

Sociology assignment

Assess the extent to which socialization produces conformity in Society (25 Marks)

Sociologists regard the process of socialization is very important. They used the concepts of order, social control, conformity and deviance to examine the social life. Humans learn culture through the process of socialization whereby human will learn the norms and values of society. Different sociological perspectives have different views on socialization. Functionalists, Feminist and Marxist perspectives agreed that socialization produces conformity in society.

Functionalist like Kingsley Davis stated that agencies of socialization are needed to learn the norms and values of society. This statement was supported by an American social psychologist, G.H. Mead who acknowledged that the child learns his social identity through interacting with people, especially his family. For Mead, the self is divided into the 'I' and 'Me'. The 'Me' was the socialized self, but the 'I' was the unsocialised part which meant that humans has capacity for originality

The self develops after the child goes through 3 stages of development. Firstly, the preparatory stage . It is when the child imitates and observes the behavior of others. Secondly, the play stage. It is when children no longer simply learn by imitation, they begin to act out the roles. At the play stage, the child begins to play the role. For example, a 5 year old child playing a game in which he was a doctor. During the play stage , the 'Me' begins to develop, as children learn to evaluate themselves from the point of view of 'significant others' and lastly, is the game stage. It is when the eight year old begins to play organized games which often have rules. They begin to understand morality and internalize the concept such as fairness. When humans internalize cultural norms and values, they accept them as right for themselves and others. They do not look for rewards or punishments because conformity is internal.

Durkheim, who is a functionalist, agreed that human learn how to behave through socialization. It important for people to agree on the norms and values of society since it will encourage social solidarity and social integration. Lack of socialization will lead to deviant behaviour and without socialization there will be chaos and revolution in society.

Parsons has also put a lot of emphasis on social order and consensus being maintained through socialization. During socialization, individuals learn to desire what the culture of society provides and in doing so their personalities become structured by social rules they learn. The reason for social order is the consensus that is learned during

socialization. Shared norms and values provide the basis for social order. In Industrial society, agencies like police and the military would play an important role controlling behaviour.

Marxist analyse the agencies of socialization in capitalist society is not just family, but, mass media, school and political institution. The whole structuralist approach tend to see socialization as cultural programming. The functionalist see the process as positive, whereas, conflict theories like feminist and Marxist are negative because they see the whole process of socialization as an exercise in brainwashing that leaves mass of people in a state of 'false class consciousness'. Both approaches see human nature as passive receptive to cultural programming. They see socialization as a process of putting 'society in man'.

In contrast, the structuralist (Functionalist and Marxist) views were rejected by Interactionist and post modernist. They stated that socialization is not that powerful and human nature is not conformist. They are able to negotiate their social identity through the process of interaction. Humans learn the roles they play in society through interaction with individuals in society.

Howard Becker used the labeling theory to show how individuals can either accept or reject the negative labels given to them. For example, when a student is labeled by teachers as a lazy student. He can reject this label by studying harder and being attentive in class which in the end will change his teachers react towards him. If the individual do not reject the negative label, the label will become his 'master status' and consequently a self-fulfilling prophecy will take place whereby the negative prediction given to him become true. Therefore for the interactionist, it is not necessarily determine how an individual would behave since behaviour can change through interaction. In post modernist, consensus are no longer exist, cultural frameworks have fragmented and individual identifies are far more diverse.

For structuration, social order and social structure cannot exist independently at each other. People can only make choices within social framework. For example, laws. Laws constraint what people can do and cannot do. But can people can change laws to by making or replacing old laws with new laws. Like for example, cohabitation would have been regarded as highly deviant in western societies in the middle of 20th century but, today it is no longer regarded as deviant. In conclusion, Humans are not really control by society. Human has not much freedom.