

# FAMILY AND SCHOOL UNDERSTOOD AS AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION

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**Abstract:** *The concept of socialization is defined in the broad sense as a process through which a human being becomes a member of a society. Socialization process shall not achieve suddenly but gradually, being influenced by factors which vary from one society to another. In European societies and beyond, the family is no doubt the most important agent of socialization. Socialization process is directly related to one of the essential functions of the family that is raising and educating children. While each person's sex is accentuated given, it is received by each child at birth, however, the issue membership in a specific gender requires an real learning process. The essential difference between the family as an agent of socialization and the school is in the nature of institutionalized, formal ruling of the latter. It follows the fact that the school is an essential step towards the acquisition and integration skills to living with others in a society.*

**Keywords:** *socialization, primary and secondary socialization, family, gender socialization, school, standardization, premodern way of thinking.*

The concept of **socialization** is defined in the broad sense as a process through which a human being becomes a member of a society. This learning process makes it possible to acquire knowledge, skills, norms, values, traditions etc. by a human person. Group acts on the individual from a very early age, from the earliest years of life. Therefore, through interaction with others, parents, relatives, friends etc., the child gradually becomes aware of itself as individuality, being able to think and act by his own volition. And the reflection on the self is no doubt the most important component of the forming process of a child in a family/society, in other words, the stages by which a child becomes a person are essential for shaping the cultural profile of each individual. Interaction with others is an essential premise for the development of communication skills and understanding.

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An important distinction must be operated between two types of socialization, namely: **primary socialization** and **secondary socialization**. Primary socialization, on the one hand, occurs during childhood and refers mainly to family or others people who occupies with child care. This type of socialization constitutes the basis that support the entire children's forming process. Family and close relatives are a kind o society in miniature, a spyglass overturned, which reproduces in miniature dimensions the whole society. This comparison is however not true in an absolute sense; the specificity of primary socialization lies in the fact that the affectivity/love is dominant, actually, there is no conflict of interests between parents and children (at least not until the children reach adolescence), while thereafter, when the child must shall integrate into a community formed by others members than his family, such as the preschool or school, the watchword will not be the unconditional love, but rather the adaptation to a situation in which each child pursues his own interest. In other words, one can notice a significant rupture between the type of socialization provided by the family, in which the child is seen as a center of the universe and the moment of relative separation from the family and integration into a new type of social structure, like school, where each child is a center of the world.

Secondary socialization refers to that period of childhood in which a child begins to interact strongly with other social environments than strictly the family. Contact with other children and with adults other than his own parents helps the child to understand that there is another social universe outside the family. In addition, as it grows, the child will gradually loosen the direct control exercised by parents and seek to integrate into a group of colleagues/friends/acquaintances, this group being an important agent of socialization. This type of socialization works in the same direction with formal activities, e.g. school or job, but often it has a rhythm and a higher intensity than those activities.

Socialization process shall not achieve suddenly but gradually, being influenced by factors which vary from one society to another. The most important such factors are: family, school, group of friends, work, religion, media, etc.

In European societies and beyond, **the family** is no doubt the most important agent of socialization. Socialization process is directly related to one of the essential functions of the family that is raising and educating children. Primary contact with his fellow man is in the family, which involves a series of interactions with other family members.

In sociological literature devoted to family, it is seen as a group of individuals within it there is a connection between different generations (Day, 2010). The most frequent relationship is that between parent and child. Another main feature is that family members establish intimate contacts based on mutual commitment, trust, respect and a deep sense of obligation that may be spread throughout their lives. Between parents establish sexual relationships and all family members shall move towards achieving goals by “acquiring, allocating, and distributing resources (i.e., time, money, space, and close personal contact).”. In specific situations, there are some family with a deep sense of belonging, which unites the members and gives them a deeper sense than that of self-identity; in this case, the values, norms, beliefs, goals, etc. specific to the family are internalized in a very high degree. There are also situations where there is a feeling of disintegration among members; the links between them have not disappeared completely, but they have gained a accentuated formal character, they communicate, but lacks the enthusiasm and mutual expectations. There are also situations where there is a feeling of disintegration among members; the links between them have not disappeared completely, but they have gained a accentuated formal character, they communicate, but lacks the enthusiasm and mutual expectations.

An important component of the socialization process is **gender socialization**. While each person's sex is a accentuated given, it is received by each child at birth, however, the issue membership in a specific gender requires an real learning process. Gender socialization refers to the way in which girls and boys learn how to act, how to behave into society in which are raised. Gender socialization occurs both at the clear and default level. For example, girls are taught explicitly to adopt certain behaviour, to be sensitive and non-confrontational, while boys are suggesting it's better to have a tougher temperament, that they should not complain and to whine. Gender socialization involves the choice of gender-specific types of clothing, or the right colours for girls and boys (pink for girls and blue for the boys etc.), or certain kinds of toys (girls play with dolls and boys with little cars or robots), but also different physical activities (girls oriented to dance or painting, while boys are directed to the sports that require intense physical effort). This often leads to the creation of true stereotypes, which are not really aware by the parents. Moreover, social scientists have conducted numerous field researches to demonstrate the importance of gender socialization. For example, a study conducted of some Australian

children aged between 6 and 7 years showed the fact that the boys involved in sports activities, while girls concerned about ballet and dance (Ember, Ember, 2003). In Senegal, the girl's favourite games are about domestic activity and takes place over the entire childhood, while boys have a similar play, but only until the age of two years, after which their play includes father's work imitation, activities such as hunting or leaving home. Also, mothers from the same country shows herself to be more willing to ask the girls to work than boys, and to involve these in activities that require a higher degree of responsibility.

