A Theory for Educational Research: Socialisation Theory and Symbolic Interaction

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This article develops a theory of socialisation based on the Chicago School of symbolic interactionism but infused with new and important insights offered by contemporary scholars and their writings on roles and relationships in the twenty first century and life in the informational, network and global world. While still rooted in the seminal ideas of Mead and Blumer who originally formulated the key theoretical stance that lays behind symbolic interaction this article adds to and refines their important contributions. It thus offers an updated and contemporary version of interactionism and socialisation that may be utilized by those seeking a framework to understand important aspects of education. The article while drawing on the core contributions of Mead and Blumer notes how they wrote for different times and places. The article argues that what is now needed is to understand a new world with new roles, relationships, selves and identities.

Introduction

The origins of our actions can be found in our motives, personalities and characters (Smith, 1998). Socialisation theory can help us to understand individuals' perspectives. Socialisation refers to the process whereby individuals adopt the standards and values of society needed for successful social interaction (Maccoby, 2008). This article develops a theory of socialisation based on an eclectic form of symbolic interactionism. It focuses on the place of significant others, primary, secondary and occupational socialisation.

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Symbolic Interaction

One of the main approaches to the study of socialisation is the Chicago School of symbolic interactionism. This is only one form of symbolic interactionism, for interactionism contains a number of competing traditions (Denzin, 2011; Musolf, 2003; Reynolds and Herman, 2003). When studying social situations some interactionist scholars emphasise structures while others emphasise processes, others stress science but not scientism (Musolf, 2003). Chicago interactionists seek to understand human action and not to predict and control it (Musolf, 2003). This article incorporates conceptions of the self and identity in the network society (Castells, 1996 a and b, and 1997) to develop an eclectic form of interactionism. It is a new variant relying on some borrowed ideas, the elimination of others and the development of new insights (Hage and Powers, 1992).

There is a need for new theoretical stances that combine insights from different perspectives for studying the meso level of social organisation where persons are influenced by and in turn influence the character of the wider social order (Hage and Powers, 1992). It is timely for a synthesis between macro and micro social theory (Hage and Powers, 1992). An eclectic form of symbolic interactionism emphasises flexible social institutions, complex selves, and creative minds because macro structure and micro interaction come together at the level of social roles (Hage and Powers, 1992).

The Chicago School of symbolic interactionism was first developed by Herbert Blumer who stressed a humanistic approach to the study of behaviour. Symbolic interactionism rests on three main principles, namely: human beings act towards things according to the meanings that these have for them; the meaning of such things is derived from social interaction that one has with one's fellows; and lastly the meanings individuals attach to things are modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things she/he encounters (Blumer, 1969).

Symbolic interactionism contrasts markedly with theories that claim that human behaviour is determined by structural forces in society (Woods, 1992). Interactionism emphasises the person as a constructor and creator who continually interacts with the world being influenced by and influencing structures (Woods, 1992). The contemporary relevance of symbolic interaction is especially so because in post-industrial society the prerequisites for success at the micro level are so crucial (Hage and Powers, 1992).

Because of technological change social roles and selves are more complex with behaviours, duties and obligations less defined and more subject to the effect of human agency than previously (Hage and Powers, 1992). Because of continuous role definition, caused by technological change, symbolic interaction increases in importance in post-industrial society (Hage and Powers, 1992).

However increasingly people act collectively, rather than unilaterally and autonomously (Hage and Powers, 1992). Because societies are being disenfranchised by globalisation and informationalism and with the exception of a small elite, people face loss of control over their own lives (Castells, 1997). Dominant interests face resistance from less powerful groups as they challenge the alleged logic of the new world order (Castells, 1997).

