

KAPITEL 12 / CHAPTER 12¹²

AGE PECULIARITIES OF PERSONALITY SOCIALIZATION

DOI: 10.30890/2709-2313.2023-16-04-002

Introduction.

The main parameters of a personality are not inborn but gained by an individual during his life. Socialization *is not a one-side process*. We study from our parents, peers. Under the influence of these people we form our intellectual, social and physical skills necessary for fulfilling our social roles. Our community somehow studies from us at the same time. People and institutions responsible for teaching cultural norms and mastering social roles are called agents of socialization. They can be divided into agents of primary and secondary socialization. Agents of primary socialization are parents, relatives, peers, teachers, doctors, leaders of youth groups. Agents of secondary socialization are representatives of school / university / enterprise administration, army, state, mass media.

A process of socialization is highly individual. Therefore, socialization of an individual is necessary and involves his individualization, moulding personal characteristics or traits. Socialization is an ever-lasting process. It covers all stages of person's life when he masters and uses cultural values. Quantitative accumulation of the gained values changes their quality in certain period which influences on a person's structure and focus. Depending on age of an individual there are 4 key stages of socialization:

1. Childhood socialization.
2. Adolescence socialization (unstable, interim).
3. Lasting conceptual socialization (transformation from adolescence to early adulthood for people aged from 17-18 to 23-25).
4. Adult socialization.

Each stage has its own "*critical period*". Critical period for childhood socialization covers first 2-3 years and beginning of schooling, adolescence socialization lasts during transformation from a child and teenager to a young man; lasting conceptual socializations takes place at the beginning of an independent life and transformation from a young man to adult. Adulthood socialization is aimed at

¹²Authors: Spytka Liana



behavioural changes in a new situation or circumstances. Socialization of an individual *in different age periods is characterized* by specific social and psychological peculiarities.

The aim of socialization in early age is to form child's motivation for affection to other people which is manifested with trust and desire to do something pleasant for them. Children age 3 to 7 are influenced by additional agents of socialization apart from parents. They include school and kindergarten teachers, doctors and nurses. At this period a number of agents of socialization increases and a program of their actions changes. A lot of focus is paid to mastering cognitive and thinking skills, a child learns to use words and letters, masters the system of rules and standards.

12.1. Key stages of personality socialization

Personality socialization starts from the first years of life and finishes in adulthood though it is clear that powers, rules and responsibilities mastered by him do not mean the process of socialization is fully completed: in some aspects it can be ever-lasting.

In accordance with Neil J. Smelser the action of three facts is needed for successful socialization: expectations, behaviour changes and desire to meet those expectations. In his opinion the process of moulding takes place at three different stages: 1) stage of imitating parents' behaviour by children; 2) game stage, when children realize behaviour as performing the role; 3) stage of group games where children learn to understand what they are expected for by the whole group of people.

French psychologist Jean Piaget keeping the idea of different stages of person's development emphasizes on development of individual's cognitive processes and their further reformation depending on his experience and social interaction. These *stages follow one another* in accordance with the specific sequence: sensory-motor stage (from birth to age 2), operational stage (age 2 to 7), concrete operational stage (age 7 to 11), and formal operational stage (age 12 to 15). A number of psychologists and sociologists highlight that a process of socialization is life-long and adulthood socialization is different from childhood socialization in some aspects. Adulthood socialization rather changes external behaviour while childhood socialization moulds value orientations. Socialization of adults is designed to help a person gain definite skills and socialization of children mainly deals with motivational behaviour.



12.2. Childhood

Socialization should begin in childhood as a personality is moulded at approximately 70% in this period of development. It can be late when irreversible processes start. Childhood lays the foundation for socialization and at the same time this period is the most vulnerable. Children isolated from a society fail socially though adults often seek solitude and self-isolation deliberately to dive into their thoughts and contemplation. It is often when adults get into isolation not deliberately and for a long period of time, they do not perish in spiritual and social context. Oppositely, overcoming difficulties they develop their personality, discover new sides of themselves.

Therefore, childhood and adulthood socializations are qualitatively different stages. Socialization is an accumulative process within which social skills are built up.

