Part 2: Theoretical Background and Further Information

Socialization is a process and result of teaching individuals the system of values and norms, patterns of behaviour applied in a particular community as well as definite skills. It prepares one to enter the world of social institutions and takes place through influence of social environment, people and education institutions.

Regulatory and group mechanisms affect adopting sex roles and their internalization.

Conditioning: reinforcing boys' behaviours that are in accordance with cultural gender patterns and not reinforcing behaviours that are not (e.g. disapproval of a crying boy). Learning gender roles through observation:

1. adults' behaviour (mum is cooking and cleaning, dad is repairing the car, watching the match);
2. the observed adult person may become a model (a boy-child refuses to help in the kitchen, because dad does not do it) and the child may identify himself with him and adopt emotional states and qualities of the model.

Learning through language:

1. when a child receives a direct verbal message how to behave according to its sex;
2. through verbal and written messages (literature, handbooks) boys acquire knowledge on the current system of gender roles;
3. the structure and lexis of the language convey information on gender and gender roles.

Learning through acting as a result of doing tasks assigned by adults. This way boys consolidate certain behavioural habits and have an opportunity to practise gender roles (boys do DIY with their fathers).

Comparative reference makes adopting gender roles easier when boys compare their own feelings and personality traits with group standards referring to sex and age and also compare themselves to their peers of the same sex and the opposite sex trying to become similar or different from the other one in order to earn approval of the group.

Group pressure:

1. on a micro social scale through the system of reward and punishment parents or peer group exert pressure on boys to behave according to sex patterns. Fear of being rejected, losing love or aggression makes them lean towards conformism (laughing at a mummy's boy in a peer group);
2. on macro social scale through a system of social control which has formal and informal sanctions at its disposal for behaviours which are not in accordance with sex standards in a given community (wearing make-up or women's or girls' clothes by boys).

Group culture (roles, norms, life patterns) determines behaviour norms and lifestyles in which individuals may function depending on their sex so that they can deserve social acceptance. People who depart from generally accepted customs or playing roles according to common patterns meet with social disapproval.

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