

**MILITARY SOCIALIZATION: THE FORMATION OF THE PERSONALITY AND
IDENTITY OF A SERVICEMAN**

Mirzakhammadova Odina Mirzokhid kizi
3rd-year student, Department of Sociology,

Faculty of History, Fergana State University

Abstract: This article is devoted to analyzing the essence of the military socialization process and the formation of the personality and identity of a serviceman. It examines, from a sociological perspective, how mechanisms of socialization within the military environment—such as discipline, collectivity, obedience to orders, patriarchal values, and patriotism—affect individual development. The paper also analyzes the psychological adaptation, role acquisition, and identity formation that occur during military service. The study substantiates methods of integrating individuals into society through military institutions based on empirical data.

Keywords: military socialization, personal identity, military environment, sociological adaptation, personality development, civil and military role, social institution, obedience to command, discipline, social role.

The position of the individual in society, their process of self-awareness, and the formation of their social role occur under the influence of various institutions. From this point of view, military service is one of the most powerful social institutions in which a person undergoes not only physical but also social and psychological transformation.

Military socialization is the process of an individual's adaptation to the military environment and understanding themselves as a member of the military collective. It signifies the reshaping of one's personal identity and the adoption of a new social role.

Within the framework of military socialization, the individual adopts a unique role compared to other social roles in society, through adherence to strict discipline, collective values, obedience to orders, fulfillment of duties, and submission to hierarchical structures. This article analyzes this complex and multifaceted process in depth.

Socialization is the process by which an individual adapts to society, internalizes its norms and values, and understands and fulfills their social role. Military socialization, as a special type of socialization, has distinct characteristics: it involves strict discipline, a vertical structure, a system of orders and commands, collectivism, and hierarchical management.

Socialization within the military environment significantly impacts an individual's internal psychological state. During this process, a civilian rapidly reshapes their previous identity and transforms into a military individual who operates collectively rather than individually.

Identity is the answer to the question, “Who am I?” In military service, identity transformation occurs in two stages:

1. **Stressful Phase:** The civilian suddenly encounters military rules, experiences a restriction of autonomy, and is burdened with new social roles. During this phase, signs of resistance, depression, and a sense of identity loss are common.
2. **Adaptive Phase:** The individual gradually adapts to military discipline and begins to see themselves as a “soldier.” Their identity is reshaped according to new norms.

During this process, the “civilian” identity is replaced by the “service member” identity. Military uniform, jargon, group behavior, marching, and routines—all serve as instruments for shaping personal identity along military lines.

Key mechanisms in military socialization include:

- **Discipline and Obedience:** Fundamental principles of military life that train individuals in submission and control.
- **Collectivism:** In the military, the group’s interests take precedence over individual actions, requiring the surrender of self-governance.
- **Rituals and Symbols:** Ceremonies, uniforms, medals, and other attributes reinforce military identity.
- **Formal and Informal Hierarchies:** Alongside official military ranks, informal reputation also determines one’s place in the social structure.

Through these mechanisms, a serviceman’s personality is continually aligned and reinforced according to social norms.

Military service can positively influence personality development in several ways:

- Develops discipline, responsibility, and resilience.
- Strengthens physical and psychological stability.
- Enhances patriotism and civic duty.
- Fosters leadership and teamwork skills.

However, in some cases, the process can lead to negative outcomes:

- Restriction of personal freedom can lead to depressive states.
- Excessive submission and external control may reduce personal initiative.
- Psychological pressures within the military environment (e.g., hazing, lack of respectful communication) can negatively affect mental well-being.

Therefore, psychological preparation, a thoughtful approach, and consideration of individual

potential are crucial in the military socialization process.

In Uzbekistan, although military service primarily involves men, recent years have seen increasing female participation in the military. Gender factors create noticeable differences in the socialization process. For instance, while military identity among men is often associated with strength, discipline, and bravery, among women, it often serves as a means of social advancement.

There are also differences in the levels of socialization and identity formation between urban and rural youth, and between conscripts with higher education and those with only secondary education. Sociological studies show that individuals with greater cultural capital adapt more quickly to military service and more actively internalize social roles.

Those who complete military service often attempt to integrate their previously formed military identity with other social roles in civilian life. This process is known as **re-socialization**. In some cases, this occurs smoothly, as military service instills many valuable skills. In other cases, former servicemen struggle to reintegrate, facing challenges such as unemployment, social exclusion, and depression. Therefore, developing specialized psychological and vocational rehabilitation programs for the post-service period is critical.

Military socialization is the process of adapting to the military environment, internalizing a new social role, and shaping a military identity. It contributes to the development of disciplined, responsible, and socially stable individuals. However, it also entails certain risks, psychological pressures, and adaptation challenges. For this reason, military socialization should be managed in a coordinated manner by the state, society, and psychological services. Viewing military service as a powerful social institution in human development can serve as a foundation for national stability and security.

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