Contexts of Socialization

Introduction

Within sociology, the concept of socialization has had two fairly distinct meanings. For much of its history, it has been used to denote the individual's adaptation and conformity of one kind of another—conformity to role expectations, to the opinions of others, to the norms and values of society. This conception of socialization has been most closely associated with the structural functionalist perspective, and, in spite of frequent critiques (most notably Wrong's 1961 criticism that it offers an "over-socialized" view of man), it remains prominent in the field (see, for example, Inkeles's view of socialization as social adaptation, 1969:66). This conception tends to view socialization from the point of view of the social group to which an individual belongs. Socialization of new members is the means by which a society perpetuates itself.

If the frame of reference is the individual rather than the group, then the concept of socialization takes on a somewhat different meaning. Here the emphasis is on the development of the person, rather than on the transmission of culture. Socialization in this sense refers to the process of development or change that a person undergoes as a result of social influences (Gecas, 1979a:365). Its focus tends to be the development of self-concept, identity, and various attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors of the individual. Tallman and Hinger-Tallman (1977) define socialization as a process of negotiating identities. Similarly, Stryker conceptualizes socialization as a matter of the shaping of self-concepts (1979:177).

The sociological tradition most closely associated with this view of socialization is symbolic interactionism. Grounded in the social psychological writings of Mead, Cooley, James, and Thomas, this perspective offers a conception of socialization as a continuous process of negotiated interactions out of which selves are created and re-created. The hallmark of this perspective is the emphasis it places on symbolic interac-
tions of Weber, Marx, and Simmel, has been concerned with the social structural bases of human experience. Focusing on the contexts within which socialization takes place, especially the organizational and institutional settings, requires that special attention be given in the social structural features of the situations as they affect socialization processes and thereby influence the individuals involved. Social structure is commonly defined as stable patterns of social interaction in a group. But the concept also includes other aspects of the group such as its composition (sex and age, for example), and other group features such as size, density, permeability of boundaries, and so forth. Families are different from classrooms, peer groups are different from prisons, and occupational organizations are different from religious conversion settings with regard to the structure of their social relations. One of the tasks of this chapter will be to examine how aspects of the social structure of various socialization settings set the stage for the socialization processes that take place. As Wheeler points out, "just as individuals may become differently socialized because of differences in past experiences, motivations, and capacities, so may they become differently socialized because of differences in the structure of the social settings in which they interact" (1966:51).

The number of contexts of socialization in a complex society is almost limitless. For that matter, all socialization is contextual in that it occurs in some social situations. Situations that are occasions for socialization vary in scope and duration, from relatively trivial and fleeting encounters to totally absorbing and enduring experiences. My strategy in this chapter will be first to consider some of the dimensions of social context that can be expected to affect socialization; then to focus on a small sample of socialization contexts selected to reflect variations on some of these dimensions.

Some Dimensions of Socialization Contexts

Much of the socialization that takes place in our society occurs in the context of social institutions or organizations, such as family, school, prison, and work setting. The explicit goal or mandate of many of these organizations is to change people. Wheeler points out that socialization is increasingly a function of large-scale bureaucratic organizations (1966:53). One is expected to learn basic cognitive skills in school, to get advanced training in universities, to be treated for mental illness in an asylum, or to be subjected to rehabilitation programs in prison.

At the level of general organization goals, Wheeler distinguishes between "developmental socialization systems" and "re-socialization systems. The former refers to organizations, such as family and school, whose formal purpose is the training, education or, more generally, the further socialization of the individuals passing through" (1966:68). The latter refers to organizations, "where the formal purpose is to make up for or correct some deficiency in earlier socialization. These are largely organizations designed to re-socialize the deviant" (1966:68).

Wheeler's refers to re-socialization organizations are prisons and
mental hospitals. But this category may also apply to religious and political organizations with missionary functions, to military organizations training recruits, and to various rehabilitation groups. One reason this distinction is important is because different processes may be involved when the end is re-socialization. For example, a process of "unlearning" is frequently described as a necessary step in the re-socialization process. That is, old identities, beliefs, and values may have to be abandoned in the process of creating a new self-concept and world view.

