

Socialization as an inseparable part of modern world

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



In the last few decades, our society has adopted many social values, beliefs, and norms set the standard of living. This happens through the transmission of various group affiliations that inform our own personal relationship to one group of our choosing. This statement leads to the question of how a person becomes socialized in their life and is it done through our social institutions?

In order to address the issue of socialization, we must understand the individual behaviors that we as a nation exhibit through our constructed self.

Socialization has been studied by many theorists as an attempt to understand the ways in which we create and join social groups, however, the central concept behind the cultural groups is the development of 'self'.

Charles H. Cooley is one of many vital contributors to the development of the construction of "self". Cooley (2011: 87) says that "the looking-glass self proposes that, like a mirror, the self develops through a process of reflection." This implies that through interactions with others, humans set the foundation for our individual behaviors in our current society. For example, if a person observes the tales of the feral child (which is a young boy or girl that displays wild behavior- (Carl)). In this case, the effects of the outside world on a child would be necessary. This sounds harsh, but this has happened before. In Think Sociology, there is a story about a father that imprisoned his daughter in a dungeon for 24 years in 2008 (2011: 86). This created a stir in the U. S, because she had no communication with the other people. Her brain development was impaired by the lack of human interaction which aligns with Cooley's argument. Without constant human interactions, the primary social development is hindered.

One of the ways that interactions shape us is through primary interactions between parents and children. In the early years of child development, their first interaction is done through the act of primary socialization, which occurs during childhood. At this stage, the parents are the child's teachers. The parents pass down their individual values, rules, language, religious beliefs, and an unlimited list of social norms. However, the learning process is reciprocal since the child is also teaching them. For example, compare the socializing abilities of new parents versus experienced parents. My parents have five kids, which means they have learned how to deal with different personalities and outburst from each of us. New parents typically have little to no experience socializing children. John Carl argues that the process of socializing is reciprocal and we make as the "socializer" and at other times the "socialized" (2011: 85). This back and forth between the parent and child acting as the socialized and socializer continues to the secondary socialization. The secondary socialization process is the dynamic whereby socialization that continues throughout our lives (John Carl: 85).

As an individual continues to go through life they experience different milestones that help to make them unique. For example, when a student enters college they are presented with new challenges and experiences. Through the secondary socialization people will encounter new norms, values, and expectations from different people. The individual learns to accept and integrate them as they adjust themselves to a new environment. In a sense, the process of primary and secondary socialization helps to

influence the idea of definition of “ self” which is our own special talents that make us unique.

The concept of identity depends on the family and diverse social institutions (family, media, educational and religious systems, and media) to convey numerous values, beliefs, and norms that uphold the standard of living. How does one really distinguish what makes them who they are? Cooley reasons that this is done through our interactions, but in *The Power Elite Mills* (1956: 6) would argue that, “ The life-fate of the modern individual depends not only upon the family into which he was born or which he enters by marriage but increasingly upon the corporation in which he spends the most alert hours of his best years.” However, the overall answer to this question depends on how the world sees that individual in the end. In Michael A. Messner (1985: 127) study called *Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities*, he described the family as an emotional salience that pushes their young boys to participate in sports. This is further proven when you look at the life of an individual who participates in sports. Messner says that the young men described their sudden interest in sports as a “ natural instinct”, but their nothing natural about throwing a ball through a hoop or hitting it with a bat (Pp 123). The motivation behind young men wanting to play ball is a conception of masculinity. The social instructions that are apparent in the lives of young men is the organized sports institutions (gendered institution) and the family.

Similarly, class and racial dynamics help to facilitate the end result of what people become. Race affects the average person whether they see it or not.

The world is seen through a racial lens that paints our world in black, white, Asian, Mexican, minority, or “ other”. How we are seen and how we view others affects various domains of the human population. As Mary C. Waters states in her study titled *Optional Ethnicities: For Whites only?* “ the type of symbolic ethnicities that are described is based on white American European origins” (Pp 231). This means that people of African, Hispanic, Asian, and Indian American ancestry, have to always voice their different ethnic background while White Americans can live their lives without having to situate themselves based on their different racial heritages.

Similarly, one important implication to the topic of race is the idea of individuality. There is a tendency that most people use when viewing diversity in the different environments. Waters argues that, “ the symbolic ethnic [groups] tend to think that all groups are equal; everyone has background that is their right to celebrate and pass onto their children” (Pp 232). The conclusion that is taken from this text is that the people that share the same background have similar identities. However, this assumption as Waters states is wrong. “ It ignores the very big difference between individualistic symbolic ethnic identity and a socially enforced and imposed racially identity” (Pp 232). Assuming that the occupants of any social group is the same eliminates the positionality, that each individual has before the enter their primary group affiliation.

Equally important is the way in which class affects the way in which individuals construct themselves. As I have stated earlier the lens in which the world is viewed is through the color of our skin, class is essentially

viewed in the same fashion. Class performance has enabled people to acknowledge the rules that are set through their social interactions. In Julie Bettie's essay she examined how kids were initially separating themselves based on their race and class. The groups that mingled with each other were linked to their social roles and extracurricular activities. However, the class would sometimes engage in class "passing" or performing a different identity to fit into the higher crowd. The act of performing class should not be looked at as just an attempt to fit in, it should also be seen as a cultural identity that effects the social structure that caters to the big three. Actors and entertainers use their ability to switch from class to class to market off of the social capital that is associated with it. Class is an inequality that uses the appearance of a person's skin to justify what is pure and not.

The social construction of 'self' is continuously linked to the analysis done by Cooley who voices that our interactions make us who we are. Mills argues that statement in *The Power Elite* (1956: 6) when he states that "religious, educational and family intuitions are not autonomous centers of national power: on the contrary, these decentralized areas are increasingly shaped by the big three'). The world is run by the rich and powerful, and their performance of class and power unconsciously affect the middle and lower-class people. The very framework of modern day society is confined in the projects and decisions of the power elite. They occupy the command post of the social structure which gives them the reigns to continue the cycle of socialization.

The perspectives on life behaviors are a result of social biographies. Mills (1959) examines this idea beautifully in *Social Structure and Social Theory* when he states that, " Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both". Thus, our world view is dominated by the patterns that are tied to the social and culture biographies. The biographies that are followed by the public are framed by domain social structures that are imposing internalized beliefs and practices to regulate people on their individual experiences in life. The select few will choose not to conform to the false reality that most people into when dealing with the workings of the world. The symbolic interaction that the selected few choose to participate in add on to their already socialized behavior.

In conclusion, the views and or experiences from different backgrounds inevitable determine the way people become unique and socialized. Through the different stages, an individual will be influenced by active agents that help to enforce the social norms and or laws that are in place. The very essence of a person is cultivated by the power elite and larger social institutions that influence how the world works.