



## Socialization of the Society: The Ground Truth

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### Abstract:

*Socialization is the process by which children and adults learn from others. We begin learning from others during the early days of life; and most people continue their social learning all through life (unless some mental or physical disability slows or stops the learning process). Sometimes the learning is fun, as when we learn a new sport, art or musical technique from a friend we like. At other times, social learning is painful, as when we learn not to drive too fast by receiving a large fine for speeding.*

*Natural socialization occurs when infants and youngsters explore, play and discover the social world around them. Planned socialization occurs when other people take actions designed to teach or train others from infancy on. Natural socialization is easily seen when looking at the young of almost any mammalian species (and some birds). Planned socialization is mostly a human phenomenon; and all through history, people have been making plans for teaching or training others. Both natural and planned socialization can have good and bad features: It is wise to learn the best features of both natural and planned socialization and weave them into our lives.*

*Positive socialization is the type of social learning that is based on pleasurable and exciting experiences. We tend to like the people who fill our social learning processes with positive motivation, loving care, and rewarding opportunities. Negative socialization occurs when others use punishment, harsh criticisms or anger to try to "teach us a lesson;" and often we come to dislike both negative socialization and the people who impose it on us. The society and the entire family take part an important role for the process of socialization of human being. The author wants to convey via this article that what is the ground reality for the whole process of the socialization.*

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### 1. Introduction

Socialization refers to the meaning of one being able to relate in a pleasant type of companionship with a friend or associate. Teachers are one of the most influential people regarding the philosophy and lessons of socialization. By teaching and modeling socialization to children, children will learn the meaning of kindness and generosity. They will then be able to eventually go out into society and contribute in a positive, meaningful and productive way. Teachers, in a sense are a child's provider outside of the child's home. The teacher has a very important role in the facilitation of socialization in a child's life. Having said this, I would like to stress the importance of a teacher's role to the effect a teacher has on children's perception of the concept of socialization. One of the main roles a teacher plays in socialization in a child's life is by direct examples set by the teacher in the classroom. A teacher has the responsibility to weave acceptance and care for one another within the curriculum. A child must feel accepted and cared for in order for that child to have healthy socialization skills and a chance of happiness and success in life. A teacher can provide that for children. A teacher must have the wisdom to guide children with compassion as well as teaching through play.

It is vital to keep the children busy and excited in what they are involved in. It is just as important for a teacher to be extremely organized. Children rely on the consistency of schedules. Children will be happier and feel safe and secure in their school surroundings when their daily schedule is better organized. Being organized creates a comfortable and social environment. It is the teacher's responsibility to nourish a child's cognitive and physical needs. Children need to run and play as well as learn the ability to sit and work. They need to know and understand boundaries and respect for others. Children also need time during their schedule where they have freedom to do whatever they choose to do without being told by a teacher. This is time allowed where children get to explore and play either by themselves, side by side with other children, or play by interacting with each other. Teachers must allow children to have this non-direction play time. All of these tools aid as in building structures for a healthy social life.

Just as important as the building structures mentioned in the previous paragraph, a teacher must be able to connect with the child's family or caregivers. By reaching out to the family or caregivers, a teacher will understand the child more, and this will help the teacher to better provide and nourish the child. Knowing more about the child's home life will enhance the knowledge the teacher has for the child as a whole.

Children observe, feel and see with their spirits, hearts and souls. No matter where a child comes from, what cultural background or difference in heritage or mental and physical state, a teacher holds the gift of kindness that will radiate outward to a child. This compassion will create a thriving atmosphere for children where he or she will get the chance to flourish socially, and be able to give back to others.

## 2. Stages of Socialization

Richard Moreland and John Levine (1982) created a model of group socialization based upon the assumption that individuals and groups change their evaluations and commitments to each other over time. Since these changes happen in all groups, Moreland and Levine speculate that there is a predictable sequence of stages that occur in order for an individual to transition through a group.

Moreland and Levine identify five stages of socialization which mark this transition; investigation, socialization, maintenance, resocialization, and remembrance. During each stage, the individual and the group evaluate each other which lead to an increase or decrease in commitment to socialization. This socialization pushes the individual from prospective, new, full, marginal, and ex member.

