

Socialization

Definition:

Socialization is the learning process wherein we develop our personality through adapting another person's culture. Human infants are born without any culture yet. When a baby is born, socialization takes place in order for him to have a culture based on what his parents and his environment would teach him. They must be transformed by their parents, teachers, and others into cultural and socially adept animals. The general process of acquiring culture is referred to as **socialization**.

During socialization, we learn the language of the culture we are born into as well as the roles we are to play in life. For instance, girls learn how to be daughters, sisters, friends, wives, and mothers. In addition, they learn about the occupational roles that their society has in store for them. We also learn and usually adopt our culture's norms through the socialization process. **Norms** are the conceptions of appropriate and expected behavior that are held by most members of the society. While socialization refers to the general process of acquiring culture, anthropologists use the term **enculturation** for the process of being socialized to a particular culture. You were enculturated to your specific culture by your parents and the other people who raised you.

Socialization is the process of knowing another person's culture and learning how to live within it. When we talk about culture, we are referring to the totality of moral norms, values, language, attitudes and other aspects comprising a society. All of us have roles to accomplish within our society, and socialization helps us to harbor knowledge and skills to satisfy these societal roles.

Process of Socialization and its importance

Socialization is an important part of the process of personality formation in every individual. It is true that genetics is the reason behind the structure of human personality, but socialization is the one that causes this personality to be molded to specific directions through the process of accepting or rejecting beliefs, attitudes and societal norms. Because of the dynamics in socialization, we tend to have different personalities although we are living in the same society. Early childhood is the period of the most intense and the most crucial socialization. It is then that we acquire language and learn the fundamentals of our culture. It is also when much of our personality takes shape. However, we continue to be socialized throughout our lives.

- For example, *the Yanomamo Indians living on the border area between Brazil and Venezuela tend to train the younger generation of boys to become aggressive and strong.*
- *On the other hand, the Semai tribe living on the central Malay Peninsula in Malaysia does not like violence and hostility. This is why the younger generation of boys is trained to become gentle and peace-loving.*
- *Likewise, Shiite Muslim men of Iran are expected at times to publicly express their religious faith through the emotionally powerful act of self-inflicted pain.*
- *We also have experiences that teach us lessons and potentially lead us to alter our expectations, beliefs, and personality. For instance, the experience of being raped is likely to cause a woman to be distrustful of others.*

- Three things are necessary in order for a person to fulfill the requirements of a given social position:

1. Knowledge of the relevant normative prescriptions
2. Ability to do the assigned task and
3. Motivation to perform according to the prescriptions

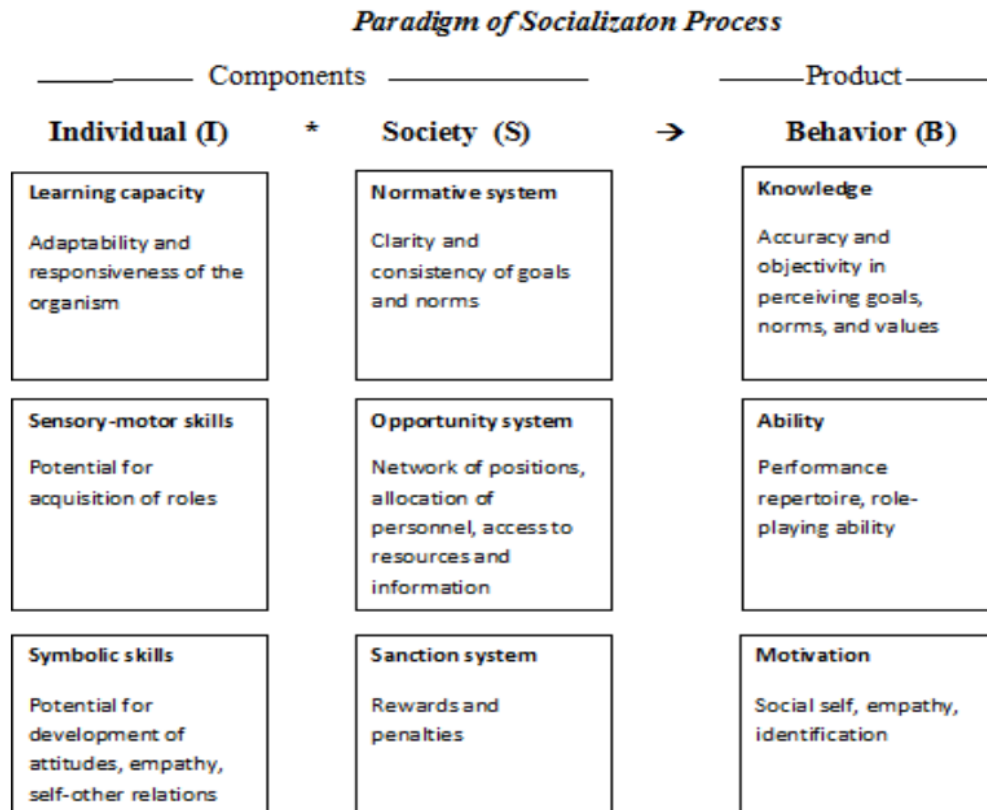
Thus the ultimate goal of socialization is to give an individual the knowledge, ability, and motivation needed for effective participation in the affairs of his society. This is ordinarily achieved by linking the individual with his society in a way as to provide the desired results.

