

in Fig. 1.8 on p. 13, and it is possible that norms, values, beliefs, language and customs can change over time.

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Socialisation

Socialisation is a developmental process whereby individuals learn and become aware of the patterns of behaviour expected by society. It is a dynamic process through which individuals become familiar with the norms and values of the culture and society. While the most intensive socialisation occurs in childhood and adolescence the process continues throughout life. Each time an individual encounters new experiences and social situations, he or she has to become familiar with another set of norms and learn the behaviour expected in that situation or social group. Each social group may have slightly different norms and to be accepted as a group member, it is necessary to conform to the group norms and behave accordingly. In so doing, the individual is undergoing a process of socialisation.

Although the individual has to learn some new patterns of behaviour in each new situation, it is often possible to transfer behaviour from one situation to another situation. Through socialisation an individual becomes socialised to know what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. Acceptable behaviour elicits positive sanctions while unacceptable behaviour elicits negative sanctions.

The child and adolescent are subject to many socialising influences other than the family, including the school, the peer group and the mass media. However, the family or primary caregivers are the child's first contact with the social world. Within the family situation, the role models for a child are usually the parents, and a child will usually internalise these role performances and regard them as normal even though they may vary from family to family. Language is learnt as a child imitates the language of those around him/her.

Socialisation may be understood to occur in three phrases:

Primary socialisation occurs in early childhood and mostly within the family, although children of working parents may be strongly influenced by other care givers in child care situations.

Secondary socialisation takes place in middle and late childhood and mainly occurs in schools which are social systems, reinforcing the socialisation carried out by the family.

Tertiary socialisation occurs mainly in adulthood and in circumstances in which individuals encounter new social situations; for example, workplace, clubs, voluntary associations etc.

Since individuals are born into different cultural and social communities they are socialised into different views of reality. What is regarded as normal in one society or sub-culture may be regarded as abnormal in another, although it is often difficult to determine what is normal and what is abnormal. Further, what is regarded by one society as inadequate socialisation or undersocialisation may not be regarded this way in another society.

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Social relationships and social interaction

Social relationships can only exist through interaction and this interaction is usually in terms of roles. Social relationships are sustained through roles; each person in the relationship has expectations of the roles and behaviour of others within the relationship. People interact with each other in terms of friendship roles, occupational roles, family roles, educational roles etc. Social relationships rely on interaction, and interaction over a time span tends to develop into a fairly stable and regular pattern.

The main forms of interaction within any group are co-operation, competition and conflict.¹ All social groups contain elements of these forms of interaction. However, for the relationship to survive, interaction patterns need to be predominantly co-operative, although degrees of competition and conflict will remain.

Conflict is a basic and recurring interaction that can occur between members of a group, between an individual and a group, and between groups. Conflict is a relationship in which the goals or purpose of an individual or group contradict, or are at odds with the goals and purposes of another individual or group.