**Stage 1: Investigation** This stage is marked by a cautious search for information. The individual compares groups in order to determine which one will fulfill their needs (*reconnaissance*), while the group estimates the value of the potential member (*recruitment*). The end of this stage is marked by entry to the group, whereby the group asks the individual to join and they accept the offer.

**Stage 2: Socialization** Now that the individual has moved from prospective member to new member, they must accept the group's culture. At this stage, the individual accepts the group's norms, values, and perspectives (*assimilation*), and the group adapts to fit the new member's needs (*accommodation*). The acceptance transition point is then reached and the individual becomes a full member. However, this transition can be delayed if the individual or the group reacts negatively. For example, the individual may react cautiously or misinterpret other members' reactions if they believe that they will be treated differently as a new comer.

**Stage 3: Maintenance** During this stage, the individual and the group negotiate what contribution is expected of members (role negotiation). While many members remain in this stage until the end of their membership, some individuals are not satisfied with their role in the group or fail to meet the group's expectations (*divergence*).

**Stage 4:** Resocialization -If the divergence point is reached, the former full member takes on the role of a marginal member and must be resocialized. There are two possible outcomes of resocialization: differences are resolved and the individual becomes a full member again (*convergence*), or the group expels the individual or the individual decides to leave (*exit*).

**Stage 5:** Remembrance In this stage, former members reminisce about their memories of the group, and make sense of their recent departure. If the group reaches a consensus on their reasons for departure, conclusions about the overall experience of the group become part of the group's *tradition*.

### 3. Types of Socialization

Primary socialization for a child is very important because it sets the ground work for all future socialization. Primary Socialization occurs when a child learns the attitudes, values, and actions appropriate to individuals as members of a particular culture. It is mainly influenced by the immediate family and friends. For example if a child saw his/her mother expressing a discriminatory opinion about a minority group, then that child may think this behavior is acceptable and could continue to have this opinion about minority groups.

Secondary socialization Secondary socialization refers to the process of learning what is the appropriate behavior as a member of a smaller group within the larger society. Basically, it is the behavioral patterns reinforced by socializing agents of society. Secondary socialization takes place outside the home. It is where children and adults learn how to act in a way that is appropriate for the situations, they are in. Schools require very different behavior from the home, and Children must act according to new rules. New teachers have to act in a way that is different from pupils and learn the new rules from people around them. Secondary Socialization is usually associated with teenagers and adults, and involves smaller changes than those occurring in primary socialization. Such examples of Secondary Socialization are entering a new profession or relocating to a new environment or society.

Anticipatory socialization Anticipatory socialization refers to the processes of socialization in which a person "rehearses" for future positions, occupations, and social relationships. For example, a couple might move in together before getting married in order to try out, or anticipate, what living together will be like. Research by Kenneth J. Levine and Cynthia A. Hoffner suggests that parents are the main source of anticipatory socialization in regards to jobs and careers.

Re-socialization refers to the process of discarding former behavior patterns and reflexes, accepting new ones as part of a transition in one's life. This occurs throughout the human life cycle. Re-socialization can be an intense experience, with the individual experiencing a sharp break with his or her past, as well as a need to learn and be exposed to radically different norms and values. One common example involves re-socialization through a total institution, or "settings in which people are isolated from the rest of society and manipulated by an administrative staff". Re-socialization via total institutions involves a two step process: 1) the staff work to root out a new inmate's individual identity & 2) the staff attempt to create for the inmate a new identity. Other examples of this are the experience of a young man or woman leaving home to join the military, or a religious convert internalizing the beliefs and rituals of a new faith. An extreme example would be the process by which a transsexual learns to function socially in a dramatically altered gender role.

### 4. Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization is the process whereby an employee learns the knowledge and skills necessary to assume his or her organizational role. As newcomers become socialized, they learn about the organization and its history, values, jargon, culture, and procedures. This acquired knowledge about new employees' future work environment affects the way they are able to apply their skills and abilities to their jobs. How actively engaged the employees are in pursuing knowledge affects their socialization

process. They also learn about their work group, the specific people they work with on a daily basis, their own role in the organization, the skills needed to do their job, and both formal procedures and informal norms. Socialization functions as a control system in that newcomers learn to internalize and obey organizational values and practices.

