

The nuts and bolts of socialization

Socialization is not as easy as it sounds, and to completely understand it is an on going process throughout life. There are a lot of different parts to socialization so we will try to cover them as brief as possible. The infamous psychologist Sigmund Freud stated that biology plays a significant part in human development. He believed that humans have two simple needs, and the first is the need to bond, and the second is the aggressive drive in which he coined as death instinct. Freud stated that these are two opposing forces that works in the unconscious level and causes some internal torment. The unconscious theory of psychology is both controversial and debatable because there is really no concrete proof that it exists. He also combined personality and the basic drives into three separate parts which are known as the id, ego, and superego. The id is an individual's basic drives in the unconscious mind, and it demands attention from people.

A popular example for this is why a young child demands a bundle of attention and materialistic objects. However, this is usually neutralized that's why one of the common words added to an individual's dictionary is no. To avoid being angry and unsatisfied a child most come to think consciously and with rational abilities. It will be illogical and impractical if a child could get everything they want and this is known as the ego stage. The last part is known as superego and this happens when an individual use cultural norms to help make decisions. This happens during the conscious stage as well, and an example is study hard to get good grades and get accepted into college. The id and the superego will always have a battle with each other, but with a socially adjusted individual the ego helps balance these two out. The superego is an important stage because if an individual don't have it then they will develop an attitude that center around themselves and would not be willing to make sacrifices in life. During his time, sex was a controversial topic and was not viewed as a basic drive for human beings. Now-a-days things have changed quite greatly but are still controversial because it shines women in a negative light.

Another psychologist that did great discoveries for the development of children around their environment is Jean Piaget. He was a Swiss psychologist that main concentration was in cognition or the mental processes of individuals. He put together four basic stages for cognitive maturing. The first stage was known as the sensorimotor stage. During this stage an individual experiences things solely through their senses such as smelling, tasting, and listening. The second stage is called the preoperational stage and occurs around age 2. This is the stage when a person starts talking and use signals such as the classic "good bye" wave. In this stage an individual still lacks abstract development. For example if you pull liquid into two separate containers and one is tall while the other is wide, then children in this stage will automatically assume that the taller glass contains more liquid even though it's the same amount of fluid in both containers. The third or concrete operational stage is which individuals can experience a more logical connection to their surroundings. An example is when an individual can note that a day can have one the more significance. If it's Sunday than not only do an individual go to church but they also have no school. The last stage is known as the formal operational stage and an individual has the ability to think very abstractly. They have a deeper understanding of things can solve some concrete math or logic problems. Even though Piaget based his theories on cognition he didn't really consider the effect that society would have on an individual developing stages, and some individuals don't go through all stages as a result of this. In some parts of the world especially in the very traditional cultures individuals don't go through all stages. However don't think that his only happens in the United States because it may surprise you that a large portion of Americans can't read or write.

A sociologist that built on Piaget's discoveries was named Lawrence Kohlberg. What he studied is individual's moral rationalizing capabilities or how they how they come to reason on what is right, and what is wrong. As young children we don't rely on our guilt feelings but more like what feels good to us. What feels good is usually associated with what is right, and this is known as the pre-conventional stage. In the next stage or conventional stage, which usually happens in the teen years, individuals usually will become less selfish and try to adjust to society's needs. In the final or post-conventional stage people look up and beyond their society's norms and ethics to help make their decisions. An example of this is debating the law because the average person will not question it, but some people may think that just because something is not against the law doesn't mean its right. Most individuals will not make it to this stage. However, there were some common errors in Kohlberg's study and this was a very common one.

There was a gender bias because all of his subjects were male and he generalized female morality based on males and you can see the obvious flaw here. Luckily, Carol Gilligan fixed this error and compared the moral development of boys and girls. What she concluded that men were more by the rules. If they hear that someone broke into a hospital and stole medicine then they will view it as wrong. However, a woman may look into it deeper and consider why an individual would break into a hospital and steal medicine and would be more sympathetic to those that steal for a meaningful purpose such as Robin Hood. Perhaps it was to save his sickly life when he didn't have the capital to pay for it.

About the Author

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