The Self in the Network Society

Fundamental to understanding individual perspectives is an appreciation of the self in the network society. We live in an informational society (Castells, 1996a). This society is dependent on the ability to create, understand and use knowledge on a global level through a series of networks (Castells, 1996). These networks change the way individuals live for they are 'the most important organisational form in post-industrial society' (Hage and Powers, 1992: 183). Networks connect individuals and organisations (Hage and Powers, 1992). Functions and processes

are organised around networks which make up the new social morphology of our societies (Castells, 1996a).

Society centres on 'flows exchanged through networks of organisations and institutions' (Castells, 1996b: 29). Dominant interests help to determine life in these networks (Castells, 1996b). Various networks embrace all parts of society and areas of the world differentiating countries and people according to the objectives of each network and the special characteristics of people and countries (Castells, 1996b). Consequently the meaning for each location, group or person comes partly from 'the flows of the network' (Castells, 1996b: 30-31). There is a reaffirmation of basic identities arising from a 'fundamental opposition between the net and the self' (Castells, 1996b: 31). Thus individual perspectives can be seen in the context of their personal location and identity in wider networks.

While the post-industrial era has involved a large-scale 'transformation of institutional life' (Hage and Powers, 1992: 2) and while globalisation of the economy is important the post-industrial transformation of work roles and personal relationships are equally important (Hage and Powers, 1992). However, post-industrial society has not occurred everywhere, nor does everyone live a post-industrial life or have the values and abilities that are defined as post-industrial (Hage and Powers, 1992). Society is now 'information-al' because the social characteristics of information generation and processing extend beyond the initial impact of information technologies (Castells, 1996b). Knowledge and technology are now the chief social forces influencing society and this affects one-to-one personal relationships and the nature of the social self (Hage and Powers, 1992). The influence of knowledge and technology is most pervasive in the family and the workplace, the areas in which most social life happens (Hage and Powers, 1992). Symbolic interactionists stress interaction in the family and occupations in the formation of individual perspectives.

Mead in his seminal work Mind, Self and Society (1934) saw the self as socially constructed. It is not possible for a self to arise outside of social experience. One's experience of others is vital for all other experience, because the others fashion the forms whereby the world is experienced. In social situations people work out joint actions by aligning their acts to one another. This is achieved by each individual interpreting the acts of fellow societal members and then indicating to others how they should act (Blumer, 1969).

However Mead's analysis of the self failed to discuss the kinds of selves most suited for particular sorts of societies (Hage and Powers, 1992). In post-industrial life people need complex selves, must be comfortable maintaining multiple identities and be 'less responsive to the looking-glass of social pressure [which] Mead might have described ... as a movement away from me towards I' (Hage and Powers, 1992: 67). In post-industrial societies, different people are brought nearer to each other by globalisation, and interact with others who are very different from themselves (Hage and Powers, 1992).

Much of the literature on post-modernism and post-industrialism ignores what this huge change means for everyday life (Hage and Powers, 1992). Notions of the self are crucial in the informational age because our lives and the world we inhabit are being formed by the opposing influences of globalisation and identity (Castells, 1997). 'Identity is people's source of meaning and experience' (Castells, 1997: 6). Our names, our language, our culture depend on distinguishing between others and our self (Castells, 1997). This is because our construction of self-knowledge is partly derived from being known by others in certain ways (Castells, 1997). Consequently notions of globalisation and identity are useful in examining individual perspectives.

In a rapidly changing world the search for identity is the essential human concern and identity is becoming the principal if not the only source of social meaning (Castells, 1996a). Individuals now

derive their meaning less from their occupation and more from what they are or feel themselves to be (Castells, 1996a). However, individuals, groups, regions and even countries may be locked out of global networks if they are irrelevant to the needs of those same networks (Castells, 1996a). Thus there occurs a crucial division between identities which are based in history and those which are now based on some sort of universal instrumentalism (Castells, 1996a). Thus 'our societies are increasingly structured around a bipolar opposition between the Net and the Self' (Castells, 1996a: 3). Consequently social communication is under stress, if not broken down completely (Castells, 1996). This results in individual and group estrangement with identities becoming 'more specific and increasingly difficult to share' (Castells, 1996a: 3).

