

CHAPTER THREE: SOCIALIZATION

AT-A-GLANCE

Chapter Outline	Key Terms	Key Players	Media Supplements
Socialization into Gender	<p>Gender Socialization: the ways in which society sets children on different courses in life because they are male or female.</p> <p>Gender Role: the behaviors and attitudes considered appropriate because one is male or female.</p> <p>Peer Group: a group of individuals of roughly the same age who are linked by a common interest.</p>	<p>Susan Goldberg and Michael Lewis: conducted research on how mothers condition gender roles in their children through supervision.</p>	<p>PowerPoint Presentation Chapter Three</p> <p>ABC Video for Sociology Race and Ethnic Relations Segment #5: Erasing Race</p> <p>ABC Video for Sociology Poverty and Stratification Segment #5 Living on the Street: Starring on Snowdays</p> <p>Test Bank: Chapter Three</p> <p>Content Select</p> <p>Web links</p>
Agents of Socialization	<p>Agents of Socialization: people or groups that affect our self-concept, attitudes, behaviors, or other orientations toward life.</p> <p>Manifest Function: the intended beneficial consequences of people's actions.</p> <p>Latent Function: unintended beneficial consequences of people's actions.</p> <p>Anticipatory Socialization: because one anticipates a future role, one learns parts of it now.</p>		

Chapter Three: Socialization

Lesson Summary

Socialization is not only critical internalizing social norms, to the development of the mind, but also to the development of emotions. Although there are some basic emotions that all people experience, all people do not express these emotions the same way or to the same extent. Different socialization experiences tied to regional, gender, and class differences, for example, may not only affect how people express their emotions, but also the particular emotions they may feel. Males and females *learn* what it means to be boys and girls and, later, men and women through gender socialization—the ways in which society sets children onto different courses in life *because* they are male or female. From the time of their birth, children are constantly presented with cultural messages that *teach* them how to *act* masculine or feminine based on their sex.

Human beings learn how to think, behave, and act through agents of socialization—those people or groups that influence our self-concept, attitudes, behaviors, or other orientations toward life. Major agents of socialization include the family, religion, daycare, school, peer groups, sports, and the workplace. When people move from one place, job, and/or life situation to another, they often have to undergo resocialization—the process of learning new norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss how socialization is not only critical to the internalization of cultural norms, the development of cognitive activity, but also to the development of emotions affecting not only how people express their emotions, but also what particular emotions they may feel.
- Know what is meant by gender socialization and how the family, media, and other agents of socialization *teach* children to act masculine or feminine based on their sex.
- Describe some of the “gender messages” in the family and mass media, and discuss how these messages may contribute to social inequality between men and women.
- List the major agents of socialization in American society, and talk about how each of these teach and influence people’s attitudes, behaviors, and other orientations toward life.

Lesson Outline

III. Socialization into Gender

- A. The ways in which society sets children onto different courses in life *because* they are male or female is *gender socialization*. Through gender socialization, men and women are socialized into gender roles—the behaviors and attitudes considered appropriate because one is female or male.
- B. Gender socialization begins with the family as parents consciously and unconsciously pass their own gender orientations onto their newborn children through the way they dress, play, and respond to them.
 - ✓ Psychologists Susan Goldberg and Michael Lewis studied the different ways that mothers treated their six-month-old infant daughters and sons. They observed that the mothers played with, touched, and spoke to their daughters more than their sons. They also observed that by the time the children were thirteen months old, the daughters stayed closer to their mothers during play, and returned to them sooner and more often than the sons. From their observations, Goldberg and Lewis concluded that mothers in our society unconsciously reward daughters for being passive and dependent while encouraging their sons to be active and independent.
 - ✓ Subsequent studies are inconsistent with Goldberg and Lewis’ findings. Some sociologists have shown that Goldberg and Lewis were merely observing innate differences. In experiments with monkeys, researchers found that male monkeys preferred cars and balls, which female monkeys rejected, while female monkeys preferred dolls and pots.

- C. The mass media (forms of communication directed to mass audiences) further teach and reinforce appropriate gender roles through advertising, television, movies, and video games.
- ✓ Advertising directed at children typically depicts boys as more dominant, active, and aggressive than girls.
 - ✓ In movies and on prime-time television, male characters outnumber female characters. Although sexual stereotyping along traditional lines of masculinity and femininity is still the norm, some female action characters such as “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” and “Xena the Warrior Princess” have been introduced, popularized, and embraced by television audiences in recent years.
 - ✓ Studies on video games suggest that their influence on players’ ideas about gender is unknown and that the average American spends 75 hours a year playing them. Even 4- to 6-year-olds play them an hour per day on average. More studies are needed to help determine how these games may or may not reinforce and/or challenge sexual stereotypes.
 - ✓ Studying a group of junior high school boys, sociologist Melissa Milkie found that the boys used media images to discover who they are as males. From watching movies and television, the boys “learned” that to be a male is to be obsessed with sex and violence.
 - ✓ Portrayal of women on televised sports tends to reinforce gender stereotypes since women athletes receive little coverage and, when they do, newscasters tend to emphasize breast, bras, and engage in locker-room humor turning women athletes into sexual objects.

