

Elements of Social Interaction: Role Theory & Conflict, Social Classes, Institutions and Networks

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Social Interaction is defined by Gettys and Dawson as a process by which human interpenetrate the minds of each other. According to Corkiness, social interaction is defined as a process that influences the overt state or behavior of individuals minds. Social interaction is usually described as an event that changes the attitude and the behavior of the interacting persons. It is a social relationship between at least two people, which affects and changes the societal conditions of people's lives. This social interaction is the soul of relationship and social life, which produces groups that are the foundation of societies.



Social Status

The prestige or the honor that is attached to someone's position in the society is referred to as social status. Which also may refer to a position or a rank that someone has in a group, such as a daughter or a son. Different ways may contribute to the determination of someone's social status. Achieved status refers to a social status that can be earned by someone's own achievements. In addition to that, there is ascribed status, which refers to the positions that someone inherits, for example, race, or sex.

Both types, achieved status and ascribed status, meld to define social status. For example, a baby who is born to a family with high socioeconomic status has that as an ascribed status; however, these factors that he will be raised around will help him get a better education and a better future, which eventually contributes to his **achieved status**.

Role Theory

The role theory studies human behavior and its expectations and argues that the behavior of humans is guided by expectations, which are held both by the individual himself and other community members.

Role Conflict

A conflict among or between the roles corresponding to more than one status fulfilled by an individual is referred to as role conflict. Usually, we experience this kind of role conflict when we find ourselves dragged into various and different directions, while we try to respond to the variety of statuses that we withhold.

The family/work conflict, or the conflict that someone feels when dragged between professional and familial responsibilities and obligations, is the most obvious example of role conflict. For example, a mother who works as a doctor will face this role conflict as she has to organize between her stressful job with long-working hours as well as night shifts and taking care of her children.

Culture

Culture is defined as the set of values, beliefs, symbols, religion, means of communication, logic, fashion, food, etiquette, art, and rituals that unite a particular society. Learned behaviors are considered the elements of culture; older people pass these behaviors and elements to their children as they grow up. The process of learning and passing culture from a generation to another is referred to as 'acculturation'.

Social Class

Societies are arranged in a way called social hierarchy, which means some people have more power while others have less. The main factor that corresponds to these social hierarchies, also called **social stratification**, is the socioeconomic status, or in other words the social capital or amount of material possessed by an individual.

In societies, people are differentiated based upon their power or wealth, which is described by social class.

Groups

A collection of people who identify as well as interact with each other is referred to as a social **group**. A social group is united, which means they share values, interests, backgrounds, language, family ties, or social roles.

One of the ways that people or individuals use to make assumptions about each other's identities is called group identification. The way groups operate is referred to as cognitive heuristics, which could be legitimate or illegitimate assumptions about an individual.

Social Institutions

Any mechanism or structure of cooperation and social order governing the behavior of a community and the individuals in that community is called an institution. An institution is identified with permanence and a social purpose, which transcends an individual's intention and lives by governing cooperative behavior via enforced rules. Institutions teach individuals in a community how to conform to their norms, or in other words, they act as socialization forces.

These institutions could be formal or informal. Institutions that have the intention of governing the behavior of humans are considered formal institutions, for example, the United States Congress. On the other hand, an institution that is not designed in order to regulate conduct is considered an informal institution. Institutions may also be abstract, for example, the institution of marriage.

Social Networks

The social structure that exists between organizations or individuals is referred to as a social network, which indicates the way that organizations and people are connected via different social familiarities. These social networks are composed of ties and nodes. An organization or a person who participates in a social network is called a node. The different and various types of connections between these nodes are called ties, which are assessed in terms of strength; as there are weak and strong ties. A strong tie is like family bonds; however, mere acquaintances are considered as weak ties.

The utility of social networks for their nodal participants is influenced by the size and shape of these social networks. Tighter, smaller networks that are composed of strong ties will have different behaviors when compared to looser, larger networks with weak ties. For example participants in a small network will be more likely to share information and values, which increases efficiency but decreases creativity; however, in a large loose network, nodes are more likely to introduce new opportunities and ideas to the members and participants of the social network.

Virtual Worlds

A simulated computer-based environment or an online community is referred to as a virtual world. In these virtual worlds, individuals create avatars, which are online representations, and these avatars can interact on the internet under the direction of the owner/creator of the avatar. Both reality and fantasy worlds may affect these virtual worlds and their rules, for example, topography, real-time actions, gravity, locomotion, and communication.

References

[Elements of Social Interaction](#) via courses.lumenlearning.com

[Social interaction, Definition, Elements, Types & Forms](#) via studylecturenates.com

[Essential Elements Of Social Process](#) via sociologydiscussion.com

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