SOCI10103: General Sociology May Intersession 2025

Chapter 4: Socialization

Chapter outlines

- Why socialization is important
- Social psychological theories of human development
- Sociological theory of human development
- Agents of socialization
- Socialization through the life course
- Resocialization

Why socialization is important

Socialization is the lifelong process of social interaction through which individuals acquire a self-identity and the physical, mental, and social skills needed for survival in society

The kind of person someone becomes depends greatly on the people who surround them. How will this boy's life be shaped by his close and warm relationship with his mother?

Problems Associated with Social Isolation and Maltreatment

- Social isolation

- Anna: born in 1932 in Pennsylvania to an unmarried, mentally impaired woman. In 1938 (age 6), sociologist Kingsley Davis (1940) observed

- [Anna] had no glimmering of speech, absolutely no ability to walk, no sense of gesture, not the least capacity to feed herself even when the food was put in front of her, and no comprehension of cleanliness. She was so apathetic that it was hard to tell whether or not she could hear. And all of this at the age of nearly six years.

Social isolation: Genie

- At the time of her admission (about 13 years old), she was virtually unsocialized. She could not stand erect, salivated continuously, had never been toilet-trained and had no control over her urinary or bowel functions. She was unable to chew solid food and had the weight, height and appearance of a child half her age. (Rigler, 1993: 35)

Maltreatment

neglect is the most frequent form of child maltreatment

Neglect often involves acts of omission (where parents or caregivers fail to provide adequate physical or emotional care for children) rather than acts of commission (such as physical or sexual abuse)

Neglect is the most common type of maltreatment (nearly 76.1 percent) among children under age eighteen (with 16.5 percent being physically abused, 9.4 percent sexually abused, and 0.2 percent sex trafficked.

Social Isolation and Loneliness

social isolation and loneliness are central issues for persons across all age categories.

Loneliness is stigmatized, even though everyone feels it at one time or another"

older individuals are among the most likely to be socially isolated because of the structure of contemporary families and the greater likelihood that one spouse (in heterosexual marriages this is typically the wife) will outlive the other partner by a good number of years.
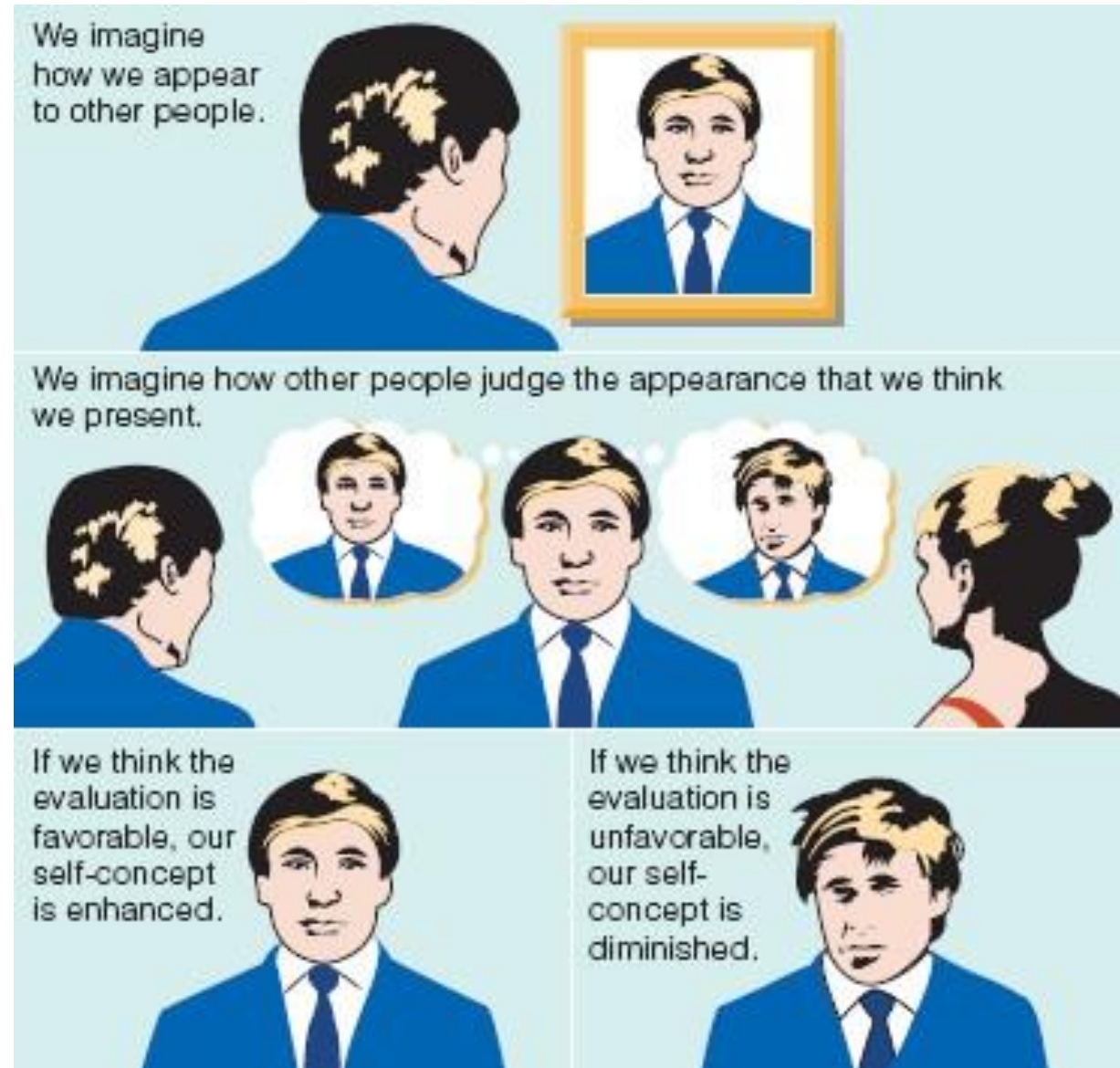
Social psychological theories of human development