Individual perspectives are located within individual identities. However even in the network society individuals can take on the role of significant others. It is to these that the discussion now turns.

Significant Others

Symbolic interactionism stresses individual interactions with significance others as crucial in socialisation (Pavalko, 1971). The history of individuals can be seen as the history of their relationship with others (Berger and Berger, 1972). Individuals in post-industrial societies will however, be interacting with others who are very dissimilar to themselves because due to globalisation very different people are brought closer together (Hage and Powers, 1992).

Persons with whom one interacts do not necessarily have the same perspectives and individuals give greater consideration to the perspectives of certain others (Stryker, 1972). Significant others have special importance for given individuals (Stryker, 1972). There exist two classes of significant others. These are role-specific significant others and orientational significant others. Individuals have longer relationships with orientational others than

they have with role-specific significant others (Denzin, 1972). Orientational significant others refer to the others to whom the individual is most fully committed, who provide the general vocabulary, and continue to give the categories of self and other, and finally to others in communication with whom the self-conception is largely kept intact and/or changed (Kuhn, 1972). One's role-specific significant others may on occasions become one's orientational others (Denzin, 1972). Significant others can be sources of influence in the formation of individual perspectives. As significant others are especially important in primary socialisation we now turn to a discussion of this phase of socialisation.

Primary Socialisation

Individual perspectives are the result of socialisation in a variety of contexts. Thus it is necessary to examine an individual's primary and secondary socialisation. This is because secondary socialisation may have caused a shift in values, which were initially fostered by primary socialisation. A proper understanding of the self requires knowledge of its construction in history, its formative years, the influence of significant others, of key decisions, of critical incidents and the identification of reference groups (Woods, 1996).

Primary socialisation is the first process by which an individual becomes a member of society (Scollon, Scollon and Jones, 2011). Two major social institutions that shape people's lives are the family and work (Hage and Powers, 1992). Family relationships shape the self and frame symbolic interaction (Castells, 1996). While there is a basic similarity in both primary or childhood socialisation and secondary or adult socialisation concerned with learning the norms and role expectations from the group, there are some components of the process that vary. The essential difference is that in primary socialisation the child is 'a tabula rasa' (Pavalko, 1971). The role of the family is crucial because it

must prepare the child for life in the 'macro-society' through the teaching of roles, behaviours and norms.

In primary socialisation a child internalises the world of her/his significant others as the only world and not simply one of a number of possible worlds (Berger and Luckman, 1966). It is for this reason that the world of primary socialisation is especially embedded in consciousness compared to that encountered in secondary socialisation (Berger and Luckman, 1966). The child is socialised through a process of self-interaction (Blumer, 1969). He or she comes to grips with the world through a process of definition and this allows construction of actions (Blumer, 1969). Through making indications to the individual and by interpreting what is indicated, the child forges together a line of action. Out of this the child's self develops reflecting the attitudes first taken by significant others towards it (Berger and Luckman, 1966). The individual not only takes on the roles and attitudes of others, but at the same time also adopts their world. Consequently there exists the possibility that the origins of individual perspectives may be traced to childhood.

In the industrial age games were effective for socialising children because there were only a limited range of scenarios to be dealt with (Hage and Powers, 1992). However, individuals now need more inventive and modern methods to interact with others. (Hage and Powers, 1992). Mead failed to explain how variously structured societies socialise their children differently (Hage and Powers, 1992). How does socialisation for life in post-industrial society differ from that for industrial society and what is the best way to prepare for post-industrial life (Hage and Powers, 1992)?

