

Role of socialization

Society



Family is the first social agent which individuals are exposed to; they are the primary source of socialization (Bryman & Lie, 2012). This social agent is responsible for teaching individuals about 'self' – a set of ideas and attitudes about who one is as an independent being" (Bryman & Lie, 2012, p. 58). A functionalist view would argue "family is the most important agent of primary socialization, the process of mastering the basic skills required to operate in society during childhood" (Bryman & Lie, 2012, p. 60).

Language is one concept taught by the family in order to communicate, without a basic form of communication fitting into society would be near impossible. Teaching children how to speak is considered part of being a parent and is not questioned; bad parenting in turn would lead to bad socialization. Families also provide 'class' and how you as an individual, and family, fit into the order of society. Wealthy families may be able to provide different opportunities versus poor families, and different values may be taught such as wasting food and saving money.

The lessons children are taught shape how they will act in society and what they will think of themselves and others. School is another social agent which impacts an individual's understanding of self and society ("Agents of socialization," 2013). School teaches individuals how to be a productive member of society and gives them the means in order to succeed in society. One example is learning to listen to and respect authority. This is taught from kindergarten on.

If a child breaks the rule and disrespects their teacher, or authority, they will be disciplined and taught to not do that again. Without the understanding of

respecting authority an individual will have a hard time fitting into society since there is always rules to follow and authority to respect; bosses, RACE, laws and so on. School also teaches a work ethic which is an important aspect of each individual. Bad work ethic can lead to being less successful in life, being an underachiever, and in turn not living up to what one could.

Norms are also an aspect of society that are taught in school. An individual's family is responsible for teaching communication and language, and the school builds on that basic knowledge to make it acceptable for societies standards. For example college students are expected to write at a specific level, in proper form, following rules and guidelines in order to convey their thoughts. If a student is unable to write at that level they will fail their courses and be unable to graduate in that program.

The 'norm' for adults to be able to read and write with specific accuracy, without this basic understanding the adult may not be able to hold a steady job, own a house, find a marriage partner, or, have kids. This would in turn impact their understanding of oneself and how they fit into society. Peers are a third social agent, which hugely impacts and shapes our understanding of self. Interacting with peers teaches individuals what is considered normal and acceptable in society. From a young age children are taught to use words instead of hitting during an argument.

This lesson carries forward and is a crucial part of socialization. As an adult one cannot hit somebody because they are upset- that can lead to a criminal charge (Barbour, 2008). Peers also teach sharing from a young age, which follows through to adulthood and an integral part of society. In adolescence

peer groups promote individuality from family, and finding oneself. Among peers adolescents are able to make choices on their own and learn from their own mistakes, and not the guiding of parents and authority. Peers also offer a challenge to individuals.

Prior to having friends individuals are influenced by family, however, once peers and friends become more involved in their lives they are opened to new views and opinions that may differ from their own (Barbour, 2008). Gender roles are also another aspect of society, which peer groups heavily influence ("Agents Of colonization," 2013). Boys and girls are treated differently, social expectations are placed on the different genders, and masculine and feminine ways are taught. Peer groups can have a negative social influence as well.

Cliques, gangs, and peer pressure are all aspects of peer groups, it is up to the individual to choose right from wrong and look at how those peers will negatively affect them. Functionalist theory can also be applied to this agent of colonization, since functionalists look at "how colonization helps to maintain orderly social relations" (Bryn & Lie, 2012, p. 60). A functionalist would also argue "social structures are based mainly on shared values" (Bryn & Lie, 2012, p. 12). That would explain gangs, cliques, and groups among peers. Mass media is one of the biggest social influences.

All individuals have access to mass media in some form. TV, internet, social networking, advertising, videos, newspapers and books are just a few of the forms of mass media, which we are surrounded by. Media influences how individuals think they should view themselves; fat, skinny, popular, rich,

different etc. Media also influences what we view as norms; fashion, technology, hair, engage, posture etc. With both norms and views individuals are faced with expectations of society. For example if you want to look rich and sophisticated you must drive an expensive car and wear expensive clothing.

If you want to have an attractive boyfriend you must wear revealing clothing, act provocatively and be very thin. These are expectations that have been placed upon individuals by the mass media, and although they are not always true, they are viewed as the way that society works. When you cannot fit into size 0 pants your understanding of self will be shaped as well because according to the media you will not be able to be successful and marry an attractive man, get a great paying job, own a house and start a family.

All that is influenced from the media and shaped your understanding of what you can achieve in life and where you stand within society. By looking at all the different type of agents of socializations it is easy to see how individuals are shaped based on the agents they are exposed to. Each agent has their own job in shaping individuals and teaching them lessons. The agents of socialization; family, school, peers, and media are what influence and shape our understanding of society and ourselves.