IV. Agents of Socialization

- A. Human beings learn how to think, behave, and act through “agents of socialization”—those people or groups that influence our self-concept, attitudes, behaviors, or other orientations toward life. Major agents of socialization include the family, religion, day care, school, peer groups, sports, and the workplace.
- B. The first group to have a major impact on children is the family, which from early on provides them with their basic sense of self, initial motivations, values, and beliefs. Moreover, variation in family structure has significant impact on the socialization process.

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- ✓ Not all families socialize their children the same way. For example, as sociologist Melvin Kohn uncovered, social class affects the way parents rear their children.
 - ✓ Kohn found that the “type of work that parents did” was the critical variable. Parents in work settings that stressed conformity and closely supervised their workers tended to rear their children in the same way. Parents in work settings that valued independence and encouraged their workers to take initiative worked to develop these same qualities in their children. Middle-class parents socialized self-control into their children and were less likely to use physical punishment and more likely to reason with their children.
- C. Another important agent of socialization, the neighborhood, varies in terms of social class. Studies show that children from poor neighborhoods are more likely to get in trouble with the law, to become pregnant, to drop out of school, and to end up facing a disadvantaged life.
- D. Religion also plays a major role in the socialization of most Americans with 70 percent belonging to a local congregation and, during a typical week, 40 percent attending a religious service.
- E. With the increase in single-parent families and the increase in mothers and fathers both working outside of the home, daycare has become another significant agent of socialization.
- ✓ The research is mixed about the effects of daycare. Some findings show that the more hours per week children spend in day care, the weaker the bonds between mother and children and the greater the child’s behavioral problems. Other findings note that the more hours children spend in daycare, the higher they score on language tests, especially for children from low-income homes and/or dysfunctional families.
- F. One of the most influential agents of socialization in children’s lives is school.
- ✓ Schools serve many manifest functions (intended consequences) for society, including transmitting valuable knowledge and skills, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. At the same time, schools also have a number of latent functions (unintended consequences), such as showing children that when they are outside of their homes, they will not always be at the center of attention. Once in school, children are forced to learn universality—that the same rules apply to everyone. Sociologists have identified a “hidden curriculum” in schools—values that, though not explicitly taught, are part of the school’s “message.” This hidden curriculum may include transmitting values of patriotism, democracy, justice,

and honesty through school activities, assignments, and/or exercises. Conflict theorists argue that the hidden curriculum perpetuates social inequality by socializing children to accept their “proper” places in the workforce based on their social class standings.

- G. One of the most significant aspects of education is that it exposes children to peer groups—a group of individuals roughly the same age who are linked by common interests.
 - ✓ Research by Patricia and Peter Adler document how peer groups provide a setting for boys and girls to “practice” resisting the socializing influences of their parents and schools.
 - ✓ Peer groups significantly influence their members’ interests, tastes, attitudes, behaviors, and priorities. Although these influences extend through the entire life course, peer groups tend to have the most powerful impact on pre-teens and teens.
- H. Another powerful agent of socialization is sports, which teach not only physical skills, but also values.
 - ✓ Sports tend to reinforce gender socialization, with boys learning that masculinity is related to success in sports. This, in turn, makes them more successful with their peers.
 - ✓ With more women getting involved in organized sports, there needs to be more studies examining how sports affect the formation of female identities.
- I. The workplace is a major agent of socialization for adults, teaching not only a set of skills, but also a perspective on the world.
 - ✓ Often before taking a new job, people imagine what that job will be like. Through “anticipatory socialization,” they learn parts of their future role before actually entering that role.
 - ✓ The more one participates in a line of work, the more that work becomes a part of one’s self-concept. For many people their job is not only something they do, it is who they *are*.

