

Socialisation concepts

This information is adapted from:

Aspin, L.J. (2001) *Focus on Australian Society* (2nd ed.) South Melbourne, VIC: Pearson Education.

Norms

Norms are standards or rules of behaviour; expected ways of behaving in certain social situations and within groups in society. Societies, families, schools, peer groups and social groups all have specific norms to which individuals are expected to conform. Norms are regarded by many theorists as necessary for the maintenance of an integrated and stable society.

Norms may be formal or informal. Norms which are formal are those which are written down; rules which apply to the whole of society and referred to as laws. Norms which are informal are unwritten rules and are regarded more as expectations rather than as rules.

Sanctions

Sanctions are rewards or punishments that an individual may receive when he or she observes or rejects the norms of the group. A positive sanction is a reward or approval for appropriate behaviour; a negative sanction involves disapproval or punishment for inappropriate behaviour.

Internalisation

The process of internalisation starts with learning what the norms are, and then the individual goes through a process of understanding why they are of value or why they make sense, until finally they accept the norm as their own viewpoint (Scott, 1971). Sanctions will encourage the internalisation of particular norms. As a result of internalisation, norms seem 'natural' and 'normal'.

Role and status

Role and status are terms which may be used as separate but related concepts. Role can be defined as the duties, obligations and rights associated with a position. Status can be used to refer to the prestige or esteem an individual receives in society as a result of his/her position.

Status and thus role may be **ascribed** or **achieved**.

Status is **ascribed** when an individual acquires it by birth or inheritance and masters the role afterwards. Examples:

Status is **achieved** when the position requires the individual to have special skills, abilities and experience obtained through his or her own efforts. Examples:

Agents

Socialisation occurs through interaction with the following agents: family, school, peer group and media.