master basic modes of logical thought.

  - Children in this stage are egocentric

  - **Egocentric**: According to Piaget, the characteristic quality of a child during the early years of his or her life. Egocentric thinking involves understanding objects and events in the environment solely in terms of one's own position.

- **Concrete operational stage**: A stage of cognitive development, as formulated by Piaget, in which the child's thinking is based primarily on physical perception of the world. In this phase, the child is not yet capable of dealing with highly abstract concepts or hypothetical situations.

- **Formal operational stage**: According to Piaget's theory, a stage of cognitive development at which the growing child becomes capable of handling abstract concepts and hypothetical situations.

- According to Piaget, the first three stages of development are universal; but not all adults reach the formal operational stage.

Sigmund Freud's Theory of Gender Identity

- According to Freud, the learning of gender differences in infants and young children centers on the possession or absence of the penis.

- The possession and absence of the penis are symbolic of masculinity and femininity, of power and lack of power, respectively.

- Freud's theory is controversial, and major objections have been raised against his view.

Theories of Socialization

Nancy Chodorow's Theory of Gender Identity

- Chodorow argues that learning to feel male or female derives from the infant's attachment to the parents from an early age.

- In her view, girls develop sensitivity and emotional compassion through their extended relationship with their mother, whereas boys develop analytical thinking and repress the ability to understand emotions after severing from the mother.

- Chodorow's view has been criticized for being oversimplified and based on a narrow, White, middle-class concept of the family.

Carol Gilligan's Theory of Moral Development

- Gilligan suggests that women's views of themselves are based on successfully fulfilling the needs of others, whereas men's are based on pride and individual achievement.

- Gilligan's work has been criticized for essentializing gender differences and reifying the (mis)perception of women as innate caregivers.

APPLYING SOCIOLOGY TO SOCIALIZATION AND THE LIFE COURSE

THEORY	APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING SOCIALIZATION	CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION
G. H. Mead theory of self	Children learn to adopt the perspectives of others, and thus become self-aware.	A child may feel proud when a parent praises them. By adopting the parent's perspective, they become aware of their own good behavior.
Cooley's looking glass self	Our self-concept is based on our perceptions of how others see us.	A college student feels accepted and popular when they receive lots of "likes" on their Instagram photo
Piaget's cognitive development model	As children mature, they gradually acquire skills and capacities in reasoning, with the final stage encompassing abstract reasoning.	Young teens may gravitate to poetry and symbolic song lyrics because they have the capacity to understand abstractions.

APPLYING SOCIOLOGY TO SOCIALIZATION AND THE LIFE COURSE

THEORY	APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING SOCIALIZATION	CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION
Psychoanalytic perspectives	Freud and Chodorow believe that gender identity develops out of one's attachment to and separation from parents.	Cisgender girls may mimic the clothing and personal style of their mothers, whereas cisgender boys mimic their fathers.
Gilligan's moral development theory	Men and women use different moral criteria in their decision- making, due to early socialization processes.	Men and women on a jury may react very differently to a defendant, as they may apply different values when assessing the motive and behavior.

4.3 Research on Socialization Today: Race Socialization

Race Socialization

- **Race socialization**: The specific verbal and nonverbal messages that older generations transmit to younger generations regarding the meaning and significance of race.

- Research shows that while parents of all racial and ethnic groups discuss their heritage with their children, parents of color—especially Black parents—do so more often than White parents.

Messages and Consequences

- What do Black parents teach their children about race, race stratification, and race relations?

- Brown and Lesane-Brown found five themes in messages of racial socialization in Black families: individual pride, racial-group pride, deference to and fear of Whites, color blindness, and the belief that Whites are prejudiced.

- They found that the messages one receives during childhood have far-reaching implications on one's political attitudes and behaviors.

Research on Socialization Today

- Changing gender roles since the1960s
  - Work: Women (esp. married women with young children) entering the labor force
  - Family: from "breadwinner husband" to "dual-earner" families
  - Changing division of labor

Research on Socialization Today

- Early Child Care and Youth Development
  - Who should care for children?

The Public Differs in Role of Fathers and Mothers

% saying children are ...

Just as well off if mother works	Better off with mother home
34	51

Just as well off if father works	Better off with father home
76	8

Note: The questions were asked separately for m
fathers. Responses of "Just as well if mother/fat
and "Depends" are not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center survey, conducted
2013, N=1,003.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

4.4 Unanswered Questions

Are Gender Differences Caused by Social Influences?

- Some of the most significant disagreements and unanswered questions about socialization have to do with gender.