Children and adults have a lot of differences: height, physical straight, cognitive skills and ability to use them with benefit, attitude to danger and risk, interrelation between cognitive and emotional components, amount of gained knowledge, ability to study from their own mistakes and take decisions in difficult situations, aspiration to take additional responsibility.

However the most important thing which has not been mentioned is social roles fulfilment. Children are the only category of population which has no social statuses and roles if the status of “child”, “male/female”, “son/daughter”, “nephew / niece” and others are not considered. More over those statuses are not fully realized by them. As children are neither producers of material goods nor a category of economically dependent population, they are out of professional, economic and political statuses and roles. They are not aware of status nature elements – set of rules and responsibilities. They do not know responsibilities of an engineer, postman, parliamenteer or parishioner. They do not know what responsibility is. Children do not know what social norms are though they are told a lot about them by adults.

Theoretical and relative knowledge on social roles do not allow us to conclude that children master and accept them. They play roles but do not behave themselves in accordance with requirements of social roles. Children discover social representation of the world playing games: boys play war while girls play house. Adults never play roles except for gamification as an approach in studying business.

Therefore, two worlds – children and adults ones – are different from the socialization point of view. They are in different stages of this process. The main



difference is the degree of mastering social roles.

12.3. Adolescence

Adolescence completes an active period of socializations. The adolescents are considered to be teenagers age 13 to 19. Teenagers undergo important physiological changes (one of them is puberty) which results the following psychological changes: attraction to members of the opposite sex, aggression which is non-motivated in most cases, a tendency to take unreasonable risks and be not able to estimate the degree of its danger, an emphasized desire for independence and autonomy.

Psychophysiological changes cannot but affect the course and content of socialization. The tendency to innovation and creativity, non-recognition of any authorities, on the one hand, emphasized autonomy and independence – on the other, give rise to a special phenomenon called youth subculture. It is associated with three main negative traits, phenomena-symbols: drugs, sex and violence. Adolescence is called "difficult age", "turning point". Its content lies in changing behavioural characteristics: from almost complete obedience common for small children, adolescents move on to restrained obedience – hidden disobedience to parents. In the earlier age being children, they looked at the world through their parents' eyes, now they play a double game: adolescents have an equal system of values and world views, which partly intersects with both: position of parents and views of peers. This period is characterizes by completing personality fundamentals moulding, where their ideological (upper) views have been formed. Their self-awareness is followed by realizing their place in lives of parents, friends, surrounding society. At the same time, there is a constant search for moral guidelines associated with a re-evaluation of the meaning of life. Adolescents are more susceptible to others' negative evaluations, especially when it comes about clothing, appearance, behaviour, circle of acquaintances, that is, all that makes up their social environment and social self-symbolism. Hypertrophied independence is expressed in an emphasized harsh evaluation of their own: for many teenagers, "good" and "correct" things are only those they like.

Difficulties in socialization during this period are connected with the following circumstances:

- dis-match between high level of claims (desire to become a hero, to become



famous) and the low social status set by their age;

- discrepancy between old style of fatherhood, focused on the fact that son and daughter always remain a child for his/her mother, and new potential possibilities of teenagers, given by their psychophysiological maturity;

- contradiction between a sharp focus on independence and dependence, which has been intensified by attitudes and behaviour of peers.

Psychophysiological maturity does not change a lot in social and economic status of a teenager. Social statuses of parents and adolescents are incompatible as before: parents earn for a living, are morally and legally responsible for their children and inviolability of property, take part in social and industrial life.

Adults are owners, managers, guardians, manufacturers, legislators, consumers, defenders, etc. and teenagers are economically dependent, they still demand social protection and do not act as perpetrators. Their role range is extremely limited. They are not owners, managers, manufacturers, legislators. They are just consumers. Although in legal content they can make vital decisions, and they are ready for them in the psychological context. However they are limited by their parents and that is a contradiction.

In this regard, sociologists talk about the role disempowerment of teenagers which means a smaller amount of rights and obligations compared to adults. Having less possibilities, teenagers face such global ideological and moral problems that are solved in adulthood. Lack of life experience causes them to make much more mistakes than adults do. The lack of life experience causes them to make much more mistakes than adults do. And in this case quantity does not matter, but the seriousness of mistakes and their effects do: crime, drug use, alcoholism, sexual promiscuity, violence against a person. Many teenagers drop out of school which results a disturbed natural process of socialization. Lack of knowledge affects the economic situation immediately, adolescents and young men find themselves in a worse situation in the labour market. In developed countries, unemployment rate among 18-year-olds is 3 times higher than among adults.

