

# Violence in tv and society

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



How the nature and frequency of violence in television programs and movies affects socializing and being socialized. " Sociology offers a perspective, a view of the world. The sociological perspective opens a window onto unfamiliar worlds" and offers a fresh look at familiar ones (Henslin3). " With socialization being such a huge part of our daily lives, it is important that we get the right socialization. Today much of our youth's socialization skills are being obtained from mass media sources, and in particular social networking and television.

A single glance at a children's television show gives you only a slight glimpse of the violence portrayed in today's children TV shows. As Americans we are exposed to violence on a daily basis. Just turning on the TV we are bombarded with news of violent acts, and violent TV shows or movies. This has changed violence into a symbol of despair, and a solution to most situations. Thus changing our perspective of symbolic interactionism, and its relationship to becoming socialized negatively. The symbolism of violence has been altered, desensitizing us to violent acts.

Dave Grossman argues that this is something that has long been used in the military to train soldiers to perform their duty, however these same techniques have been used unintentionally on the general population which more drastic effects. Because this desensitization is taking place during childhood rather than in late teens and early twenties, the social constraints that are normally in place to prevent people from acting out such as norms and sanctions have not been instilled the same way they would be in a 18 or 19 year old. The results have been a drastic increase in violence.

Television is by far the medium of mass media socialization. Children watch an average of 3 to 4 hours of television a day (AACAP). It has a huge effect on young children. Children are watching people interact, but are not actually interacting. Time that should be spent outside interacting with other children has been replaced with televisions, which dramatically reduces children's social skills. Television satisfies social needs to some extent but does not give real life social skills that can be used. Along with decreased social skills, children are becoming socialized the wrong way.

The majority of children perceive things on television as real. " When young children see somebody shot, stabbed, raped, brutalized, degraded, r murdered on TV, to them it is as though it were actually happening. To have a child of three, four, or five watch a " splatter" movie, learning to relate to a character for the first 90 minutes and then in the last 30 minutes watch helplessly as that new friend is hunted and brutally murdered is the moral and psychological equivalent of introducing your child to a friend, letting her play with that friend, and then butchering that friend in front of your child's eyes.

And this happens to our children hundreds upon hundreds of times. " (Grossman) Is this the way we really want our kids to become socialized? To answer this question we must dig deeper, and discover what it really means to become socialized. As stated by our book, " Socialization makes us human" When we are born, we do not know what it means to be human. We do not have any ideas. We do not know how to speak, or how to act . We must learn how to do all these things, and only then, do we develop a self.

With socialization being such a huge part of becoming "human" it is essential to get the right kind of socialization, which includes Symbolic interactionism. (Henslin) The symbolic interactionism perspective of sociology views society as a product of everyday social interactions of individuals. Symbolic interactionists also study how people use symbols to create meaning. In studying violence, these theorists look at how people in everyday situations define violence, which differs between cultures and settings. (Spark notes) In the US particularly violence has become part of the norm.

Most children start out watching kid friendly and educational programs, and around the ages of three or four start watching shows like Tom and Jerry and Loony toons. Although these shows are somewhat kid friendly they still portray violence as acceptable. Violence is portrayed to be comedic. Thus desensitizing kids to violence in an indirect way. As children grow older, parental controls grow looser, allowing children to watch more violent, and adult rated TV shows, and movies. The exposure to violence at such a young age alters values, and norms.

Children begin to perceive violence as normal, and as a solution to everything. Children's shows like Ben10, Looney Toons, and Power rangers portray "the good guys" trying to save the world, by taking drastic and most likely violent measures. The "cool" factor of these shows is actually kids becoming more and more desensitized to violence. Although these shows have not been proven to turn a normal child into a deviant. "Hundreds of studies of the effects of TV violence on children and teenagers have found that children may become "immune" or numb to the horror of violence.

They may gradually accept violence as a way to solve problems, or imitate the violence they observe on television; and identify with certain characters, victims and/or victimizers (Grossman). " Keeping in mind that Socialization is the core of our existence and ability to interact with others, we can gather that excessive violence on TV shows, has huge negative impact on children's socialization skills, and most importantly that it affects the symbolic interactionism that takes place in all stages of socialization.