- **Gender role socialization**: The learning of gender roles through social factors such as schooling, the media, and family.

- **Gender roles**: Social roles assigned to each sex and labeled as masculine or feminine.

Gender Learning

- Male and female adults usually handle infants differently.

- Children have a partial understanding of what gender is by age two.

- As children become toddlers, parents engage in more rough-and-tumble play with boys and hold more give-and-take conversations with girls.

- Retailers typically categorize their products by gender.

Gender in Children's Media

- Gender socialization
  - Gender roles and learning
  - Influence of mass media (storybooks, TV, movies, commercials, etc.)

- Children's books, TV, and games also reinforce binary gender roles.

- Male characters outnumber female characters and take a more active role, whereas female characters are more passive.

Unanswered Question

- The difficulty of nonsexist child rearing
  - http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2010/01/09/socialization-and-gendered-job-segregation/
  - http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2010/07/10/wanna-be-brides-the-socialization-of-girls/
- Creating Gender Inclusive Schools

A training program at an elementary school encourages teachers, students, and parents to think critically about the meanings of gender.

How Do Children Learn to Bully? Can They Unlearn?

- Peers learn to bully through imitation and reinforcement.

- The Boy Game (In this selection, middle school boys reenact common bullying scenarios among peers)

- Increased identification with their peers and an inability to resist peer influence make adolescence a time when peers are particularly influential on children.

- Peers can play an important role in the socialization process by modeling pro-social behaviors as well as antisocial behavior.

Networks, Groups, and Organizations

Opening Question

How many people can ultimately contract COVID-19 if a single carrier of the virus is allowed to go about their life unchecked?

A. 200

B. 5,000

C. 25,000

D. 59,000

Learning Objectives

- Learn the variety and characteristics of networks and groups, as well as the effect they have on individual behavior. Know how to define an organization and understand how organizations developed over the last two centuries.

- Learn Max Weber's theory of organizations and view of bureaucracy.

6.1 Basic Concepts

Networks

- **Networks**: Sets of informal and formal social ties that link people to each other.

- Biological and social networks function differently.

- Most people rely on their personal networks to gain advantages, but not everyone has equal access to powerful networks.
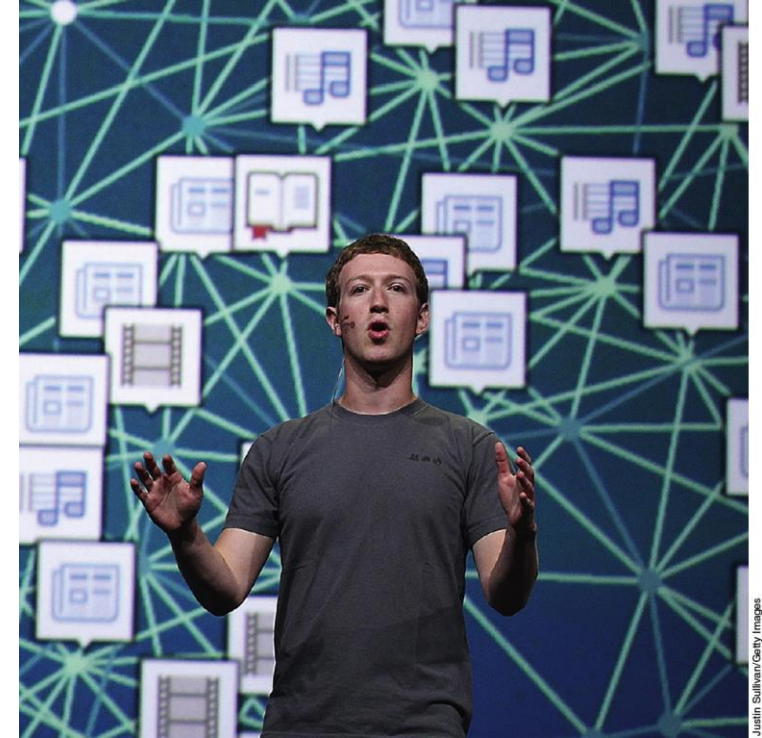
The Strength of Weak Ties

- Distant relatives or remote acquaintances
- People depend on personal networks to gain advantages. There can be enormous strength in weak ties or connections with distant relatives or remote acquaintances, particularly among higher socioeconomic groups.
  - E.g. Women's job market networks comprise fewer ties than do men's. Women are more likely to be hired or promoted into jobs that already have a high proportion of women.
  - Examples at school?

The Internet as Social Network

- Internet users can connect with global networks.

