Culture and socialization

[Society](#)

Socialization can be defined as the process by which people learn to become members of a society (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 58). Thus, the socialization process of an individual starts from birth and continues throughout life. The period of socialization helps an individual to develop feelings, perceptions, learn the basics of social interaction and also learn to recognize and respond socially to parents and other important people in their lives (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 58).

According to Tepperman and Curtis (2011), " Socialization is accomplished by many different variables; including ethnicity, familystructure, gender, environment, and birth order" (p. 58). Socialization perpetuatescultureso therefore individuals are affected by socialization and culture in one way or the other. By definition, culture is a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization, or group (MacNeill, 2012). It is the key to understanding how we relate to each other.

There are different types of culture around the world, for example, American culture, Chinese culture, and African culture. Tepperman and Curtis (2011) noted that " Culture is different between places and at different times" (p. 32). Culture consists of a set of principles and traditions which is passed on from one generation to another. Socialization teaches cultural values and norms which provides the guidelines for our everyday life. It is therefore inevitable that socialization influences what we do as humans.

This paper will argue that the effects of the principal agents of socialization have led to the continuity of culture. This paper will then discuss some of the attributes of the cultural realms that are connected with the process of socialization. Finally, the essay will conclude with a discussion on the effects

of socialization outcomes. The process of socialization starts within the context of the family. The family is considered to be the most impressive agent of socialization because it provides the context in which the first and most long-lasting intimate social relationships are formed.

Tepperman and Curtis (2011), explains that " In families, children learn how to relate to other people, express intimacy, and resolve conflict "(p. 62). In order to accomplish this, parents internalize social norms and values in their children to behave in socially appropriate ways (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 62). Furthermore, the family is the child's window to the world. A child's experience of the world would be framed by his or her family's social class, religion, ethnicity and so on (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 62).

That is to say, a child who does not start the process of socialization within the family context is likely to lack a sense of self-control and other basic social skills which are learned from the family. In addition, the family plays a primarily important role in shaping the child's attitude and behaviour. Tepperman and Curtis (2011), noted that " Successful socialization of children involves not only bringing about their outward conformity to parental directives, but also enabling them to become self-regulating, and motivating them so that they become willing to cooperate with parental socialization" (p. 62).

The social interaction that takes place within the family contest is a major contributory factor to the continuity of culture. The mass media is another principal agent which has been accorded a place of importance in the explanation of socialization. The mass media constitute a key realm of cultural production and distribution. The mass media including magazines,

internet, newspapers, radio, television and all means ofcommunicationwhich are directed towards a vast audience in society are deemed to be influential agents of socialization.

According to Tepperman and Curtis (2011), the media are " Instrumental in transmitting and reinforcing certain values, social behaviors, and definitions of social reality" (p. 64). The media also contribute to racial and sexual stereotypes – stereotyped portrayal of men and women, racial or ethnic minorities, homosexual men or women, older people, or those with varying abilities shape viewer understanding and socializations (Tepperman $ Curtis, 2011, p. 64). Thus, the mass media is assumed to be significant, with powerful, long lasting consequences. Today there are more televisions and fewer people per household.

In other words, more people are watching television alone (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p68). Children spend a great deal of time surfing the internet and watching television. Most of the time, these children are unattended or unsupervised because so many parents are in the labour force spending long hours to provide for their families.

As a result of the increasing use of the internet and other sources of entertainment or information such as television, children are more liable to imitate what they see on the television or the internet. There has been a long standing concern that focuses onviolenceand pornography in digital media; 20 years ago it was televisions particularlymusicvideos; but movies, comics and magazines have all been considered potentially dangerous sources of influence, especially for young people (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p65).

The mass media is a central cultural concern because of the nature of the content that it brings to the vast majority of people (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 45). Through the production and the distribution of information to a wider audience, the mass media serves as a means by which cultural and social continuity is attained.

As children move throughchildhood, there are many environmental influences on their socialization to adult roles. Children gradually move beyond their experience of the family – as they become involved in groups in the neighborhood, other families, peers, play groups and so on (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 64). Peer groups have gained increasing recognition as an important socializing agent for children (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 68). The peer group usually involves children within a given peer group are the same age and come from the same social status.

According to Tepperman and Curtis (2011), playgroup provides " Important opportunities for children to learn to relate to others and increase their social skill" (p. 68). This is achieved by children interacting with their peers in playgroups to develop a frame of reference not based on adult authority (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 68). This is the time children are able to learn among their peers and function independently without supervision from an adult. The peer group exerts great influence especially in the adolescence. Tepperman and Curtis (2011) " depicts adolescent as a period of testing limits" (p. 68).

In 2008, Sara, Shmuel and Zinaida concluded that " Adolescents prefer alternative and independent ways, especially with peers, over activities that are organized for them by adults" (p. 373) The school is an important

institution which provides an environment for the transmission of social values through teaching and learning. Tepperman and Curtis (2011), argues that the " School is probably the most important locus of childhood and adolescent socialization because it is central to a young person's social life and acts as a filter for future occupation choice" (p. 70).

In school, children learn discipline, social interaction and other basic skills that are deemed to be appropriate by society. The school also provides a platform for children to mingle, play and interact with peers. Through this, they learn to understand themselves and others. Sara et al. (2008) concluded that the school enables them to socialize outside the family, to establish independence from adults, to practice the skills required for entering conventional adult roles, to develop their future adult identities, to express their own interests, and to build their own cultures with their peer groups" (p. 373).

In the process of socialization, beliefs and values are passed on to children through language practices. Communication is the sharing of meaning by which the thoughts of one person are made understandable to another (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 44). Tepperman and Curtis (2011), defines language as a " System of words both written and spoken for the purpose of communication" (p. 44). Socialization is realized to a great extent through the use of language, the primary symbolic medium through which cultural knowledge is communicated and instantiated, reproduced and transformed.

During this process, individuals learn the language of the culture they are born into as well as the roles to play in life. In addition, the mass media is also one of the most important attributes of the cultural realms that play a

variety of social roles in the socialization process. Through distribution and production, the mass media transmit messages to a mass audience. They are the means by which we find out about important political, economic, and social happenings.

We rely on them for the information we need to understand our local, regional, national, and global contexts (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p. 46). Through the mass media, individuals can learn the cultural practices of other countries or culture. For example, through the mass media, people can watch the Chinese New Year celebrations without going to China, the Caribbean Calypso Carnival without going to Jamaica or the Olympics games without visiting the host nation.

The principal agents of socialization are the most important contributory factors to ensuring the continuity of cultural attainment. The family, mass media, school and the peer group have been accorded a place of importance in the explanation of socialization. It is important to note, however, that there are also certain attributes of the cultural realm that are connected with the process of socialization. These attributes of the cultural realm includes language, mass media and so on. Thus, there is a circular relationship between culture and socialization.