Social Interaction

Chapter 4
(At least the last 7 pages of the chapter)
Social Interaction

- Social Interaction-

- …is the process in which people act toward or respond to others.
Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism-

…human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, by ascertaining the meaning of one another’s actions. (Stimulus and response in the case of human behavior.)
Symbolic Interactionism

- Herbert Blummer-
- ...we act towards things according to the meaning we give them
- ...meaning arises out of social interaction.
- ...in any situation, we go through an internal process of interpretation,(...), in order to assign meaning to the situation and decide how to act.
Ethnomethodology

- A term coined by Harold Garfinkel-
- ...an analysis of the rules (ethnomethods) people follow in everyday social interaction.
- Background assumptions - Deal with shared assumptions.
- ...behavior patterns that are so taken for granted that they are not noticed unless they are disrupted.
Ethnomethodology

- Breaching Experiments-
- ...behavior in which the researcher refuse to share the basic assumptions of the situation.
Dramaturgic Sociology

- Erving Goffman - Compares human interaction to the role of actors in a theater. (Shakespeare)
- Impression Management -
  - ...refers to the attempt to present ourselves to others so they will see us as we wish to be seen.
- Goal of Impression Management -
**Dramaturgic Approach**

- Backstage/Frontstage Behavior-
- Nonverbal Communication-
- ...is communication transmitted in symbols other than language.
Types of Nonverbal Communication

- Body Language-
- Facial expression- a rich source of nonverbal information because they reveal emotions so directly.
- Fear
- Happiness
- Surprise
- Anger
Types of Nonverbal Communication - Body Language Cont’d

- Gestures - movements of the body which vary from culture to culture.

- Posture - the way people hold themselves. (In addition to a person’s gait)
Types of Nonverbal Communication

- Personal Space - The area surrounding a person that is employed consciously or unconsciously to convey meaning.
- Intimate Distance - Contact to 18 inches
- Personal Distance - 18 inches to 4 feet
- Social Distance - 4 feet to 12 feet
- Public Distance - Beyond 12 feet
Social Structure

- Refers to the way the units of a group or society relate to one another.

- Characteristics:
  - ...remains stable despite changes in the population.
  - ...makes possible efficient human activity.
  - ...restricts personal freedom. (When excessive it may cause social change)
Units of Social Structure

- Status - a socially defined position in a group or society.

Types of Statuses:
- Achieved Status - is the status that an individual attains through direct effect.
- Ascribed Status - is the status that is assigned to a person according to standards beyond their control.
Units of Social Structure: Cont’d

- Master Status - is the status that dominates and determines an individual’s social position.
- ...usually occupationally defined.
Units of Social Structure: Cont’d

- Role - is the behavior expected of someone with a given status in a group or society. (You occupy a status, but you play a role.)

- Types of Roles:
  - Role Set -
  - ...is the set of roles associated with a given status.
Units of Social Structure
Types of Roles: Cont’d

- Role Expectation-
  - ...is society’s definition of the way a role ought to be played.

- Role Performance-
  - ...is the way the person actually plays the role.
Role Conflict - refers to the opposing demands made on a person by two or more roles expected of a person.

Role Strain - occurs when opposing demands are built into a single role.
Leadership Roles

- Instrumental Leadership- is directed toward having the group meet its goals.

- Expressive Leadership- seeks to create group unity and harmony. (Concerned with emotional and social issues.)
Leadership Styles

- Authoritarian Leadership - Characteristics:
  - Exhibits the highest degree of hostility.
  - Exhibits the highest degree of aggression.
  - Leaders are personal in their criticism.
  - Only one person determines group policy and assigns tasks.
Leadership Styles

- Democratic Leadership Style;
  Characteristics:
  - Policy and tasks are decided through group discussion.
  - Criticism is objective and fair.
Leadership Styles

- Laissez-Faire Leadership Style
  - Characteristics:
    - There is complete freedom of the membership.
    - There is little comment on member’s actions.
    - There is minimal involvement by the leadership.
Group Decision Making Process

- Risky Shift- Is a phenomenon in which groups make riskier decisions than people working alone.
- Groupthink- Occurs when the desire to be unanimous overrides critical thinking.
- Mind Guards- Are members who stamp out potential dissension and protects the consensus.
Forms of Social Interaction

Exchange Relationships

- George Homans- Exchange Theory
  ...self interest is the universal motive behind the way people behave toward one another.

- Exchange Relationships occur when a person acts in a certain way toward another to receive a reward or return.
Forms of Social Interaction

Cooperation

Cooperation - Is the interaction of people or groups in order to achieve common interests or goals.

Robert Nisbet - Types of cooperation:

- Spontaneous Cooperation - Is the oldest and most universal. (Mutual aid.)
- Traditional Cooperation - Cooperation that becomes fixed in a society’s customs.
Forms of Social Interaction

Cooperation Cont’d

- Directed Cooperation- Cooperation that is directed by a third party.

- Contractual Cooperation- Occurs when groups formally agree to cooperate in certain ways.
Forms of Social Interaction

Conflict Relationships

- Georg Simmel - Defined four major types of conflicts.
- War between groups.
- Conflict within groups.
- Litigation
- Clash over impersonal ideals.
Positive Results of Conflict

- Conflict can bind people on opposing sides into groups.
- Conflict can lead to needed social change.