- Factors such as social position, wealth, race, ethnicity, gender, and physical disability are less likely to cloud social interactions online than in face-to-face encounters.

- Not everyone has equal access to the Internet.

Groups

- **Social group**: A collection of people who regularly interact with one another on the basis of shared expectations concerning behavior and who share a sense of common identity.

- **Social aggregate**: A simple collection of people who happen to be together in a particular place but do not significantly interact or identify with one another.

- **Social category**: People who share a common characteristic (such as gender or occupation) but do not necessarily interact or identify with one another.

Types of Groups

- **Primary groups**: Groups that are characterized by intense emotional ties, face-to-face interaction, intimacy, and a strong, enduring sense of commitment.

- **Secondary groups**: Groups characterized by large size and by impersonal, fleeting relationships.

Groups Over Time

- For most of human history, nearly all interactions took place within primary groups. Today, most of our time is spent within secondary groups.

- Some early sociologists worried about the growing impersonality and anonymity of modern life. Others saw it as an opportunity for increasing tolerance of individual differences compared to the strict conformity of primary groups.
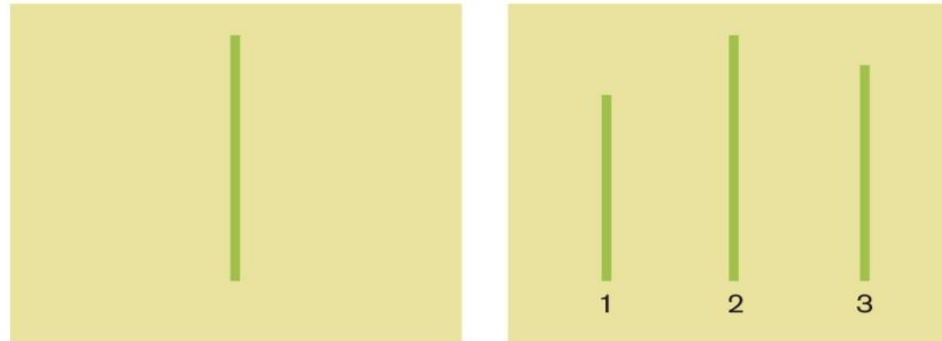
Conformity

- Solomon Asch (1952)

  - Asch's line experiment showed that many people are willing to discount their own perceptions rather than buck group consensus.

Figure 6.1
The Asch Task

In the Asch task, participants were shown a standard line (left) and then three comparison lines. Their task was simply to say which of the three lines matched the standard line. When confederates gave false answers first, one-third of participants conformed by giving the wrong answer.

Conformity

- Stanley Milgram (1963)

    - Milgram's experiment, which would not be allowed today, showed that ordinary citizens will obey orders given by someone in a position of power even if those orders have horrible consequences.

Conformity: Milgram's Experiment

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXXbIF5Okjc

Organizations

- **Organization**: A large group of individuals with a definite set of authority relations.

    - Many types of organizations exist in industrialized societies, influencing most aspects of our lives.

    - While not all organizations are bureaucratic, there are close links between the development of organizations and bureaucratic tendencies.

- **Formal organization**: A group that is rationally designed to achieve its objectives, often by means of explicit rules, regulations, and procedures.

Basic Concepts: Organization

- Organizations
  - An identifiable membership that engages in concerted collective actions to achieve a common purpose
  - Ways of coordinating human activities and goods in a stable way across space and time

6.2 Theories of Networks, Groups, and Organizations

In-Groups and Out-Groups

- The "sense of belonging" that characterizes social groups is sometimes strengthened by scorning other groups.

- **In-groups**: Groups toward which one feels particular loyalty and respect—the groups to which "we" belong.

- **Out-groups**: Groups toward which one feels antagonism and contempt—"those people."

Reference Groups

- **Reference group**: A group that provides a standard for judging one's attitudes or behaviors.

- You do not have to belong to a group for it to be a reference group.

- Reference groups are used heavily in advertising.

Dong Jinlin/Color China Photo/AP Images

The Effects of Size

- **Dyad**: A group consisting of two persons.

- George Simmel reasoned that dyads, which involve both intimacy and conflict, are likely to be simultaneously intense and unstable.

- **Triad**: A group consisting of three persons.

