

TYPES / STAGES OF SOCIALIZATION

Socialization is seen as a lifelong process, that is, it starts at birth and ends when a person dies. Besides the involvements of various agents during this process, different types of socialization can be identified and these help us to assess the contribution of these agents in the process.

Generally, there are five types of socialization: primary, secondary, developmental, anticipatory and resocialization.

1. Primary socialization

This type of socialization happens when a child learns the values, norms and behaviors that should be displayed in order to live accordingly to a specific culture. It refers to basic socialisation that takes place between the individual and a group of people with whom he/she has intimate contact. This is mostly prevalent during childhood and it is normally the family and peer group who are involved.

Example: A child hears his father talk bad words against an old lady. The child would think that this behavior is socially acceptable, so he would start talking bad words against older people.

2. Secondary socialization

This type of socialization occurs when a person learns an appropriate behavior to be displayed within a smaller group which is still part of a larger society. The changes within the values, attitudes and beliefs of an individual are seen to be less important than the changes made in him as he participates in the larger society. This occurs in usually more formal situations, which are not personal. Secondary socialization comes to take over when agents of primary socialization seem to decrease in their influence. Some major powerful agents of secondary socialization are the school, the mass media and the workplace. Sometimes this form of socialization is also referred to as **adult socialization**

Example: A College graduate chooses a career in Business Management after participating in a small group career seminar led by college business majors. New roles and position involve adaptation to them like for instance when one is getting married, having his/her first child, getting into a job for the first time and so on.

3. **Developmental socialization**

This type of socialization involves a learning process wherein the focus is on developing our social skills.

Example: A shy senior college student starts to teach English to new freshmen students in order to develop verbal communication.

4. **Anticipatory socialization**

This type of socialization refers to the process wherein a person practices or rehearses for future social relationships. When the individual anticipates some future roles and this occurs when, for instance, an individual visualizes himself/herself as being a parent before he/she actually becomes one or a child imitating the roles of her mother preparing the dinner or his father going to work while playing with his/her peers. Adolescence is also a period of anticipatory socialization since aspirants of a particular social role might begin to discern what it will be to occupy this position.

Example: A child anticipates parenthood as he observes his parents perform their daily roles.

5. **Resocialization**

This type of socialization involves rejecting previous behavior patterns and accepting new ones so the individual can shift from one part of his life to another. Re-socialization is said to be happening throughout human life cycle.

Some examples of resocialisation done at free will can be an alcoholic, drug addict or HIV/AIDS patient looking for help in a rehabilitation centre with his/her consent or own willingness. But resocialisation can become constraining when, for instance, an individual is contrived to certain settings that will eventually demand that he/she learn new ways of life. These are present in regimented and total institutions like prisons, asylums, psychiatric hospitals and the military services, where the objectives are to have a complete control over the individual. Resocialisation can also take place in certain religious sects or organization that brainwash their members so that the latter follow certain norms and beliefs.

Theories of Socialization

Development of self:

During the first months of life, the infant possesses little or no understanding of differences between human beings and material objects in the environment, and has no awareness of self. Children do not begin to use concepts like I, 'me' and 'you' until the age of about two or after. Only gradually do they then come to understand that others have distinct identities, consciousness and needs separate from their own.

The child learns to differentiate between various other people by names—Daddy, Mummy and Baby and he begins to use I which is a sign of definite self-consciousness—that he is becoming aware of himself as a distinct human being (Cooley, 1908). As time passes and social experiences accumulate, he forms an image of the kind of person he is—an image of self. This self develops gradually in the child.

A. Cooley's View

For Cooley, the self is essentially a social product and the structure and content of the self is derived from society represented by groups and institutions. These surround the individual through involvement and communication with him/her. Cooley used the metaphor of **Glass Looking** to explain how other influence the ways we see ourselves. For instance, gestures and reactions of others in respond to our behavior acts as a mirror in which we see ourselves. In other words, one comes to see others as a reflection of one's own psychological reflection just as the mirror is a reflection of one's physical body. This process is called **Self Realization**. In trying to understand the process of socialization through self-realization, Cooley divides the self into three major elements:

- Our imagination of how our physical appearance, friends, manners, goals are and their self presentation.
- Our perception of other people's judgments about us - e.g. values.
- Some sort of self feeling or reaction about those judgments such as pride or embarrassment.

According to Cooley, a person's self image and self esteem are directly related to the feedback received from others. In the first years of socialization, the main reference group is the primary group (parents) through imitation and rewards and punishment. As the person grows up, these are complemented by subsequent images through wider social interactions and by and by the imagination and self concept of the individual is built and organized. In conclusion, the looking-glass self means that we see ourselves and we respond to ourselves, not as we are and not as other think we are, but as we imagine others think we are.