Sociologists believe that sexual promiscuity, alcohol abuse and foolhardiness are nothing but an attempt to play the adult role. It is possible that the same reason pushes many teenagers on dropping out of school. The status of a student is considered as "not-an-adult". It does not contribute to achievement of success in life and recognition in a peer group. Teenagers are looking for recognition of their psychological adulthood outside of school and family which are the institutions where they are still considered



as children.

Therefore, we have considered difficulties of socialization in the period of adolescence and found that the main problem among teenagers is role conflict, or role disempowerment of adolescents.

12.4. Parenthood

The relationship between parents (mother and father) and their children is a decisive moment of socialization. They are manifested at the most crucial moment – when a person is the most susceptible to good and evil, when he is the most trusting and open to everything new, namely during childhood. The second feature is that this type of relationship is life-long and, therefore, has the most lasting impact. The third feature is that parent-child relations are the closest ones ever existed in a human society.

Many people are convinced that parental feelings are transmitted biologically and awaken with the birth of the firstborn child. Indeed, parental care is genetically programmed in all living things – from birds to mammals. However, for human beings, this is half true. Parenthood is primarily an attitude that is socially acquired. Practically, only humans have an opportunity to abandon a child or transfer custody to foster parents or give a child to state's custody. Only human beings have established special institutions for abandoned children and a system of sanctions through which parents are either punished for violations or encouraged for fulfilling parental relationships.

12.5. Adulthood

The role conflict (role disempowerment) is overcome in adulthood. Psychophysiological maturity coincides with social and economic one; aspirations, ambitions and hopes of adolescence receive satisfaction proportional to the effort expended and the knowledge acquired. Adulthood is characterized by heyday of a personality.

Adulthood as such is not an independent stage of socialization. This is a collective concept that covers several cycles of human life, separated by the most important events: mastering a profession, serving in the army, starting a work activity, or getting married, creating a family, giving birth to children.



The stage of adulthood may be delayed as a result of studying (university and post-graduate studying) up to age 21 to 23 or accelerated due to the early start of work. If a lower limit of maturity age is not defined, then its upper one is indicated by retirement. [1]

The sociological criterion for distinguishing between two periods – adolescence and adulthood – *is economic, social and political independence*. But what is considered as manifestation of such independence? In the old days, 20-year-old men took command of armies, and today they sit in lecture halls and are unable to feed their families. In extreme periods of history – during wars and revolutions – youth achieve social recognition faster; their social status grows due to increasing military importance of young men as a source of recruits. On the contrary, in a quiet period of history, the stage of independence is delayed. For such periods, sociologists have developed a set of criteria that a young person applying for adult status should meet:

- To be subsistent independently of anything external to himself;
- To manage money independently;
- To be independent in choosing a lifestyle;
- To live independently of parents.

In Spain, sociologists have found, for example, that only 20% of youth age 15 to 30 meet four criteria given and therefore have the right to be called adults.

Along with all above mentioned, sociologists use some other characteristics, in particular, a) accountability to the law; b) voting in elections; c) marriage. From the point of view of socialization, only marriage serves as a significant criterion for adulthood. The family is the only agent of socialization that has an impact throughout the life. However, the role and status of each family member changes at different stages of a family cycle. A child is an object of socialization and one of the goals of the parents' life, an adult is both a subject (regarding children) and an object (regarding another person) of socialization at the same time. He ceases to serve as a purpose of life, becoming its means. Elderly family members can only serve as subjects, but most often they are excluded by their adult children from an active process of socialization and raising grandchildren. Husband and wife act as agents of socialization for each other.