Not all organizations and groups involved in socialization have as their explicit goal the socialization or re-socialization of their members. For some it is quite an incidental and frequently unintended consequence of group membership. Most occupational organizations are of this nature as are most peer groups or friendship groups. The socialization that takes place within these contexts may be quite consequential for the individuals involved and for the organization or group as we shall see, but it may also be quite distant from the major purposes of these organizations.

Even within organizations whose major purpose is socialization, a great deal of "incidental" learning takes place. As Dreeben (1968:44) observed with regard to the socialization in public schools, what is learned is not always the same as what is taught. This distinction between intentional and unintentional socialization will be important to several of the contexts considered.

Two of the most important elements of the internal structure of socialization contexts are the role system and the power distribution. The role system refers to the configuration of social statuses, along with the behavioral expectations, rights, and responsibilities, operating in a group. It can be quite formal and rigid, as typically found in bureaucratic organizations, or the role system can be loose, amorphous, and emergent, as in peer groups. Roles provide one of the main contents of socialization in that they encompass specific identities (for example, teacher, behaviors teaching values, knowledge is good), and beliefs (if diligent work leads to knowledge and increased competence). But even more important, roles provide a major link between the social system and the individual. Two characteristics of roles are relevant in this regard: their reciprocity and their embeddedness. Role expectations refer not only to the conduct of the role occupant but also to various others in their interactions with the role occupant. Mintz's (1957) concept of "role-set" captures this reciprocal nature of roles by showing how a particular role is typically located in a whole set of interrole constellations of social roles. For example, part of the role-set of "teacher" involves role expectations vis-à-vis students, parents, school administrators, and colleagues. In this way, role occupant is embedded in a set of interpersonal relationships.

Roles, then, are part of the social environment, embedded in cultural systems, and distinguishable to some extent from the individuals who occupy them at any given time. Yet, they are also molded and fashioned by their individual occupants and to a greater or lesser degree, become sources of personal identity, values, and beliefs. Consequently, roles provide a means for anchoring individuals to social systems. Socialization, especially for adults, is to a large extent the learning of social roles (Brim 1968:88).

The conditions under which individuals become committed to the roles they play, or are socialized to these roles, are important considerations for the topic of socialization. Turner (1958) has formulated a number of propositions dealing with the conditions under which person and role are likely to merge: (1) individuals tend to merge with those roles for which significant others identify them; (2) there is a tendency to merge role and person selectively so as to maximize autonomy and positive self-evaluations; and (3) it is more likely to merge with those roles in which investment has been greatest (1958:9). The first two of Turner's principles are especially relevant to the topic of socialization as we shall see.

An important element of role systems, bearing on socialization, is the distribution of power within them. With the possible exception of friendship groups, power tends to be unequally distributed in socialization contexts. The power disparity is especially evident in such institutional role relationships as guards/prisoners, doctor/patient, teacher/pupil. Individuals whose formal status in the group involves the socialization of others typically have considerable power over those formally designated as socializers. The latter, however, are not powerless even in the most (formally) asymmetrical of power distributions. Within the context of formal organizations, the power of the socializers is to a large extent a function of their numbers relative to the number of staff or agents of socialization. In general, the smaller the socialization ratio (number of agents/number of socialized), the greater the power of the socializers. In such institutional settings as schools, prisons, and mental hospitals where the socialization ratio is quite small and where there are large numbers of people in roughly the same formal status categories, social organization and subcultures among socializers are likely to emerge (Wheeler 1956). Such subcultures frequently develop in directions antithetical to the main socialization goals of the institution.

Along with differences in goals, socialization ratios, and power and role systems, socialization contexts also differ with regard to such features as intensity and affective climate, degree of self-sufficiency or isolation (total institutions versus more open systems), the nature of the socialization cohort (children versus adults), homogeneous versus heterogeneous, mode of entry for new socializers (voluntary versus involuntary), and physical characteristics (size, density, visibility). These are some of the salient dimensions of socialization contexts which set the stage for the socialization processes and outcomes that result.

