

Most important agents of socialization

Society



Parents are important agents of socialization but they are not the only source of socialization when it comes to kids. In my paper I will be discussing the important factors of socialization and what we perceive to be a turning point in our children lives. Believe it or not but parents, family, educational institutions, and media are socializing agents who carry out the process of socialization. The family is the most influential socializing agent. Infants are born into certain types of families and grow up with them as children and adults. Socialization is the process of imbibing the norms, value and social patterns of a particular society.

It is also closely linked to the concept of individual and personal development. The family is perhaps the most important source of socialization, given its central role in the early developmental period (Holm, 2005). It plays this central role because it introduces children to intimate relationships and gives them their first experience of being treated as distinct individuals. In essence, the family is the child's first reference group, the first group whose norms and values the child adopts as his or her own and uses to evaluate his or her behavior.

The family also introduces children to group life. Several factors in family life affect socialization. For example, fathers and mothers have different parental styles. Fathers tend toward physical play and unfamiliar games, while mothers tend toward vocal interaction and familiar games. The numbers of siblings and the birth order also have substantial effects. Interactions with siblings enable children to learn about cooperation and conflict as well as negotiation and bargaining. Finally, the family introduces the child into society, helping him or her to find an identity in the larger social world.

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Socialization is seen as an essential process in the lives of the young child and adult in that it is an essential process of learning and adaptation necessary for social and psychological well-being and survival. The family and socialization are terms that are often linked in terms of their sociological nature and function, the family is in most societies the area or the social structure where the child is socialized and where he or she learns the norms and mores of that particular social environment and culture (Starrels, 2000).

Notwithstanding the recent sociological concern about the demise of the family structure in developed countries like United States, the family is still generally seen as the centre of the socialization process. Ultimately, the values or characteristics of a family impact the children. For example, the children of families who are not overly rigid and restrictive are usually content and well-adjusted; however, children who grow up in environments that are too restrictive often become defiant and lack confidence. There are two basic aspects of socialization.

First, socialization creates individuals who are part of a human community. It enables people to live within their groups and to be effective members of the society into which they are born. Second, socialization is the process by which a society reproduces itself in a new generation. It helps transmit the values and traditions of the past to the next generation (Tannenbaum 1967). The highest values and discourage deviation from social values do not just come from the family but through other sources such as institutions and peers. (Arnett 1995).

Sociologists have long recognized that peers play a critical role in children's initiation to society. Peer groups provide experience with egalitarian relationships. The absence of a power imbalance enables peers to teach other skills and to provide resources in ways in which parents frequently cannot. Children select peers; they do not select their parents. This selection opportunity enables children and young adults to test some of their preferences for certain types of friends. Peers also teach each other about subjects that adults consider sensitive or taboo and develop their own distinctive norms and values.

During adolescence the influence of peers increases, while the influence of parents decreases. Adolescents often experience conflict with the power and expectations of their parents and other adults. However, adolescents generally remain responsive to their parent's desires regarding goals and values. Peer values generally reinforce parental values. Cross-cultural research has highlighted differences in peer group socialization in different societies (Wilson, 1995). Children are exposed increasingly to a variety of mass media.

The media play a substantial role in contemporary socialization and have become increasingly important over the last several decades. Children in the United States today spend more time watching television than in school. Parents as well as others have become increasingly concerned with the role of television and other mass media, but a review of the research on the impact of television on children yields mixed results. Fathers, especially, are still likely to stress the importance of a career or occupational success for their sons than for their daughters.

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As a result, parents are more likely to provide opportunities for their sons than for their daughters(Benokraitis, 2008) Generally my research shows that watching programs which emphasize positive values often stimulates positive behaviors, where as viewing violence and other negative types of programs encourages aggression and other types of negative behaviors. At a minimum, it is clear that television can have a major effect in that children interact with television in much the same way as they interact with other elements in their social environment.

Education has become an increasingly important source of socialization in the last century as society became less rural and more urban. School serves as a transition point between the home and the adult world. Schools teach certain official values such as intellectual skills, but they also include a hidden curriculum that teaches useful skills such as how to live in a bureaucratic setting (Mcleod, 1967). Adult socialization is also transparent.

Some life transitions simply build on existing norms, values, and roles; others require resocialization or the internalization of an alternative set of norms and values. For example, army recruits and mental patients must be resocialized to their new roles. Desocialization requires stripping oneself of the self-image and values acquired previously and replacing them with a new outlook and self-image. Total institutions, such as prisons, are organizations that deliberately close themselves off from the outside world and lead a very insular life that is formally organized and tightly controlled.

Newcomers to total institutions undergo mortification: they are stripped of clothes and personal possessions and are given standard clothing. They

perform meaningless tasks, endure abuse and are deprived of privacy; these procedures are designed to destroy newcomer's feelings of self-worth and to prepare them for deference to their superiors (Summers, 1972).

Occupational socialization involves learning the norms, values, and beliefs appropriate for a new occupation or organization.

Considerable variation occurs in the type and extent of occupational socialization. In conclusion I would like add that “ Agents of Socialization” defines socialization as the process of passing down cultural beliefs and practices to society; many groups in society are involved in this process, but after researching I found out that the family is the most important socializing agent. The restrictiveness of the family environment can impact socialization of children, affecting how well-adjusted children and teenagers are.

Social class can affect the ways that families socialize their children. Lower class parents tend to be more controlling and rigid, whereas middle class parents tend to encourage more independence. In the past three decades, the ways that families socialize their children have changed. Specifically, society's views of children and teenagers have changed from one in which children and teenagers are naive and immature to one in which they are viewed as more competent and worldly. Also, adults have become less controlling over time.