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Key Terms in Chapter Three

agents of socialization: People or groups that affect our self-concept, attitudes, behaviors, or other orientations towards life. (p. 78)

anticipatory socialization: Because one anticipates a future role, one learns parts of it now. (p. 84)

gender role: The behaviors and attitudes considered appropriate because one is a female or male. (p. 77)

gender socialization: The ways in which society sets children onto different courses in life *because* they are male or female. (p. 75)

latent function: The unintended consequences of people's actions that help to keep a social system in equilibrium. (p. 81)

manifest function: The intended consequences of people's actions designed to help some part of a social system. (p. 81)

mass media: Forms of communication, such as radio, newspapers, and television that are directed to mass audiences. (p. 77)

peer group: A group of individuals of roughly the same age who are linked by common interest. (p. 77)

social inequality: A social condition in which privileges and obligations are given to some but denied to others. (p. 78)

socialization: The process by which people learn the characteristics of their group—the attitudes, values, and actions thought appropriate for them. (p. 68)

Key People in the Lesson

Patricia and Peter Adler: Patricia and Peter Adler documented how children use peer groups to separate themselves by sex and develop their own worlds with unique norms. (p. 83)

Paul Ekman: Studying emotions in several countries, Ekman concluded that everyone experiences six basic emotions—anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise—and that people, everywhere, display the same facial features to express these emotions. (p. 73)

Susan Goldberg and Michael Lewis: Observing the social interactions between mothers and their infant sons and daughters, Goldberg and Lewis showed how parents consciously and unconsciously pass their own gender orientations onto their infant children through the way they dress, play, and respond to them. (p. 75)

Melvin Kohn: Kohn uncovered the different ways that social class affects the way parents rear their children. He found that parents in work settings that stress obedience and conformity tend to rear their children the same way, while parents in work settings that value independence and initiative work to develop similar qualities in their children. (p. 80)

Michael Messner: Messner examined how sports reinforce gender socialization—teaching adolescent boys that masculinity is related to success in sports. This, in turn, makes boys more successful with their peers. (p. 84)

Melissa Milkie: Milkie studies how adolescent boys use media images to discover who they are as males—“learning” from what they watch in movies and on television that to be a male is to be obsessed with sex and violence. (p. 77)

Colin Turnbull: Turnbull asks if we are all becoming to extreme in our culture of individualism and are we becoming selfish at the expense of the family and society like the Ik. (p. 74)

Classroom Activities and Student Projects

- Ask your students to draw up a list of all the characteristics that they can think of that are traditionally associated with males or females in American society. Afterward, have them discuss and/or debate the following questions related to their list: At what age did you first start associating the different characteristics in your list with males and females, and which agents of socialization were and continue to be the most influential in getting you to view males and females this way?
- Have each student compose a diagram that features a circle in the center that represents him or her. Around the circle, have the student list the various social institutions that have had an impact on his or her development. List the institutions that have had the greatest impact on the student closest to the circle. Next, have students draw two arrows between the circles that represent them and the social institutions. One arrow will be pointed from the circle to the institution and the other from the institution to the circle. The thickness of the arrow will represent the degree of influence the person has had on the institution or the influence the institution has had on the person.

Service Learning Projects and Field Trips

- If your university has a day care center for the children of faculty, staff, and students, explore the possibility of students spending an hour or two at the center to observe the children. The students should take notes on how the children respond to gender socialization, the cues that are presented to them that suggest specified behavior based on gender, and other observations related to gender based behavior. Have the students take notes and report back to the class their observations.
- Have your class meet at the local mall for a field trip and—letting them roam around on their own or in small groups—ask them to identify as many examples as they can of gender stereotyping, gender socialization, and/or gender inequality in the mall setting. Have them carry around a small assignment pad and, as they move from store to store, discreetly write down all the examples they see. You can offer some suggestions to get them going. For example, they can find examples of gender stereotyping, gender socialization, and/or gender inequality in the advertisements, products, placing of items, pricing of items, customers, and even salespeople (for example, who gets to sell what, especially high commission items such as large appliances and electronics). After an hour of “searching,” have your students turn in their lists. If time permits, gather everyone together at the food court to discuss the experience over a snack.

Web Sites

Introduction to Puppy Socialization

<http://www.cyberpet.com/cyberdog/articles/behavior/pupsoci.htm#Top1>

This is an interesting site discussing dog training as a socialization process. From the information found in the site: How is animal training similar and different from human socialization?

Gender Advertisements in Magazines Aimed at African-Americans: A Comparison to Their Occurrence in Magazines Aimed at Caucasians

Http://www.findarticles.com/m2294/1_40/54250819/p1/article.jhtml

This article by Tara L. McLaughlin appeared in the January 1999 issues of *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*. It addresses magazine advertising as an agent of socialization.

For additional Web Links and World Wide Web Activities

Visit Allyn and Bacon’s Companion Website at

www.ablongman.com/henslin