In this chapter, a small number of socialization contexts are examined by reference to variations on most of the dimensions discussed. Five socialization contexts were selected: family, school, peer group, occupational setting, and radical re-socialization settings. Although there are a number of similarities between these contexts on a number of the dimensions, there are also substantial differences. In general, families are more involved in developmental socialization, as are the less formal socialization contexts, particularly peer groups and public schools, conversion contexts are more involved in re-socialization. Socialization in schools and conversion set-
tions is largely intentional, whereas in peer groups and work settings it is largely unintentional. The role systems tend to be more formal and the power disparity greater in school, family, occupational settings, and rein-socialization contexts compared to the power and role systems in peer groups. The socialization ratio tends to be larger and interactions more intense and intimate in family, peer group, and rein-socialization contexts, whereas the socialization ratio is smaller in school and, perhaps, work settings (depending on the nature of the job). The scope of socialization is relatively broad in the family, peer, and rein-socialization contexts, and narrower in school and occupational settings. Participation in the socialization experience is typically voluntary in work and peer contexts, involuntary in family and school, and in both modes of entry represented in the rein-socialization settings. The socializers are primarily children in family, school, and childhood peer group contexts, and usually adults in occupational and rein-socialization contexts. These differences between the various contexts on any one dimension may not be very sharp, but when they are considered in aggregate, it becomes apparent that these contexts represent quite different socialization experiences.

This essay is not meant to be an extensive and thorough review of the socialization literature on each of these contexts. Rather, my aim is to consider some of the key processes and structural characteristics that have a socializing effect on individuals in these contexts. Some of the more specific questions guiding this examination are: What are the important structural features in each context? What aspects of the individual are affected by these structural features? Through what processes or mechanisms of socialization are these effects produced? How are these processes and their outcomes related to the specific functions, goals, or purposes of the organization or group? How are these contexts affected by their larger institutional and historical settings?

Family Context

In the minds of many people, the family is the context most closely associated with the topic of socialization. As an institution, its major function in modern societies is the socialization and care of children. The goal of most parents is to develop children into competent, moral, and self-sufficient adults. This is typically undertaken with two objectives or frames of reference in mind: socializing the child for membership in the family group, and socializing the child for membership in the larger society. In the process, of course, parents also become socialized. Relations within the family are intimate, intensive, relatively enduring, particularistic, and diffuse. This is why the socialization that takes place here is usually the most pervasive and consequential for the individual. It is also the first socialization context that most of us experience—the place where we develop our initial sense of self.

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SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE FAMILY

The family, in contemporary American society at least, is a relatively simple structure, usually composed of father, mother, and a few children. In fact, the family is becoming increasingly simpler, with the continuing increase of single-parent families through divorce, separation, or premarital pregnancy. This constitutes the major structural variation in families, which has special significance for family socialization. Other structural variations include the number and gender of children and the presence of other adults (usually extended kin).

The major positions in the family are ascribed and tend to be divided along two axes of differentiation: age and sex. There is considerable variation across families regarding the power and authority associated with family positions. But typically, power is unequally distributed within the family, with parents having considerably more power and authority than children (although the power disparity decreases as the children get older), and fathers typically having somewhat more power and authority than mothers—vestiges of a patriarchal system and division of labor in the home that still persist.

Patterns of power and authority in families are also influenced by the size of the family group. As groups increase in size, power becomes increasingly centralized, rules governing duties and responsibilities become more formal and explicit, and tasks become more specialized, and there is a greater stress on conformity (Clausen 1968; Bossard and Boll 1968). Elder and Bowerman (1967), in a large sample of high school students, found that the proportion of adolescents reporting their parents to be authoritarian or autocratic increased with family size. The students from large families were also more likely to report that their parents often did not explain the rules that they imposed on the children, were more likely to use physical punishment as opposed to other forms of discipline, and attempted to maintain control over the child longer.

But the large family also offers each child more independence and autonomy from parental supervision than is the case in small families. The greater numbers give a certain amount of protection from parental despotism and emotional absorption by spreading parental attention over more children, thereby diminishing the influence on any one child. Furthermore, to the extent that siblings in a large family can form coalitions and provide a united front against the parents on some issues, their power increases. This is more likely to occur in large families because power is more centralized, and the larger number of children increase the emergence of a "class consciousness."

PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES OF FAMILY SOCIALIZATION

There is a wide range of processes and outcomes of socialization within the family, especially for the child. It is the context in which the child's initial sense of self develops and basic identities, motivations, values, and beliefs are formed. This occurs through most of the major processes and
mechanisms of socialization, for example, modeling, reinforcement, role-playing, labeling, and social comparisons, which are enhanced by the general process of identification. The discussion of the various processes and outcomes within this context (as well as the others) is highly selective. Emphasis is placed on those that are most comprehensively affected by the social structural features and dimensions of the family context.

