

Exam II Study Guide

Sociology

I. The social construction of reality - Berger and Luckmann

A. Intersubjective agreement on expectations

- "We do not first see, then define, we define first, then see."
- This means social reality relies on us defining it first. The social world requires us to have labels in order to understand it. Ex: Susan Boyle
- "Everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by men and subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world... [an] intersubjective commonsense world is constructed."

B. The Thomas Theorem

- "Situations that are defined as real are real in their consequences."
- What we socially negotiate as reality becomes substantial, important, and meaningful. Ex: Professor in Morocco grossed out that vender went to clean his knife in a puddle - grew up in a society that teaches about germs
- Behavior does not depend on the objective existence of something but, rather, on our subjective interpretation, on our definition of reality.

II. Presentation of self in everyday life - Goffman

A. Dramaturgy - Social reality is based on performance. People "shape reality intentionally." Social interaction, is therefore acting. This perspective is called "dramaturgy."

B. Presentation of Self

- "Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories."

C. Sexuality as performance

- Indeed, who people are is based on their performance.
- "A "performance" is about making an impression on those present and notably about asserting (to oneself and to the other parties present) that we are who we pretend to be.
- Key concept if Goffman's dramaturgical analysis
- Important part is the "front" (person's expressions, attitudes, etc.)

D. Commercial realism

- One place that Goffman thought that we could see gender is in mainstream advertisements, where our culture demonstrates what is possible of gender. He called advertisements "commercial realism."
- Ex: "Dr. Pepper Ten, Not For Women," "Smell like a Man, Old Spice Man," Wonder Woman pose
- Sex - biological difference, gender - how our culture labels sex

E. Impression management in virtual worlds

- In order to become what they have to, and to be seen with dignity and in a good light, people idealize impressions in social situations. This is called impression management.
- Participants' efforts to control the impressions made during the course of interaction.

III. George Herbert Mead's theory of the self

- #### A. Taking the role of the other - the process through which we place our self in the position (or role) of another in order to see our own self.

- Mead argued that the self is fundamentally social in its origins and development. The self emerges and becomes established through our relationships and interactions with others. Through these interactions, we learn to take the role of others and see ourselves as social objects. This capacity is the essence of selfhood.
- The self is a product of social experience and develops only through interaction with others.
- Thus, society is IN THE PERSON.

IV. Cooley's "looking glass self"

- A. What we think of ourselves (self-image) depends on how we think other people see us-how else do you know who you are?
- B. "In general, then, most of our reflective consciousness, of our wide-awake state of mind, is social consciousness... self and society are twin-born, we know one as immediately as we know the other, and the notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion" Ex: Dove Beauty Sketches

H. Agents of Socialization

- A. Mass media - Images and ads saturate TV and the web. Socialize us into preferences and beliefs.
- B. Family (and family environment) - Before school, it teaches values, beliefs, etc. Ascribed characteristics such as race, ethnicity, social class, and gender. Commodities play a particularly important role for parents to show their children, other parents and their children's parents, that they care and the kids are cared for.
- C. Peer group - Members who have similar interests, social positions, and age. Supervision of adults is not present; social constraint comes in other forms from peers. Commodities play a particularly important role by providing an economy of dignity through which kids socially negotiate what commodities are important, and consequently provide them with visibility.

I. Gendered commodification of childhood