

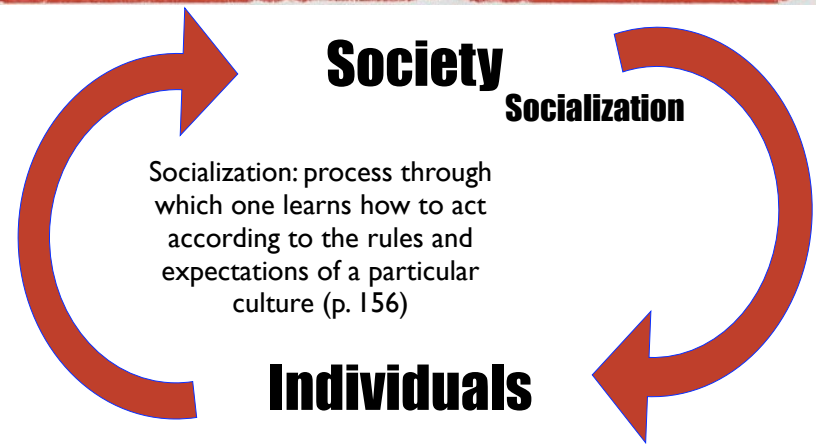
SOCIALIZATION

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www.public.iastate.edu/~soc.134

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INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY



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SOCIALIZATION BY VIOLENT TELEVISION

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THREE PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIALIZATION

- Structural-functionalism: socialization perpetuates society by making needs of individuals match needs of society
- Conflict perspective: socialization reproduces inequality
 - “Haves” & “have-nots” are socialized differently
 - “Haves” control agents of socialization
- Symbolic interactionism: socialization involves learning shared meanings that make social action possible
 - Role-taking: ability to see oneself from the perspective of others and to use that perspective in formulating one’s own behavior (p. 130)
 - Generalized other: Perspective of the larger society and its constituent values (p. 131)
 - Looking-glass self: sense of who we are that is defined by incorporating the reflected appraisals of others (p. 156)
 - Howard Becker’s “Becoming a Marihuana User”

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BECOMING A MARIHUANA USER

- Classic study of socialization, published in 1953 (*American Journal of Sociology*)
- Research method: participant observation, 50 interviews
- Premise: Any behavior (e.g., marihuana use for pleasure) requires acquiring meanings through social experiences
- Three stages in developing meaning of marihuana for pleasure



Howard S. Becker, c. 1950 (above)
and today (below)



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STAGE ONE

- Learning to smoke drug so that it will have a real effect

I was smoking like I did an ordinary cigarette. He said, "No, don't do it like that." He said, "Suck it you know, draw in and hold it in your lungs till you... for a period of time."

I said, "Is there any limit of time to hold it?"

He said, "No, just till you feel that you want to let it out, let it out." So I did that three or four times.

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STAGE TWO

- Learning to recognize the effects and connect them to drug use

They were just laughing the hell out of me because like I was eating so much.... Sometimes I'd be looking at them, you know, wondering why they're laughing, you know, not knowing what I was doing. ... I come back, "Hey, man, what's happening?" Like, you know, like I'd ask, "What's happening?" and all of a sudden I feel weird, you know. "Man, you're on you know. You're on pot." I said, "No, am I?" Like I don't know what's happening.

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STAGE THREE

- Learning to enjoy the sensations that are perceived

Well, they get pretty high sometimes. The average person isn't ready for that, and it is a little frightening to them sometimes... and they don't know what's happening to them.... You have to like reassure them, explain to them that they're not really flipping or anything, that they're gonna be all right. You have to just talk them out of being afraid.... And come on with your own story, you know: "The same thing happened to me. You'll get to like that after awhile." Keep coming on like that; pretty soon you talk them out of being scared.

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IMPLICATIONS OF BECKER'S STUDY

- Agents of drug socialization matter
 - Drug effects vary from culture to culture
- Treatment involves changing drug meanings
 - Resocialization: process of learning new values, norms, and expectations when an adult leaves an old role and enters a new one (p. 132)
 - Total institution: place where individuals are cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period and where together they lead an enclosed, formally administered life (p. 143)