Identification and sex-role identity. A good deal of the socialization that takes place in the family involves learning appropriate role behavior associated with the various family positions. For the child, the most significant of these are sex and age roles. These roles are not only pervasive and diffuse, but also that they enter into numerous interaction contexts, but their main significance lies in the consequences that they have for self-conceptions. They are sources of major identities that individuals hold. As such, they are sources of motivation (wanting to act in accordance with role requirements), values (having a positive or negative feeling toward the identity), and, perhaps most important, they engender relatively unshakable conceptions of reality. They also develop very early in the socialization process, shortly after the acquisition of language. Not long after the appearance of reflective thinking (that is, the ability to view the self as an object—in Piaget’s sense, to role-take), the child, in categorizing its world and constructing its reality, categorizes itself as boy or girl. This becomes a statement of fact, not subject to opinion or negotiation—just as the identities of brother, sister, younger child, and “Benjamin Gecas” become statements of fact that the child forms (Kohler 1955). The behavioral consequences of these identities—that is, the role behaviors considered appropriate—take much longer to develop and are much more negotiable. Through processes of reinforcement from parents and others, through identification with various role models, through countless parental admonitions and instructions, the child is socialized into the specific behavioral expectations associated with these roles.

Much of the research on role-learning in the family has dealt with the learning of sex roles (see Macroby and Jacklin 1974 for a comprehensive review). Some of this literature suggests that the processes involved in sex-role learning might be somewhat different for the two sexes. David Lynn (1976) theorizes that girls learn sex-appropriate behavior through identification with their mothers, whereas boys learn it through identification with a culturally defined masculine role. This difference in processes involved in sex-role learning is a function of the traditional division of labor in the home. As a result, according to Lynn, the process of sex-role learning for girls is rather simple, observing mother and modeling her behavior. But since the father is less visible, the process of sex-role learning is more complicated for boys. Their problem is to determine, on the basis of various sources of information (such as mother’s sanctions against “unmasculine” behavior, males portrayed in the mass media, and observations of men in various circumstances), what constitutes appropriate masculine behavior and to use it as a standard for one’s own conduct. This involves abstracting from a number of diverse sources of information a general model of masculinity.

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The significance of this difference in sex-role learning lies in the consequences that it may have for cognitive functioning. For example, Lynn argues that males tend to be more field-independent than females because of the necessity to abstract from the immediate situation in the learning of their sex role. Females, however, are more field-dependent because of the necessity of being in tune to the immediate situation (mother’s behavior) in learning theirs. Lynn’s theory seems reasonable. But the extent to which the sex differences in field dependence/independence can be attributed to the socialization process that he proposes is still to be confirmed.

Parents are not the only agents within the family important to the child’s sex-role learning. Siblings also have an effect. In a study of sex-role learning in two-child families, Brim (1958) found that children who have a sibling of the opposite sex have more personality traits of the opposite sex than do children from same-sex sibling systems, and that this effect is greater for younger than for older siblings. Furthermore, this process of mutual influence is asymmetrical in the sibling order. Older siblings, because of their greater power and competence, have more influence over younger siblings.

Both Brim and Lynn emphasize identification as a process in the development of sex-role identities. There is no doubt that it is important in the formation of sex-role identities as well as other aspects of self-concept. We develop a sense of who we are by identifying with and differentiating from others.

**Parenting styles and socialization outcomes.** Roles, values, norms, and beliefs are the main cultural contents of socialization that are transmitted from parents to children, more or less intentionally, in congruence with general socialization goals that parents hold. Much of the child’s family socialization is of this kind. But much of it is inadvertent, unintentional, and often unconsciously produced by parents. Styles of parental behavior are more likely to be relevant to this aspect of the socialization process.

In the vast literature on child socialization, two dimensions of parental behavior have received considerable attention—the degree and kind of control that parents exert over the child, and the amount of affection and support that they show. Both have been found to have important consequences for the child (for good reviews of this literature, see Rolins and Thomas 1973 and Thomas et al. 1974). The general conclusion from this research literature is that parental support combined with inductive or authoritative (as opposed to authoritarian) control has the most favorable socialization effects on the child, that is, development of high self-esteem, sense of competence, conscience, internalization of adult standards, and high achievement motivation.