Today many family forms exist and major changes in family roles have occurred (Hage and Powers, 1992). Post-industrial family life can involve: more co-operative parenting and more than biological parents; constant negotiations by a range of individuals; a greater range of accepted male and female types; both parents involved in paid employment; work flowing over into home life

(Hage and Powers, 1992). Advances in technology have allowed human reproduction to be removed 'from the social and personal functions of the family' (Castells, 1997: 241). Such developments alter basic social and biological relationships in human reproduction removing socialisation from parenting (Castells, 1997). Consequently because family and sexuality are basic determinants of the self, the disintegration of traditional family arrangements opens up the possibility of new types of selves - those that can respond to changes in society and engage in role-redefinition (Castells, 1997).

Primary socialisation is a process of self-discovery. Induction occurs into a particular world. Primary socialisation may be responsible for key facets of individuals' later perspectives. The child subsequently experiences secondary socialisation processes, which aim at maintaining the reality internalised in primary socialisation, besides furnishing further internalisations. It is to a discussion of this that we now turn.

Secondary Socialisation

Primary socialisation does not prepare individuals to cope with all future roles. Secondary socialisation is necessary to provide further knowledge, skills, and values to those already provided in primary socialisation (Appelrouth and Edles, 2011). It is through secondary socialisation that individual perspectives may form. Secondary socialisation initiates individuals into new domains (Berger and Luckman, 1966). It entails learning new roles and norms and forsaking old ones, or holding opposing values and occupying opposing roles (Nash and Calonica, 1996). Generally it is more voluntary than primary socialisation because usually the adult initiates the socialisation (Waksler, 1991).

Post-industrial society requires creative selves compared to those required in the industrial world (Hage and Powers, 1992). The majority of economic and social roles demand problem solving and creative work (Hage and Powers, 1992). Role scripts are no

longer of any use for individuals need to take part in fluid relationships and recast social roles (Hage and Powers, 1992). Technological advances mean that individuals must be able to improvise and negotiate roles and rather than learning rules 'the emphasis must be on transforming rules in order to individualise cases' (Hage and Powers, 1992: 69). Post-industrial selves must be able to envision unforeseen situations, to see how relationships and social institutions can be remade, to construct new symbols and to cross the gulf between what exists and what should exist (Hage and Powers, 1992).

In post-industrial society developing creative responses is often a collaborative activity with creativity an organisational or group attribute (Hage and Powers, 1992). Reference groups are groups of significant others. Judgements of status are reached with reference to some group or individual (Nash and Calonica, 1996). Thus a reference group is any group with which a person compares her/himself in reaching a conclusion as to her/his own status (Brent and Lewis, 2014). Because there are many facets of a person's status, more than a single reference group may be of relevance. Thus the term group need not simply refer to a face-to-face or primary group with which one has contact, or of which one has knowledge. It can also refer to a group of persons thought by the individual to be in some way important to a certain aspect of status (Pavalko, 1971). Reference groups can be found in diverse locations much more easily in postindustrial societies. Consequently when seeking to understand the origins and formation of individual perspectives the part played by reference group is of special importance. Reference groups can perform a normative or a comparative role or simply be a group individuals wish to gain acceptance by.

In secondary socialisation the individual does not simply internalise the values of his generalised other but from those available choses some as significant (Hargraves, 1975). These are then used as a frame of reference with whom he/she can compare her/himself (Shibutani, 1962). In secondary socialisation, the

individual enters new social and institutional settings, which may mean new reference groups but simultaneously the influence of generalised others from the past is retained. Participation may occur in certain reference groups outside the institutional settings which may have a direct influence on behaviour within those institutional settings (Hill and Howden, 1975). The person may be faced with inconsistent and conflicting definitions and this may mean a choice must be made between alternative ways of defining similar situations. Similarly a choice must be made between reference groups (Shibutani, 1962). Individuals tend to comply with the norms of the group that they find most attractive (Shibutani, 1962). This may mean becoming part of a subculture.

Secondary socialisation is a source of individual perspectives. Much secondary socialisation occurs within organisational settings with the individual frequently submitting to socialisation by the organisation in order to derive some benefit from it (Pavalko, 1971). We now turn to a discussion of both anticipatory and institutional socialisation.