But this type of socialization also has certain consequences, which were analyzed in detail by sociologists. First, there are differences between children in terms of the tasks assigned to them (Day, 2010). Girls are advised to engage in activities/games like the mother's social and domestic activities, and to help it in the household chores, while boys are oriented towards a completely different kind of activities. Secondly, even when children develop similar activities, these labelled of adults according of its sex. Therefore, if a girl practices a tougher sport with boys, she will be characterized as aggressive, while her males play partner plays will be regarded as if they doesn't anything exceptional, but rather full of energy and very active. Finally, it should be noted that parents and adults generally behave differently with children even from birth and this because of their gender; they are repeating to girls that there are very beautiful, a real princesses, the adults are talking with them with a low voice and great delicacy, while boys do not get the same treatment from adults, the most frequent phrase that mature people use it in their presence is to grow up, as if boys childhood should be for them a simple passing phase, what it is truly important in their lives will be spent only when they will be adults.

The family is not the only agent of socialization. **School** is another factor, whose influence in this process cannot be questioned. The essential difference between the family as an agent of socialization and the school is in the nature of institutionalized, formal ruling of the latter. It follows the fact that the school is an essential step towards the acquisition and integration skills to living with others in a society. The key task of the school in this regard it is not only to teach children various skills or to provide a wealth of information and knowledge, but especially to prepare them for life in society, to develop them for the purposes of assimilation the specific values and norms of the social world in which they were born and will live the adult life. The socialization experience through the school

requires the child to confront with new situations that cannot be met in family life. It's the first submission to a new kind of authority, represented by the teacher, in this case a foreign person outside the family and its circle of friends. Which obviously means a new approach of relations with adults, in which lacks that unique determination and guidance on who a parent show to his child or children. On the other hand, the child is now facing with existence of an impersonal regulation that does not take into account the characteristics of each child, or his particular needs, but it treats all children equally, by giving them various obligations, including most important is to behave like the others, leaving aside what dictates freely and participate in joint activities with colleagues.

Modern School focuses on evaluation, a trend increasingly emphasized of the education system being that of generalize the criteria of assessment and evaluation, to standardize them up. This **standardization** arises, but some problems have been reported by various studies conducted by anthropologists and sociologists. For example, one famous tests of intelligence is Porteus Maze Test (PMT), in which the subject must draw a line through a maze (or a series of increasingly more complex mazes), so he manages to escape of the maze in the shortest possible time. The intelligence level is linked indirectly with the time required to solve the test: as the duration is low, the greater is IQ level. But when the test was administered to Aboriginal from Australia, the researchers have found that they needed a very long time to solve the test, suggesting a very low level of the intelligence (Lindholm, 2007). But the slowness of the evidence they gave was far from being a sign of lack of intelligence, it is explained by the fact that Aborigines are never hurry in their lives. It follows that the administration of such tests should not be done undifferentiated; anthropologists have shown that, in reality, they do not measure a person's native intelligence, but the degree to which an individual shares the same values and norms with the person who made that IQ test. Furthermore, studies conducted by anthropologists have shown that should be operated a distinction between the practices appropriate modern and premodern socialization. Charles Lindholm summarized as follows:

“- Premodern learning is practical, contextual, personal. Children learn by imitation.

- Modern learning is abstract, generalized, formal. Children are taught in schools”.

An illustration of how **premodern, primitive way of thinking** works, compared with the modern is represented by the research of Soviet psychologist Alexander Luria (1902-1977) in the regions of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (apud. Lindholm: 2007). Thus, Luria asked to the various people who had been meeting in these areas to complete some type of reasoning: „In the far north, where there is snow, all bears are white. Zemlya is in the far north. What color are the bears there?“ While informants who had some rudimentary schooling quickly answered “white,” his unschooled tribal informants invariably replied: “I have never been to Zemlya. How do I know what color the bears are there?”

Another example provided by the same psychologist refers to a situation where local people are shown pictures representing an ax, a hammer, a saw, and a log and asked which object did not belong. The unschooled respondents said that all objects are in the same category. Luria tried to explain, however, to suggest that the log does not fit, but others vehemently replied in a tone that it takes the log, otherwise both the ax and hammer and saw cannot be used, are unnecessary in the absence of the log. In contrast, people who had even a minimal school education immediately recognized the log as being discordant note from the other three items, which shows that they were able to represent abstract category of “tools”. In fact, the geometrical shapes itself were perceived by those respondents lacking of school education, not as abstract forms, but through similarities between them and various objects of daily life. Thus, the circle was designated as a plate, a bucket, a watch or the moon, the square was a mirror, a door or a house. In conclusion, the representations of these people are closely related not to various abstract principles, but the activities of daily life. They were, in a sense, absolute prisoners of a daily life. Personal experience was thus valued at a maximum level; the logic and reasoning failed to penetrate beyond this unbreakable link with life and especially the practical approach to life.

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