A reason for the efficacy of these parental behaviors is that both modeling and identification are affected by them. As Bronfenbrenner points out in assessing the modeling research, the most contagious models for the child are likely to be those who are the major sources of support and control (see p. 157, fn. 33). Furthermore, a strong affective relationship between parent and child facilitates the child’s identification with the parent (and the parents with the child). In short, parenting styles that result in a
warm, supportive, "reasonably constricting" family environment produce a child who is readily socialized to adult standards. On the other hand, cold, rigid, and coercively-restrictive family environments produce children who are rebellious, resentful, and insecure.

Since the relationship between parent and child is highly reciprocal, parents are also affected in the process. In fact, in the initial confrontation between parent and offspring, the parent is much more influenced by the infant than vice versa. By means of the cry and the smile, infants are very effective at shaping parental behavior (see, for example, Bell 1977; Goldberg 1977; and Rieger 1969). Socialization into the parental role is largely a matter of on-the-job training, with the child's responses to the parent one of the major processes involved in the role definition of parent.

Family size, configuration, and socialization outcomes. There are several important socialization consequences of family size. A number of studies have found that children from large families have lower scores on intelligence tests than do children from small families, even when the effects of social class are controlled. Also, children from smaller families show higher achievement motivation than do those from larger families (Rosen 1961; Douglas 1964). The most extensive evidence for this relationship is provided by Zajonc (1975). Using records of intellectual performance on various national tests (Scholastic Aptitude Test, National Merit Test) in this country and elsewhere, Zajonc has argued strongly for the negative effect of family size on scholastic aptitude of children. Zajonc's explanation of the association between family size and the child's intelligence is based on the opportunity for interaction with parents available to the child. The basic idea of the "confluence model" proposed by Zajonc is that the intellectual environment of a family depends on the number of family members and their ages. Hence, different family configurations (in terms of number and ages) constitute different intellectual environments. The intellectual environment is conceived as an average of all the family members' mental ages, which changes continually as children grow older, and as advertisements depart from the family occur (1976:227). The research of Zajonc, as well as others (Rosen 1961; Douglas 1964; Olneck and Bills 1979), points to the negative effect of family size on cognitive development through its effect on the quality and quantity of parent-child interaction.

In contrast to the fairly consistent picture of the negative consequences of family size for intellectual development is the chaotic literature on birth order, which has prompted one reviewer to declare that the variable should be abandoned (Schoeder 1972). Zajonc (1978), however, has attempted to salvage birth order as a variable by modifying his "confluence model" of the effects of family size and spacing to include age of siblings. His data support the proposition that birth-order effects depend on age; firstborns were found to do better than secondborns initially (up until age 4 or 5), then do worse (until age 12 or so), and then to do better again (from 13 on). Zajonc concludes that when age of siblings is taken into consideration, birth-order effects on intellectual development become quite patterned and understandable.

This may be an overly optimistic assessment. Zajonc's findings have been criticized because they are based on cross-sectional population data, when longitudinal data on intra-family comparisons are needed to test these ideas (Olneck and Bills 1979). Zajonc's model has also been criticized for the low level of theory upon which it is based. The principal mechanism of influence is equivalent to contagion between family members in proportion to mental level (Olneck and Bills 1979:137). Olneck and Bills's (1979) study is one of the few studies to consider the effect of birth order by examining within-family variations. Their study, based on a sample of 346 pairs of brothers, found no significant effects of birth order on measures of intellectual ability and educational attainment. Family size, however, was significantly related to these variables even when indicators of social class were controlled. An even more damaging critique of the "confluence model" is provided by Galbraith (1979), who questions the mathematics upon which the model is based and the discrepancy between this model and other studies (including Galbraith's own data) of birth-order effects.

In spite of the doubts about the significance of birth order for intellectual development, it would be premature to abandon the variable. Because its significance is questionable regarding intellectual abilities does not mean that birth order is irrelevant to other socialization outcomes. There is enough evidence to suggest that children differently located in the sibling order experience different patterns of interaction with parents and siblings. For example, there are a number of ways in which firstborn children have an advantageous position. Besides the greater amount of parental attention that the firstborn receives (Lewis and Kritzerberg 1979), he/she is also more likely to be given responsibility and control over younger siblings and to have higher expectations associated with his/her performance. This combination of high parental support and control, plus high performance expectations, contributes to the greater tendency of firstborns to identify with parents, to internalize parental values, to be more achievement-oriented, to enforce rules, and to be more conscientious (Adams 1972; Clausen 1966; Rammeyer 1967). On the other hand, firstborns are also more likely to be more anxious, conservatve, and guilt-ridden.