- **Piaget and Cognitive Development**

Birth to 2 Years of Age	2 to 7 Years of Age	7 to 11 Years of Age	11 Years of Age Through Adulthood
Sensorimotor Stage	**Preoperational Stage**	**Concrete-Operational Stage**	**Formal-Operational Stage**
First stage of child's mental development which mainly involves sensation and motor skills such as hear, sight, feel, taste, move, manipulate, bite, chew and so on	In this stage children use their mental ability to represent events and objects in a various ways like using symbols, gestures and even communication, and so on thus their logical reasoning are	At this stage the child becomes more stable, think operationally and use logical reasoning rather than intuitive thought	Where children become more systematic and reasonable and they can not only reason of tangible objects and events but also they possess capability of reasoning and thinking in more abstract, hypothetical and

Sociological Theories of Human Development

- Cooley: Looking-Glass Self

We imagine how we appear to other people.

We imagine how other people judge the appearance that we think we present.

If we think the evaluation is favorable, our self-concept is enhanced.

If we think the evaluation is unfavorable, our self-concept is diminished.

Me and I (Mead)

- The "me" is what is learned by interaction with others in the larger social environment;

- By contrast, the "I" is the person's individuality.

Stages of development

During the preparatory stage, up to about age three, interactions lack meaning, and children largely imitate the people around them, particularly parents and other family members. At this stage, children are preparing for role-taking.

In the play stage, from about age three to five, children learn to use language and other symbols, thus enabling them to pretend to take the roles of specific people. At this stage, they begin to see themselves in relation to others, but they do not see role-taking as something they have to do.

During the game stage, which begins in the early school years, children understand not only their own social position but also the positions of others around them. In contrast to play, games are structured by rules, are often competitive, and involve a number of other "players." At this time, children become concerned about the demands and expectations of others and of the larger society.

Functionalist Perspectives on Socialization

Primary socialization refers to the process of learning that begins at birth and occurs in the home and family

Secondary socialization refers to the process of learning that takes place outside the home—in settings such as schools, religious organizations, and the workplace—and helps individuals learn how to act in appropriate ways in various situations.

Tertiary socialization refers to the process of learning that takes place when adults move into new settings where they must accept certain ideas or engage in specific behaviors that are appropriate to that specific setting.

- For example, an older person who retires from a long-term career, and then starts a new part-time position in a different field, will have to internalize new social norms and values that are appropriate to the new setting.

Problems in the socialization process contribute not only to individual concerns but also to larger societal issues, such as high rates of crime and poverty, school dropouts and failures, and family discord.

Karl Marx: Conflict theory of socialization

- Socialization contributes to false consciousness and reproduces inequalities in the class structure in the next generation as well as ignoring crucial differences based on gender, race/ethnicity, and other factors.

Agents of socialization

- The family

The school

Peer group: norm, pressure, and approval

News media

- YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter;
- newspapers, magazines, movies, videos

Gender socialization

- Gender socialization is the aspect of socialization that contains specific messages and practices concerning the nature of an individual's specific gender in a particular group or society.

Racial socialization

- Racial socialization is the aspect of socialization that contains specific messages and practices concerning the nature of our racial or ethnic status as it relates to our identity, interpersonal relationships, and location in the social hierarchy.

- Malcolm X and his teacher

Socialization through the life course

- Childhood: a child's sense of self is formed at an early age and that it is difficult to change this self-perception later in life.

- Adolescence:
  - get their first driver's license or graduate from high school

Pre-adulthood

College

- Adapting to new people and new situations
- Anticipation and excitement about studying in a new setting
- Insecurity about academic demands
- Homesickness
- If employed, trying to balance school and work life

MID FALL

- Social pressures from others: What would my parents think?
- Anticipation (and dread) of midterm exams and major papers
- Time-management problems between school and social life
- Intense need for a break
- Concerns about role conflict between school and work

LATE FALL

...tive or negative assessment of grades

END OF TERM

- Final exams: late nights, extra effort, and stress

Adulthood

In early adulthood (usually until about age forty), people work toward their own goals of creating relationships with others, finding employment, and seeking personal fulfillment.

In middle adulthood—between the ages of forty and sixty-five—people begin to compare their accomplishments with their earlier expectations.

In older adulthood, some people are quite happy and content; others are not.

Erik Erikson noted that difficult changes in adult attitudes and behavior occur in the last years of life, when people experience decreased physical ability, lower prestige, and the prospect of death.

Older adulthood

- Older adults in industrialized societies may experience social devaluation—wherein a person or group is considered to have less social value than other persons or groups.

- Social devaluation is especially acute when people are leaving roles that have defined their sense of social identity and provided them with meaningful activity

resocialization

- Resocialization is the process of learning a new and different set of attitudes, values, and behaviors

- Resocialization is voluntary when we assume a new status (such as becoming a student, an employee, or a retiree) of our own free will.

- Involuntary resocialization occurs against a person's wishes and generally takes place within a total institution—a place where people are isolated from the rest of society for a set period of time and come under the control of the officials who run the institution.