**Group socialization** Group socialization is the theory that an individual's peer groups, rather than parental figures, influences his or her personality and behavior in adulthood. Adolescents spend more time with peers than with parents. Therefore, peer groups have stronger correlations with personality development than parental figures do. For example, twin brothers, whose genetic makeups are identical, will differ in personality because they have different groups of friends, not necessarily because their parents raised them differently.

Entering high school is a crucial moment in many adolescent's lifespan involving the branching off from the restraints of their parents. When dealing with new life challenges, adolescents take comfort in discussing these issues within their peer groups instead of their parents. Peter Grier, staff writer of the Christian Science Monitor describes this occurrence as, "Call it the benign side of peer pressure. Today's high-scholars operate in groups that play the role of nag and nanny-in ways that are both beneficial and isolating."

**Gender socialization** Henslin (1999:76) contends that "an important part of socialization is the learning of culturally defined gender roles." Gender socialization refers to the learning of behavior and attitudes considered appropriate for a given sex. Boys learn to be boys and girls learn to be girls. This "learning" happens by way of many different agents of socialization. The family is certainly important in reinforcing gender roles, but so are one's friends, school, work and the mass media. Gender roles are reinforced through "countless subtle and not so subtle ways" (1999:76).

As parents are present in a child's life from the beginning, their influence in a child's early socialization is very important, especially in regards to gender roles. Sociologists have identified four ways in which parents socialize gender roles in their children: Shaping gender related attributes through toys and activities, differing their interaction with children based on the sex of the child, serving as primary gender models, and communicating gender ideals and expectations.

**Racial socialization** Racial socialization has been defined as "the developmental processes by which children acquire the behaviors, perceptions, values, and attitudes of an ethnic group, and come to see themselves and others as members of the group". The existing literature conceptualizes racial socialization as having multiple dimensions. Researchers have identified five dimensions that commonly appear in the racial socialization literature: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, egalitarianism, and other. Cultural socialization refers to parenting practices that teach children about their racial history or heritage and is sometimes referred to as pride development. Preparation for bias refers to parenting practices focused on preparing children to be aware of, and cope with, discrimination. Promotion of mistrust refers to the parenting practices of socializing children to be wary of people from other races. Egalitarianism refers to socializing children with the belief that all people are equal and should be treated with a common humanity.

**Planned socialization** occurs when other people take actions designed to teach or train others from infancy on.

**Natural socialization** occurs when infants and youngsters explore, play and discover the social world around them. Natural socialization is easily seen when looking at the young of almost any mammalian species (and some birds). Planned socialization is mostly a human phenomenon; and all through history, people have been making plans for teaching or training others. Both natural and planned socialization

can have good and bad features: It is wise to learn the best features of both natural and planned socialization and weave them into our lives.

Positive socialization is the type of social learning that is based on pleasurable and exciting experiences. We tend to like the people who fill our social learning processes with positive motivation, loving care, and rewarding opportunities.

Negative socialization occurs when others use punishment, harsh criticisms or anger to try to "teach us a lesson;" and often we come to dislike both negative socialization and the people who impose it on us. There are all types of mixes of positive and negative socialization; and the more positive social learning experiences we have, the happier we tend to be especially if we learn useful information that helps us cope well with the challenges of life. A high ratio of negative to positive socialization can make a person unhappy, defeated or pessimistic about life.

## **5. Social Institutions**

In the social sciences, institutions are the structures and mechanisms of social order and cooperation governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. Institutions are identified with a social purpose and permanence, transcending individual human lives and intentions, and with the making and enforcing of rules governing cooperative human behavior. Types of institution include:

### **5.1 The Family**

The family is the most important agent of socialization because it is the center of the child's life, as infants are totally dependent on others. Not all socialization are intentional, it depends on the surrounding. The most profound affect is gender socialization; however the family also shoulders the task of teaching children cultural values and attitudes about themselves and others. Children learn continuously from the environment that adults create. Children also become aware of class at a very early age and assign different values to each class accordingly.

### **5.2 Religion**

Agents of socialization differ in effects across religious traditions. Some believe religion is like an ethnic or cultural category, making it less likely for the individuals to break from religious affiliations and be more socialized in this setting. Parental religious participation is the most influential part of religious socialization—more so than religious peers or religious beliefs.