The distinctive feature about the position of younger children in the birth order is that they are much more subject to child-level interaction than is the firstborn. Since the firstborn is (initially) bigger, stronger, more competent, and able to exert dominance over younger siblings, he/she is likely to serve as a model for them. Thus, we would expect younger siblings to have a greater sensitivity to the moods of other children and to be more peer-oriented once they move outside the family (Clausen 1966:13). This is consistent with Sampson's (1961) observation that the early self-concept of firstborns is based largely on the appraisal of parents, whereas the self-concept of laterborn children is more likely to reflect peer evaluations, provided mainly by siblings.

SOCIALIZATION IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

The single-parent family is an increasingly frequent phenomenon, having substantial consequences for child socialization. If present trends continue, nearly half of the children born today will spend some time in
a one-parent family, usually as a result of separation or divorce (Glick 1978). Research on the consequences of this circumstance for the development of children and parents is sparse. But what there is suggests that the consequences are negative. For example, Hetherington et al. (1976, 1978) found pronounced differences between two samples of middle-class parents (recently divorced and married) in the quality of parental/child interaction. Divorced parents made lower maturing demands, were less affectionate, and showed marked inconsistency in discipline and control of their children in comparison to married parents. The reciprocity of this relationship and its effects were evident in the similar pattern of negative behavior of the children toward their parents. Hetherington et al. further observed that children living in single-parent homes are more likely to experience problems in cognitive, emotional, and social development than are children in “intact” families.

To the extent that these socialization consequences in single-parent families are true, several explanations could account for them. Along with the practical problems of living, which are frequently aggravated by separation and divorce, especially if the single parent has to work, patterns of parent-child relations become disrupted, especially along the dimensions of control and support. Hetherington et al. (1978) observed that control and discipline of children become inconsistent and support and affective interaction become strained. This suggests that personality and behavior problems in the child would be more likely to occur (recalling the earlier discussion of consequences of parental support and control). Identification with parents and with the family as a unit may also be problematic when the family is no longer an integral whole.

But perhaps most important of all for socialization in single-parent families is the loss of what Bronfenbrenner (1975) calls “second-order effects.” Second-order effects refer to the effects that the presence of a third person has on a dyadic relationship. For example, the interaction between mother and child may be different depending upon whether the father is present. Bronfenbrenner (1975, 1978) observes that second-order effects in family interaction generally seem to be positive. That is, the presence of the other parent tends to have a benign effect on the interaction between parent and child. A mother or father may be less harsh and more “reasonable” in dealing with a son or daughter if the other parent is present. To the extent that this is true, an important source of moderation and temperance in parent/child interaction tends to be lost in single-parent families.

**Family Socialization in the Larger Social Setting**

There are a number of factors that affect the family as a context of socialization. Some of these are internal, such as the developmental changes the family system undergoes as a result of life-cycle changes of its members (see the chapter by Simmons and Bush in this volume). Others are external and underscore the embeddedness of the family in the larger system of social institutions, cultural pro-

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cesses, and historical developments. This section briefly touches on a few of these external influences.

**Social Class Influences.** Various structural features of the family, as well as some of its ideological components, are affected by the family’s location in the social class system. It is frequently reported in the literature on social class and family patterns that “lower-class” families and “middle-class” families differ with regard to the conceptualization of family roles, division of labor in the home, power distribution, and socialization values and ideology (Gecas 1973b). For example, middle-class families, compared to lower-class families, are generally found to have a more open and flexible role system, a more egalitarian ideology, a less segmented division of labor, socialization values that emphasize autonomy and individual development over conformity, and less restrictive and less punitive child-rearing patterns. Several scholars have offered explanations for the perceived social-class differences in family socialization patterns. Bronfenbrenner (1958) attributed the increasingly greater flexibility and affective involvement in the child rearing of middle-class families (compared to lower-class families) to the parents’ greater exposure and receptivity to mass media and the advice of “experts” regarding patterns of appropriate child rearing. Kohn (1968) also noted the class difference in parental values in the differential occupational conditions and educational experiences of middle- and lower-class parents (more will be said on Kohn’s theory later). Bernstein (1971) argued that the role systems of middle-class and lower-class families differ with regard to degree of openness and flexibility because of differences in the nature of the social networks within which these families are located. These differences in the nature of family roles, in turn, have consequences for types of linguistic codes that parents use in child socialization (see Gecas 1973a for an assessment of these theories). There are also class-associated differences in family patterns because of ethnic, racial, and religious influences. One of the major problems in this area is to disentangle the effects of these various factors.