The fact is that family socialization for adults takes place differently comparing to children. Maturity of a young man, having created his own family, goes into a new qualitative state – from objects of raising they become its subjects. And at first, there is a painful process of mastering a new social role: newlyweds address to their parents,



friends, colleagues for any little thing concerning raising a child and arranging life – how to swaddle and feed a new-born, how to fix a water tap and pay utility bills. This is a process of mastering a new social role. At the same time, people influence each other, deciding on distribution of rights and responsibilities, leadership in the family, attitude to a new family and friends. There are no subjects and objects as socialization occurs on a partnership basis, since a wife changing her behaviour helps her partner to change his.

Adulthood is the most active period of socialization, because at this very period of life mastering social roles happens not in a game but in a real situation. For the first time, the scope of rights and responsibilities, needs and means to satisfy them have been levelled.

12.6. Old Age

The specific age, including the elderly, determines ability or disability to fulfil social roles and perform activities. With retirement, the active period of socialization finishes and the need of elders in the family decreases. An elderly person ceases to perform the most important function – to be a producer of material values. From a manufacturer, he turns into a consumer, and thereby into a dependent. Although an old person is often as defenceless, weak and helpless as a child, but unlike children, an older person is not someone's purpose of life. Parents are looking for emotional satisfaction in communication with children. It can be compared to their elderly parents where communication is only a duty in most cases.

At the same time, the transformation from adulthood to old age reveals new social opportunities and roles. Older people act as partners or competitors being opponents of other age groups in the labour market, in the system of socialization and education, in housekeeping and in interpersonal communication. However their role is minimal in all these areas: the elderly are fired from work among the first ones and hired among the latter ones; they are left with the simplest functions (sweep the floor, go shopping) on housekeeping, and young people make decisions on their own not involving elderly family members; the elderly are out of effective education and socialization in a modern society because their knowledge in comparison with young people's becomes obsolete quickly, and their views and manners are recognized as archaic.

The transition from the phase of adulthood to the phase of old age concerns



changes in a labour status, content of work, motivation and attitude to life, as well as attitude to work as a source of income and material satisfaction, working capacity, social circle and self-esteem. A huge amount of free time, retirement from a working place and emergence of new roles make an elderly person to re-go through the adaptation process, although the aging of a human body depletes reserves for re-adaptation. As a result, there is a feeling of uncertainty about the future and livelihood. Feeling of oneself in the position of a social dependent is often expressed in a sense of social humiliation.

Experts have found *a pattern*: the ability to adapt to social changes decreases as a person gets older. The older the person, the more he is dissatisfied with different aspects of life. Psychologists note: the old people become more grumbling, irritable and sadder. But another thing is also known: a person cherishes life more and appreciates every extra day when getting older. [2]

Termination of work and retirement lead to negative consequences: material dependence on relatives, a decrease in authority and prestige, a sense of isolation, fear of loneliness. Lifestyle and leisure become passive, sedentary and monotonous (sitting on a bench near the house or in the square, shortened walks, reading newspapers and watching TV shows more than ever before).

Feelings of futility and the old age to come arise because *elderly people have no life plans anymore* which is common for other age groups. A life plan is an idealized picture of the future life, the basis of which is the intended trajectory of a social career and amount of possible achievements. At a young age, life plans take the form of unclear dreams and desires, in adulthood – it is a clearly developed career, and in the old age people lose them as such.

Due to life plans, socialization turns from a spontaneous and uncontrolled process into a purposeful strategy of behaviour. An adult checks all he has really achieved with his goal and makes necessary corrections. However an elderly person can no longer do this as he does not have any time and energy. Life plans give a direction to a person in a special way: they contribute to motivation of achievement. However elderly people have neither one thing nor the other. Therefore, they are dominated by passive forms of activity and spontaneous adaptation to new social roles.



Conclusions.

Thus, socialization is a *process of moulding personality*, his gradual assimilation of society requirements, acquiring significant characteristics of consciousness and behaviour that regulate his relationship with the society. S. Freud identified psychological mechanisms of socialization: imitation, identification, feelings of shame and guilt. Many psychologists and sociologists emphasize that a process of socialization is life-long, and claim that socialization of adults differs from socialization of children in several points. Adulthood socialization rather changes external behaviour while childhood socialization moulds value orientations. Socialization of adults is designed to help a person gain definite skills and socialization of children mainly deals with motivational behaviour. Therefore, socialization is an accumulative process within which social skills are built up.