Anticipatory and Institutional Socialisation

Individuals anticipate what it would be like to be members of a particular group and what it would be like to perform a role that they do not currently. They can be simultaneously both the socialiser and the socialisee, socialising themselves based on correct or incorrect notions and information (Pavalko, 1971). Anticipatory socialisation can help or hinder socialisation depending on the congruence between the norms and role expectations to which individuals have socialised themselves and those of the new situation (Pavalko, 1971). The quantity and type of anticipatory socialisation individual's experiences before entry into a new situation will also vary in terms of contact with that situation.

As mentioned earlier much secondary socialisation occurs within organisational settings and frequently sees the individual

submitting to socialisation by the organisation to gain something from it. This aspect will now be considered. The process of socialisation is increasingly a function of large-scale bureaucracies where new learning or relearning occurs (Wanberg, 2012). Perspectives can be the result of institutional socialisation. Power resides with the state and its institutions spreading 'throughout the entire society, from workplaces to hospitals, enclosing subjects in a tight framework of formal duties and informal aggressions' (Castells, 1996a:15). Institutions have encompassing tendencies, capturing some of the time and interests of their members and providing something of a world for them (Goffman, 1961). Over time, gradual changes may take place in the ideas one holds regarding one's self and significant others - role dispossession occurs (Goffman, 1961). For individuals being a member of an organisation or institution may have quite profound influences on their perspectives.

In total institutions all the members' activities are tightly scheduled and governed by a system of rules, and each member's activities form part of an overall plan supposedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution (Goffman, 1961). Singly the attributes of total institutions are located in places other than total institutions. (Goffman, 1961). The higher the degree of institutionalisation, the greater the likelihood that one's behaviour will be prespecified (Goslin, 1969). However, even in the most highly institutionalised situations, some bargaining is permitted in the performance of individual roles.

Power is no longer concentrated in institutions but is dispersed in global networks of wealth and information, but it still rules, dominates and shapes individuals (Castells, 1997). Power is now found in information codes and representational images by which societies' institutions are organised and by which people's lives are constructed and regulated (Castells, 1997). The site of power is now peoples' minds and it is here that is enacted a battle around the cultural codes of society (Castells, 1997).

Over time, pressures from institutions may cause individuals to adjust, that is institutional socialisation may occur. Change may occur for the majority of individuals in the institution. A sub-culture may arise as a result of pressures from the institution. This sub-culture may aid the members of the institution coming to grips with institutional pressures. This is the process of situational adjustment whereby individuals become the sort of person that the situation demands (Becker, 1964).

If the individual has no option but to adjust, the institution comes to hold a certain amount of power over the individual who may be forced to conform. While resistance of those being socialised to the socialiser's goals may occur conformity to the latter's goals is also achieved (Garnier, 1973). This occurs via a restriction of options to those which facilitates the transmission of essential norms.

External groups often seek to influence an organisation's policies and programs. These groups exert pressure on administrators because they have economic or other forms of investment in the organisation (Wheeler, 1966). Thus external groups can be important sources of influence on individual perspectives. Furthermore some organisations and institutions foster creativity more than others (Hage and Powers, 1992). Bureaucracies may foster group perspectives where individuals think and act similarly (Hage and Powers, 1992). Here creativity is diminished because roles are specified and tasks rigidly defined (Hage and Powers, 1992). In some organisations uni-dimensionality of self and clear location of one's self within a hierarchical system of domination are very apparent (Hage and Powers, 1992).

Institutions and their members may seek to alter a person's self. The person so targeted is not simply passive in the face of the socialising efforts of the institution. The key issue is that institutional socialisation can be seen as an important source of individual perspectives. As many institutions are connected with

the practice of certain occupations we now proceed to a discussion of occupational socialisation.