### **5.3 Peer Group**

A peer group is a social group whose members have interests, social positions and age in common. This is where children can escape supervision and learn to form relationships on their own. The influence of the peer group typically peaks during adolescence however peer groups generally only affect short term interests unlike the family which has long term influence.

### **5.4 Economic Systems**

Socialization within an economic system is the process of learning the consequences of economic decisions. Socialization impacts decisions regarding "acceptable alternatives for consumption," "social values of consumption alternatives," the "establishment of dominant values," and "the nature of involvement in consumption"

### **5.5 Legal Systems**

Children are pressured from both parents and peers to conform and obey certain laws or norms of the group/community. Parents' attitudes toward legal systems influence children's views as to what is



legally acceptable. For example, children whose parents are continually in jail are more accepting of incarceration.

### **5.6 Penal Systems**

The penal systems act as an agent of socialization upon prisoners and the guards. Prison is a separate environment from that of normal society; prisoners and guards form their own communities and create their own social norms. Guards serve as "social control agents" who discipline and provide security. From the view of the prisoners, the communities can be oppressive and domineering, causing feelings of defiance and contempt towards the guards. Because of the change in societies, prisoners experience loneliness, a lack of emotional relationships, a decrease in identity and "lack of security and autonomy". Both the inmates and the guards feel tense, fearful, and defensive, which creates an uneasy atmosphere within the community.

### **5.7 Language**

People learn to socialize differently depending on the specific language and culture in which they live. A specific example of this is code switching. This is where immigrant children learn to behave in accordance with the languages used in their lives: separate languages at home and in peer groups (mainly in educational settings). Depending on the language and situation at any given time, people will socialize differently.

### **5.8 Mass Media**

The mass media are the means for delivering impersonal communications directed to a vast audience. The term *media* comes from Latin meaning, "middle," suggesting that the media's function is to connect people. Since mass media has enormous effects on our attitudes and behavior, notably in regards to aggression, it is an important contributor to the socialization process.

## **6. Factors Affecting Socialization of Children**

It was the first day of kindergarten. The children arrived with new clothes, lunch boxes, book bags stuffed with wide-line tablets, fat pencils, a blanket for naptime, and a box of 100 crayons. As a teacher, I watched the children's faces and those of their parents and realized that some of these children were not ready to leave home. Small hands clutched a parent's hand, eyes brimmed with tears, and even a few sobs echoed from one corner of the room. For some, the socialization process had not occurred.

## **7. Social-Emotional Development**

Specific tasks related to social development occur in early childhood, just like developmental tasks occur in cognitive growth. The term social refers to a relationship or interaction between two or more people, who by definition respond to each other and influence each other's behavior. Socialization is an important process in child development. Stated simply, it is the process whereby individuals, especially children, become functioning members of a particular group and take on the values, behaviors, and beliefs of the group's other members. Although the process begins shortly after birth and continues into adulthood, the age of early childhood is a crucial period of socialization. How children are disciplined, how they respond to this discipline, and how they develop independent behavior are all connected to the process in which socialization occurs.

## **8. The Family and Parental Influences**

Families are different, and the role of the family is changing. According to Smart and Smart (1980), "Each family is unique in the expectations of the people in various roles, in its patterns of interaction, its history of development, and its relationship with other systems". However, family categories usually fall into three groups:

1. The **nuclear family** consists of a mother, father, and offspring living together.

2. When two or more families live together, this is known as an **extended family**. Within this group are grandparents, uncles, aunts, or other relatives.
3. The third family group is that of **single parent** households. The proportion of children living in single-parent homes more than doubled between 1970 and 1998 – from 12% to 28%. Children living only with their mothers were more than twice more likely to live in poverty than those living with only their fathers (47% vs. 20%). (Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Current Population Survey: Families and Living Arrangements*).

## 9. Dimensions of Parental Behavior

Researchers believe that acceptance-rejection and control-autonomy are contributing factors that determine a family's attitude toward child rearing. The structure of the family and the personality characteristics of individual parents make a difference in socialization as will be demonstrated in the following examples.

