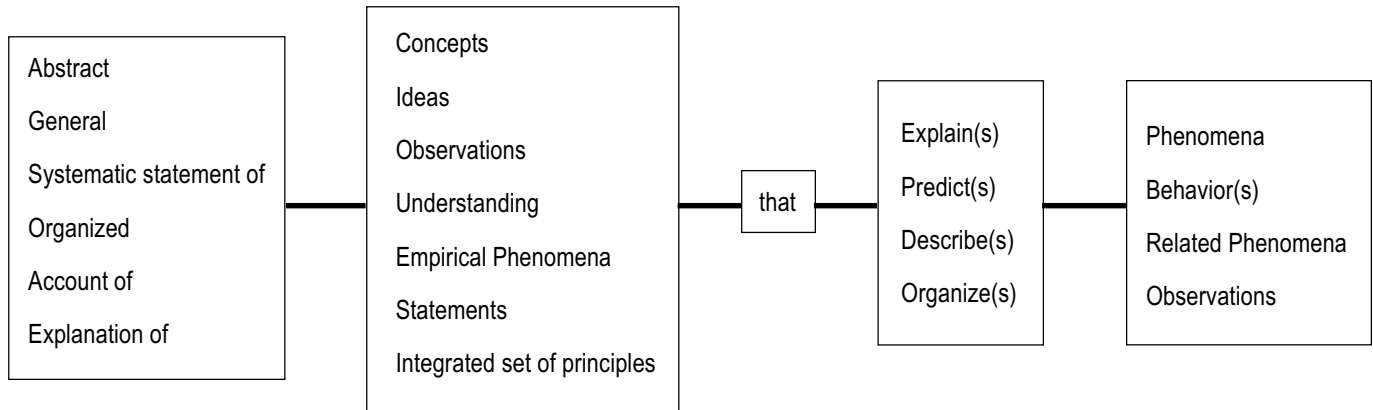


Notes on Group Socialization Theory

Notes on this side by Mary Bold. Reverse side is work of GS theory author J. R. Harris.

Theory:



Premise of GS theory:

The group is the natural environment of the child and the group is (usually) a same-sex, same-age group of peers. What a child carries into adulthood (what shapes adult personality beyond genetic predispositions) is primarily the set of influences that the child experiences in childhood and adolescent peer groups.

GS author:

Judith Rich Harris; M.S. in psychology; textbook author; no university affiliation;
Psychological Review article in 1995; *The Nurture Assumption* book in 1998.

GS theory posits four influences on personality development:

Direct genetic effects — Example: aggressiveness, disagreeableness

Indirect genetic effects — Example: pretty child receives more attention than plain child

Childhood peer group — Most influential: elementary school years

Parent-peer-group influence on the childhood-peer-group — Individual parent of little importance

GS on family influence:

Influence is limited to concerns (like religion) that are not addressed by the child's peer group.

Animations illustrating several tenets of the theory are available online at www.boldproductions.com

(click on "Animations from the N&N textROM"). Warning: the animations may take a long time to load.

The Assumptions of Group Socialization Theory

Component	Assumption
Context-specific socialization and personality development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children learn separately how to behave at home and how to behave outside the home. 2. Personality consists of an innate core plus acquired, context-specific behavioral systems. 3. As children get older, the outside-the-home behavioral system takes precedence over the inside-the-home system and eventually becomes part of the adult personality.
Sources of outside-the-home socialization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primates are predisposed, for evolutionary reasons, to affiliate with and adapt to a group. 2. Humans have the ability to identify with more than one group; the group identification that is salient at any given moment depends on social context. 3. The group that children identify with when they are outside the home is the peer group—a group of others who share socially relevant characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and (in adolescence) abilities and interests. 4. Identification with a group entails taking on the group's attitudes and norms of behavior. This is a within-group process that results in assimilation—the group members become more alike.
Transmission of culture via group processes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents do not transmit their culture directly to their children. Culture is transmitted from the parents' peer group (and from other cultural sources) to the children's peer group. 2. Children transfer behavior learned at home to the peer group only if it is shared by, and approved by, the majority of members of the peer group. Children who come from atypical homes do not transfer their atypical home behaviors to the peer group. 3. Children's peer groups create their own culture by selecting and rejecting various aspects of the adult culture and by making cultural innovations of their own. During childhood, children move through a series of these child-created cultures.
Between-group processes that widen differences between groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In-group favoritism and out-group hostility derive from adaptive mechanisms acquired through evolution and found in humans and other primates. 2. In humans, in-group favoritism and out-group hostility produce group contrast effects, which widen differences between groups or create differences if there were none to begin with.
Within-group processes that widen differences among individuals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Status hierarchies within the group—differences in dominance or social power—exist in all primate groups. Differences in status tend to persist and, in humans, may have lasting effects on personality. 2. Social comparisons within the peer group give children information about their own strengths and weaknesses and result in typecasting of individuals by other members of the group.
Assimilation and differentiation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within-group assimilation and between-group contrast are most likely to occur when group identity is salient. Group identity is most salient when other groups are present. 2. Within-group assimilation and within-group differentiation are not mutually exclusive. Children can become more similar to their peers in some ways (socialization) and, over the same period of time, less similar in other ways.