Occupational Socialization

The process of work is at the core of the social structure with work being the nucleus of many lives' (Castells, 1996a). 'The number of working hours and their distribution in the lifecycle and in the annual, monthly, and weekly cycles of people's lives, are a feature of how they feel, enjoy and suffer' (Castells, 1996a: 439). A distinctive feature of post-industrial life is that individuals in knowledge occupations must keep learning (Hage and Powers, 1992). Occupational identities are formed in formal training situations, and in the performance of the occupations (Pavalko, 1971). In accounting for individual perspectives the influence of occupations needs to be examined. We need to remember that in post-industrial societies:

People do not just have different kinds of jobs; they must have different minds in the most fundamental sense [for] the kinds of work one does fixes the mental framework on which the individual constructs, maintains, and reformulates his or her reading of and attitude towards the rest of the world (Hage and Powers 1992:65).

In post-industrial society people need inventive minds and complex selves because institutions, markets and roles, necessitate elaborate selves to operate (Hage and Powers, 1992). Post-industrial societies need enhanced interaction skills, better listening skills and more teamwork sensitivities – 'symbolic interaction is the key to success in a PI world' (Hage and Powers, 1992: 91).

In the informational society occupations change and a new labour force is needed with those who are unable to acquire informational skills being unemployed or being relegated to lesser positions in the occupational structure (Castells, 1996a). Work in the

informational society transforms other aspects of social life as well (Castells, 1996a) The effects of post-industrialism on work and careers include: a lessening of hierarchical distinctions and rule-bound behaviour; recruitment of creative individuals; the use of work teams; more mental than physical activity; work being defined in terms of gathering information, solving problems, producing creative solutions and flexibility; the displacement of unskilled and semiskilled occupations with more highly skilled and specialised ones; tight job descriptions disappearing as the optimum way to accomplish goals vary; the lack of fixed procedures causing diminution of job satisfaction and work related stress; an increase in the importance of research and development; the growth of automation; the spread of mass university education (Hage and Powers, 1992).

Information and knowledge are embedded in the culture of societies and consequently 'culture and symbol processing become productive forces in the new society' (Castells, 1996b: 16). Mental capacity is linked to education but 'it also depends on a variety of cultural and institutional conditions' (Castells, 1996b: 16). The capacity to produce new knowledge and to collect vital information is dependent on entry to the knowledge networks and in turn the power and influence of individuals and institutions depends on the ability to understand and utilise such knowledge (Castells, 1996b). However, there is no source of information that is autonomous because knowledge is also itself a flow and hence no research center or individual can survive in isolation (Castells (1996b).

The individual self is influenced by such flows and/or resistance to them rather than being structured on the basis of work (Castells, 1996b). Often local communities, in defence of the self, reject the logic of flows (Castells, 1996b). The remaking of the self to fulfil the demands of the informational society necessitates drawing together 'all the new codes and messages from the different networks relating to the various dimensions of people's lives' (Castells, 1996b: 34). Consequently the making and re-making of

'the self is tantamount to managing the changing set of flows and codes that people are confronted with in their daily experience' (Castells, 1996b: 34).

When one enters an occupation, socialisation does not cease but continues in a variety of contexts and through a variety of processes (Pavalko, 1971). A number of socialisation devices now regulate the individual's behaviour. To a certain extent the occupation becomes an important normative reference group whose norms, values and definitions of appropriate occupational conduct serve as guides by which the individual organises and performs his or her work (Pavalko, 1971).

Occupational socialisation commences in the training situation and continues in the occupational setting. Because of primary socialisation, occupational socialisation confronts an already formed self. In occupational socialising the occupation, and the institution may influence the person's self. In either case the person is not simply passive in the process. Work was for a long time a major source of individual identity. Given the fundamental place of identity in the network society we now turn to discuss notions of identity.