- Triads tend to be more stable, but can also fall prey to alliances between two members to overpower the third.
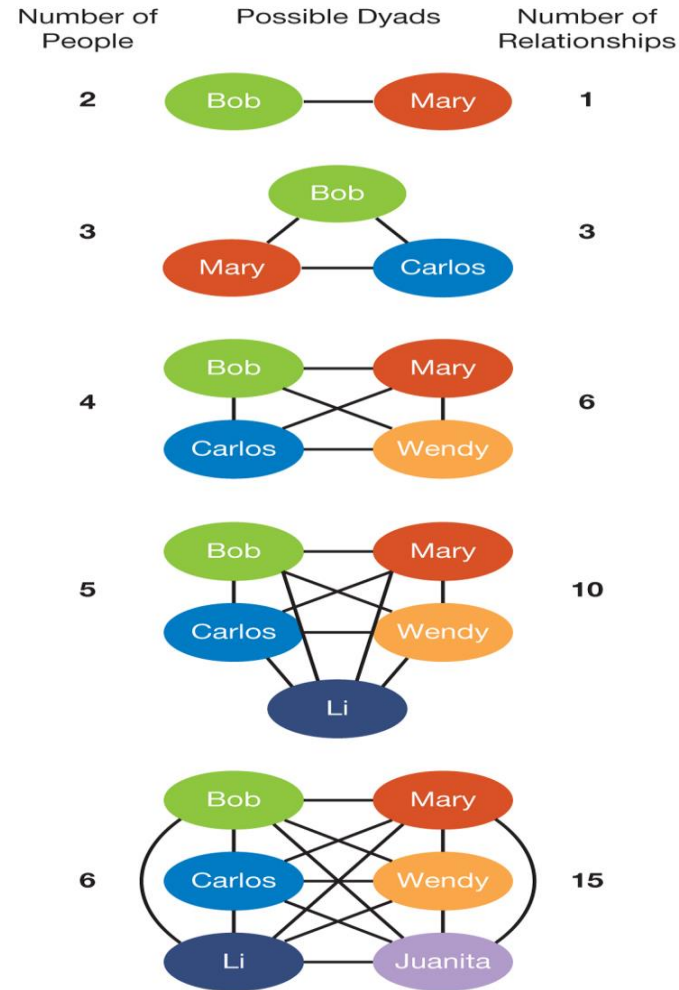
Larger Groups

- In most cases, as groups grow in size, their intensity decreases while their stability and exclusivity increase.

- Larger groups can survive the withdrawal of a few members.

- Beyond a certain size (about 12), groups tend to develop formal structure.

Theories of Groups, Organizations, and Networks

- The Effects of Group Size
  - Dyads
  - Triads
  - Larger groups
  - Organizations
- George Simmel: As groups grow in size, their intensity tends to decrease and their stability tends to increase.
- Group size affects how members interact with each other.

Figure 6.2
DYADS

The larger the number of people, the greater the possible number of relationships. Note that this figure illustrates only dyads; if triads and more complex coalitions were to be included, the numbers would be still greater (4 people yield 10 possibilities). Even a 10-person group can produce 45 possible dyads!

Theories of Organizations

- Max Weber argued that organizations are ways of coordinating the activities of human beings or the goods they produce in a stable way across space and time.

- He stressed the central importance of writing in this process. An organization needs written rules to function and files in which to store its "memory."

- Weber also saw organizations as strongly hierarchical.

Theories of Groups, Organizations, and Networks

- Bureaucracy

  - A type of organization marked by a clear hierarchy of authority and the existence of written rules of procedure and staffed by full-time, salaried officials

  - **Weber:** The development of bureaucracies is inevitable in modern societies (to cope with the administrative requirements of large-scale social systems).

  - Reflects the "rationalization of society" in modern times (Weber is concerned with its negative consequences, such as the loss of human creativity)

Bureaucracy

- **Bureaucracy**: A type of organization marked by a clear hierarchy of authority and the existence of written rules of procedure and staffed by full-time, salaried officials.

- **Ideal type**: A "pure type," constructed by emphasizing certain traits of a social item that do not necessarily exist in reality. An example is Max Weber's ideal type of bureaucratic organization.

Weber's Ideal Type Bureaucracy

- There is a clear-cut hierarchy of authority.

- Written rules govern the conduct of officials at all levels of the organization.

- Officials work full time and are salaried.

- There is a separation between the tasks of an official within the organization and his or her life outside.

- No members of the organization own the materials with which they operate.

**Weber believed that the more an organization approaches the ideal type of bureaucracy, the more *efficient* it will be in reaching its goals

Formal and Informal Relations within Bureaucracies

- **Formal relations**: Relations that exist in groups and organizations, as laid down by the norms, or rules, of the official system of authority.

- **Informal relations**: Relations that exist in groups and organizations developed on the basis of personal connections; ways of doing things that depart from formally recognized modes of procedure.