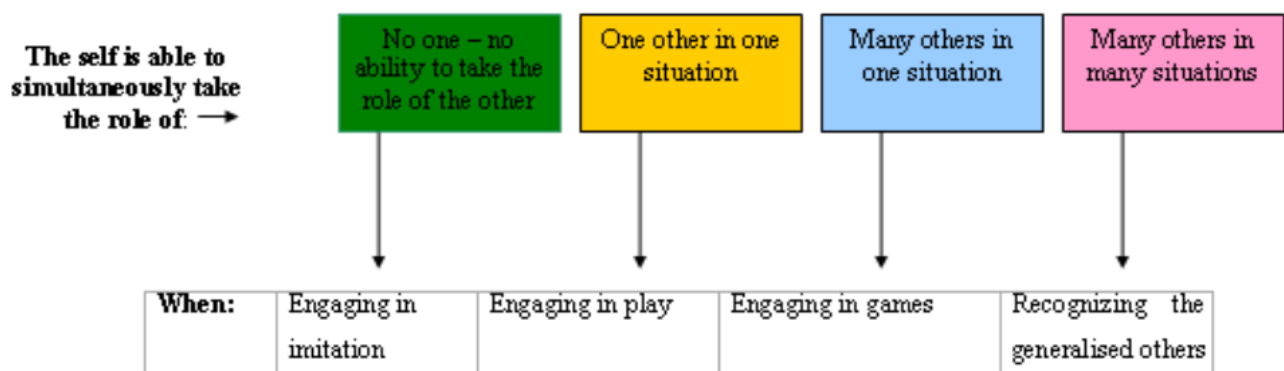
B. Mead's View on Socialization:

Theory of G.H. Mead (I and me):

American philosopher and social psychologist George Herbert Mead (1934) developed his ideas about the same time that Cooley did in the early years of the twentieth century.

Mead does not see the self as being a product of biology, that is being inborn, but results from an individual's social experiences and interactions, based on his/her self awareness, self image or personality which are rooted in the communication of symbols. By using symbols, people create and share meanings about their situations and are able to understand the actions of others by interpreting the meaning of their own actions. This unique ability of manipulating and using symbols, allows the human being to anticipate the reaction of others, imagining how the others see and respond to him/her or to a particular event. Mead's contribution to an understanding of the socialization process is more of a sociological analysis as compared to that of Freud and Piaget. He minimized the importance of biology in personality development and laid stress on social experience rather than maturation. His approach is often referred to as social behaviorism. For him the infant becomes a member of society, through the development of "the self".

- (1) The infant's development of the self occurs through his/her contact with his/her social environment.
- (2) The development of the self depends on the ability to use language. Language is a set of symbols. Symbols carry meanings.
- (3) To understand the meanings underlying symbols and to be able to react to other's actions, one should be able to take the role of the other. The child must be able to adopt the perspective of other people towards himself/herself.
- (4) As the child takes the role of the other, he/she becomes self-reflective; that is, the self is of a dual nature.



Source: Macionis 5th edition, 2000

The self is composed of a subjective side, what Mead calls the I. The I is the creative side of the self and reflects the child's intentions and motives. The other side of the self is of an objective nature, what Mead calls the ME. It is society's views that the child has internalized. The individual's action can hence be viewed as an interaction between the 'I' and the 'ME'. Hence, the key to developing the self is largely a matter of taking the role of the other with increasing sophistication. This is what is displayed in **Figure 3.1** in Macionis.

We can identify 4 stages in the development of the self:

- (1) Imitation: mimicking behavior without understanding.
- (2) Playstage: child begins role-playing. They often play 'house' (Mummy-Papa) or 'school' (Teacher- Student), enacting the role of mother, father, teacher, student or any other person important to them—significant others. The child takes one role at a time. For example, the child plays the role of the mother. However he/she cannot distinguish between his/her role as a child and the role of the mother at this stage. While playing the role of the mother, he/she believes that he/she is the mother. The roles the child plays are often modelled significantly after others, especially parents. By practicing the roles of others in play, children learn to understand what others expect of them, and they learn how to behave to meet those expectations. As a result of such play, the child becomes cognizant of himself and obtains a picture of himself by assuming the role of others.
- (3) Through further social experience, the child enters the game stage. Here the child is capable of taking a number of roles simultaneously in a particular situation. The child can understand things/events from various perspectives. To learn organized games, one must understand the rules of the play, notions of fairness and equal participation
- (4) Finally the child acquires widespread societal norms and values which enable him/her to act as any other individual in society. This generalized standpoint from which the child views himself/herself is called by Mead as the Generalized Other. This generalized other is an individual's total impression of the judgments and expectations that other persons have toward him. At this stage, the sense of the self in the full sense of term emerges.

Moreover, the theory of Mead does suggest the method of studying social interaction. It is through the development of a self that the individual becomes a member of society. The process of becoming a member of society does not depend on biological elements but rather on social experience.