Will, a father of two young children, believes that spending time each day with his kids is vital to developing strong family ties. During this time, the children talk about their day, engage in some type of physical activity, such as going for a walk, playing with their dog, or enjoying simple games. Hugging his children, telling them how important they are in Will's life is a part of each day. In return, his children feel accepted in this warm environment. His friends often remark, "Your children show such responsibility and self-control. What are you doing that makes a difference?" When children feel this level of acceptance, they want to please and parents become their best role model.

Next, let's look at Susan a mother of a six-year-old. At the end of a long workday, Susan is exhausted. Instead of giving her daughter a few minutes of quality time when she comes home, she immediately starts working on the home chores. "Every time I want to talk to my mother, she is too busy, too tired, or says 'wait till later,'" remarks her daughter. Later never seems to come. Parents who use rejection in parental behavior may have children who are hostile and aggressive toward others.

I recall a home of six youngsters where the children were extremely well behaved. Some years later I talked with one of the adolescent boys in that home and he said, "On occasion, my father had to watch us while our mother ran to the grocery store. He made each one of us sit on the couch and dared us to move. A large paddle stood nearby. We were scared to death of him." Restrictive parents who use strict control usually have children who are well behaved. However, these children may be highly dependent on the parents.

On the other hand, parents and teachers that are highly permissive allow children to make the rules. In these settings, the child is clearly the "boss." Take for example, Lorri and her three year-old son. "Whenever my friends visit, my son interrupts constantly, jumps on the furniture, and is loud and noisy," says Lorri. "Often I have to count to three several times. Nothing seems to help." Children who see autonomy as a form of parental and caregiver behavior may be sociable and assertive youngsters who are aggressive.

Achieving a balance between these dimensions of parental behavior seems to be the ideal, yet it is difficult to accomplish.

### 9.1 The Effects of Punishment and Discipline

The approach to punishment and discipline is another developmental task of learning. When children misbehave, teachers or parents may use some form of discipline. This approach may be in the form of spanking, scolding, yelling, embarrassing, or making the child feel inferior or unloved. Often a combination of these is involved. These negative approaches may have unwanted results (Park, 1977).

Parents and teachers that rely on a positive approach to discipline teach the child the appropriate behavior and reinforce that behavior, which makes it less likely to recur in the future. For example, if a child turns over their milk at the table, have them clean up the spill instead of punishing. This positive approach teaches the child what to do when an accident happens.

Consistency is vital in guiding children to a higher level of socialization. Often teachers scold or punish a child for a behavior one day, and the next appear to ignore the same behavior. This happens due to the mood of the teacher at the moment. Consistency in discipline allows the child to know what he can and cannot do. Parents and teachers can assist children in socialization by building a sense of trust and a feeling they can have some control over their life (Maccoby, 1980).

Children who are disruptive and seek attention may draw attention to self through silly behaviors, immature or regressive actions, loud talking, and making inappropriate noises or gestures. Educators suggest that parents terminate disruptive attention-seeking behaviors and increase cooperative, prosocial interactions. (Jongsma, Peterson, McInnis, 2000)

## 10. Conclusion

Socialization is important because we are social animals. If you can't interact and socialize with those around you life will be extremely difficult. Not knowing the rules of behavior for your society and culture can create a lot of problems. For example, in our culture smiling is a sign of friendliness and is considered polite, but in other cultures smiling at someone might be considered rude or a sign of weakness.

The term socialization is used by sociologists, social psychologists and educationalists to refer to the process of learning one's culture and how to live within it. For the individual it provides the skills and habits necessary for acting and participating within their society. For the society, inducting all individual members into its moral norms, attitudes, values, motives, social roles, language and symbols is the 'means by which social and cultural continuity are attained' (Clausen 1968: 5).

If we look at the really sad cases of people who have not gone through the socialisation process the so called 'feral children' it becomes very clear that without socialisation we have little capacity to be human.

One person who,, because she became deaf and blind when she was two, and so missed out for some years on basic socialisation, was Helen Keller. She was later able to explain how important the stage of understanding concepts is, in the process of socialisation and becoming 'human'.

'Keller discovered that words were related to things: At the well-house Sullivan place her hand under the spout, under cool stream of water, and spelled into the other hand the word water. "That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free."

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