Post-Industrial Identity

Identity is 'the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is/are given priority over other sources of meaning' (Castells, 1997: 6). In post-industrial society individuals have complex selves which are composed of a number of different types of identities. The core self is now much more flexible and complex (Hage and Powers, 1992). Complex selves and identities can be based on a number of affiliations which include gender, family, religion, friendship, work, leisure, race, ethnicity and nationality (Hage and Powers, 1992). A complex self can have different identities at once (Hage and Powers, 1992). Post-industrial people devote greater effort to constructing the self as opposed to presenting it and they are no

longer as concerned with a single core self but take on more complex selves and identities simultaneously (Hage and Powers, 1992). Multiple identities for each person may cause stresses and problems (Castells, 1997). Identities while providing a sense of meaning for individuals become such only when and if individuals internalise them (Castells, 1997).

Rather than leading to the disappearance of regional loyalties modernisation appears to have led to a resurgence of such identities (Hage and Powers, 1992). Symbolic interaction and the relationship between individuals and the environment 'crystallise over history in specific territories, thus generating cultures and collective identities' Castells (1996a: 15). Thus individual perspectives can be linked to self and group identity.

In the last 25 years expressions of collective identity have attacked globalisation and cosmopolitanism to assert people's control over their own lives (Castells, 1997). Such expressions have included movements based on locality which have often used new media technologies to assist in their cause (Castells, 1997). In the network society meaning stems from a primary identity that frames the others and is also self-sustaining over time and space (Castells, 1997). There exist three forms and origins of identity building and these are: legitimising identity - fostered by powerful institutions to facilitate their control; resistance identity - results from the actions of individuals who challenge their subordinate position; and project identity - when individuals construct new identities to redefine their place in society and thus try to alter the prevailing social structure (Castells, 1997). Consequently perspectives may contain various forms of resistance and project identity, which challenge accepted and legitimate notions.

Resistance identity, which leads to the growth of particular communities, is possibly the most important type of identity formation in society today (Castells, 1997). This builds collective resistance on the basis of identities defined by history, geography and biology (Castells, 1997). The network society is marked by

'the reconstruction of defensive identities around communal principles' (Castells, 1997: 11). Individuals' basic and common desire to express and have recognised their own identity even in the current global and technological world is particularly important (Castells (1997).

Local environments do not of themselves cause specific behaviours or distinctive identities (Castells, 1997). What happens is that people gather in communities that gradually generate feelings of belonging and in instances cultural identity (Castells, 1997). For individuals the most basic source of self-identity is their locality (Castells, 1997). Consequently there results 'the paradox of increasingly local politics in a world structured by increasingly global processes' (Castells, 1997: 61). This is 'defensive identity, an identity of retrenchment of the unknown and uncontrollable' (Castells, 1997: 61). When the global world seems large and uncontrollable, when networks seemingly dissipate time and space, individuals attempt to reduce the world to manageable proportions by lodging themselves in their localities and recalling their history (Castells (1997). The issue here is to what extent individual perspectives are a retreat from the global world and part of a broader attempt by individuals to lodge themselves in their own locality.

Conclusion

In this article a theory of socialisation has been outlined. This framework rests on the Chicago School of symbolic interactionism but made contemporary with new insights and new understandings appropriate to a new and different world. Symbolic interaction rests on a number of premises. These include the fact that human beings act on the basis of meanings that they give to objects and events. Such meanings arise out of social interaction. Furthermore, these meanings are the result of individual's having an interpretive faculty. By taking the role of the other individuals work out the meanings and intentions of others. Using this reflexive self, individuals are able to modify or change their

definition of the situation, try out alternative courses of action and consider their possible consequences. Individuals work out their own acts by interpreting the acts of others. The eclectic from of symbolic interactionism outlined above stresses the need for more complex selves, creative minds and more flexible social institutions. Because of changes in society, roles and selves are now much more complex and more subject to human agency than previously. Because of the continuous nature of role definition caused by vast technological and social change symbolic interaction has increased in importance in the post-industrial and global society of the twenty first century. Symbolic interaction is crucial to survival and success in the post-industrial world.

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