

SOC1101 Midterm 2 Review

Culture

- Culture includes: the knowledge, language, values, customs and material objects that are passed from person to person, and one generation to the next
- Culture Shock: personal disorientation that comes from encountering an unfamiliar way of life
- No specific culture trait is inherently “natural” to humanity, what is natural to our species is the capacity to create and learn cultural traits
- Symbols: Anything that meaningfully represents something else to others, ex: words, numbers, pictures, colours, gestures, facial expressions, etc.
- Language: Set of symbols that express ideas and enable people to think and communicate with one another
- The *Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis*: Language shapes how we think, perceive, and thus experience the world
 - We know the world only in terms of the language we speak
- Values: collective ideas about what is wrong and what is right, good or bad, and desirable or undesirable
 - Provide the criteria for evaluating people, objects and events
- Norms: established rules of behaviour or standards of conduct
 - May be formal or informal, consisting of folkways, mores, laws and taboos
- Material Objects: the tangible things made by members of society; the artifacts, tools, and technology we develop and use
 - We live in a world of things that people have made
 - Almost everything we do involves relations to the things we have made
 - Almost all our interactions with other people are mediated through objects of one kind or another
- Ethnocentrism: to be centered on its own people. From the latin *centrum* (center), and the greek *ethnos* (people)
 - Also known as cultural relativism

The Socialization Process

- Socialization: the lifelong process through which individuals acquire a self-identity and the physical, mental, and social skills needed for survival in society
- Functions of Socialization:
 - To ensure the survival and stability of society
 - To ensure the individual's survival and development; personality and sense of self
- As early as 3 or 4 months of age, infants have already acquired some of the behaviours that conform to their own culture
- Agents of Socialization: The persons, groups, or institutions that teach us what we need to know in order to participate in society
 - Family
 - School
 - Peer Group
 - Mass Media
- The family: the most basic Agent of Socialization
- The school:
 - Enlarging children's social world, introducing them to social diversity
 - Formal curriculum, hidden curriculum
 - Introduction to the impersonal functioning of large organizations

Social Structure

- Social Structure: stable pattern of social relationships that exist within a particular group or society
- Social Interaction: Process by which people act toward or respond to others
- Components of Social Structure:
 - Status
 - Roles
 - Groups
 - Social Institutions

- Status: A socially defined position in a group or society characterized by certain expectations, rights, and duties
 - Recognized social position
 - Guides our behaviour
 - Relational: defines who and what we are in relation to others
 - Collectively occupied
 - Not to be confused with *prestige*

- Role: A set of behavioural expectations associated with a given status
 - Note: we hold a status and perform a role

- Groups: People who regularly and consciously interact with one another