The formula is $I \times S \rightarrow B$

I represents the Individual

S represents the Society

B represents the Behavior that results from the linkage between the individual and society



How children are socialized?

We see that different cultures use different techniques to socialize their children. There are two broad types of teaching methods--formal and informal. **Formal education** is what primarily happens in a classroom. It usually is structured, controlled, and directed primarily by adult teachers who are professional "knowers." In contrast, **informal education** can occur anywhere. It involves imitation of what others do and say as well as experimentation and repetitive practice of basic skills. This is what happens when children role-play adult interactions in their games.

Most of the crucial early socialization throughout the world is done informally under the supervision of women and girls. Initially, mothers and their female relatives are primarily responsible for socialization. Later, when children enter the lower school grades, they are usually under the control of women teachers. In North America and some other industrialized nations, baby-sitters are most often teenage girls who live in the neighborhood. In other societies, they are likely to be older sisters or grandmothers.

Examples: Case Study

During the early 1950's, John and Beatrice Whiting led an extensive field study of early socialization practices in six different societies. *They were the Gusii of Kenya, the Rajputs of India, the village of Taira on the island of Okinawa in Japan, the Tarong of the Philippines, the Mixteca Indians of central Mexico, and a New England community that was given the pseudonym Orchard town.* All of these societies shared in common the fact that they were relatively homogeneous culturally. Two general conclusions emerged from this study. First, socialization practices varied markedly from society to society. Second, the socialization practices were generally similar among people of the same society. This is not surprising since people from the same culture and community are likely to share core values and perceptions. In addition, we generally socialize our children in much the same way that our parents socialized us. The Whitings and their fellow researchers found that different methods were used to control children in these six societies. For instance, the Gusii primarily used fear and physical punishment. In contrast, the people of Taira used parental praise and the threat of withholding praise. The Tarong mainly relied on teasing and scaring.

FACTORS OF PROCESS OF SOCIALIZATION

Socialization as said above is the process of learning group norms, habits and ideals. There are four factors of this process of learning. These are imitation, suggestion, identification and language. A brief description of these four factors is necessary.

Imitation:

Imitation is copying by an individual of the actions of other Mead defines it as self-conscious assumption of another's acts or roles. Thus when the child attempts to walk impressively like his father swinging a stick and wearing spectacles he is imitating. Imitation may be conscious or unconscious, spontaneous or deliberate, perceptual or ideational, imitation. The person imitating performs exactly the same activity as the one being performed before him.

Imitation is the main factor in the process of socialization of the child. Through it he learns many social behavior patterns. The child is compared to adult possesses the greatest capacity for imitation. Language and pronunciation are acquired by the child only through imitation. It is because of the tendency to imitate that children are so susceptible to the influence of their parents and friends whose behavior they imitate indiscriminately.

Suggestion:

According to Mc. Dougall, suggestion is the process of communication resulting in the acceptance with connections of the communicated proposition in the absence of logically adequate grounds for its acceptance. Suggestion is the process of communicating information, which has no logical or self-evident basis. It is devoid of rational persuasion. It may be conveyed through language, pictures or some similar medium.

Suggestion influences not only behavior with others but also one's own private and individual behavior. In trade, industry, politics, education and every other field people acquainted with psychological facts make use of suggestions to have, their ideas and notions accepted by other people and to make the latter behave according to their wishes. Actually, propaganda and advertising are based on the fundamental psychological principles of suggestion.

The suggestibility of the child is greater than that of the adult because in childhood he is devoid of maturity and reason. The suggestibility of an individual decreases with an increase in his maturity and mental level. It may be however necessary to keep in mind that there can be a difference in the suggestibility of children belonging to different society and also the same society.

There are several external and internal conditions, which enhance suggestibility. Thus, temperament, intellectual ability, ignorance, inhibition, dissociation, emotional excitement and fatigue are some of the internal conditions of suggestibility. Among the external condition, mention may be made of group situation, prestige of the suggested and public opinion.

3. Identification:

In his early age, the child cannot make distinction between his organism and environment. Most of his actions are random. They are natural reaction of which he is not conscious. As he grows in

age, he comes to know of the nature of things, which satisfy his needs. Such things become the object of his identification. Thus, the toy with which he plays, the picture book, which he enjoys or looking and the mother who feeds him become the object of his identification. The speed and area of identification increases with the growth in age. Through identification he becomes sociable.

4. Language:

Language is the medium of social intercourse. It is the means of cultural transmission. At first the child utters some random syllables which have no meaning, but gradually he comes to learn his mother-tongue.