**Historical Considerations.** The family as a socialization context has been undergoing considerable change over the past few decades, from shifts in child-rearing philosophies to experimentation with alternate family forms. Many of these have had an effect on socialization, but one development that Bronfenbrenner (1970) identifies is especially noteworthy. Bronfenbrenner argues that there has been a progressive decrease in recent decades in the amount of contact between American parents and their children (1970, 1975). Various social forces (such as urbanization, commuting, working mothers, and the professionalization of child care) have operated to decrease the amount of parental involvement, and hence the parent’s role as a socializing agent. Bronfenbrenner points to two important consequences of this parental withdrawal. It has produced a vacuum that is increasingly filled by the child’s involvement with age peers and with television. Children’s peer groups develop independently of (and more often in opposition to) adult standards and values (more will be said on this later). They become a frame of reference and a powerful socializing influence for the child. So does television. “The American child spends about as much time watching televi-
School Context

The school, like the family, is an institution whose explicit mandate is to socialize people. In each case, this mandate is directed toward children. The school's mission, however, is defined more narrowly than is that of the family. It is primarily concerned with the formal instruction of children and the development of their cognitive skills (but here again, more is learned by the child than that which is explicitly taught). Next to the family, the school is the institution in which the child is most directly involved. And like the family, this involvement is largely involuntary. But in most other respects, family and classroom constitute quite different socialization experiences for the child.

The Social Organization of the Classroom

There are a number of excellent analyses and reviews of the social organization of the classroom (see especially Bonacich 1972; Bowles and Gintis 1973; Dreberen 1968; Gledewell et al. 1968; Jackson 1968; Parsons 1964). I have selected from these sources discussions of classroom features and processes that have the most direct bearing on the socialization of children.

Most of this discussion will focus on the classroom since that is where the business of formal education takes place. The typical elementary school classroom (and to a large extent, the high school classroom) is composed of one adult and around twenty-five children of both sexes and approximately the same age, drawn from a relatively small geographical area. The major status distinction is between teacher and pupils—not unlike the major status distinction in the family, although the ratio is quite different. The relationship between teacher and student is more limited in scope (that is, more role-specific) and of shorter duration than is that between parent and child. The procedure of annual promotion from grade to grade provides the child with the experience of establishing and severing relationships with adults at regular periods.

The homogeneous age composition of the class is an especially conse-

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quent feature of classroom structure. It provides the child with a standard of comparison for his competencies. It also provides the teacher with a standard for evaluating each student. Formal and public evaluation of performance is one of the hallmarks of the school experience, and, as we shall see, it has substantial consequences for the child's self-esteem. Differentiation among the cohort of pupils is based largely upon differential performance of school tasks. As Parsons pointed out, the school is the first institutionalizing agency in the child's experience that institutionalizes a differentiation of status based on achievement (1964:45).

Another important consequence of a fairly large, age-homogeneous group of socialization in roughly the same formal status and experiencing similar social circumstances is the emergence of a subculture. The content of these subcultures will be considered in some detail in the section on peers as a context of socialization.

Processes and Outcomes of Socialization

Ostensibly, school is primarily concerned with the cognitive development of the child—the acquisition of knowledge, the development of analytical and verbal skills, and other competencies. But in the course of this socialization experience, other things are also learned, such as general norms and beliefs, and other aspects of the child are affected (personality characteristics, self-esteem). The main processes involved are direct instruction, buttressed by a system of costs and rewards (grading, use of praise, manipulation of self-esteem), social comparison processes, and expectancy effects.

Social reinforcement, expectancy effects, and social comparison processes. The most conspicuous socialization process in the classroom (as, perhaps, in the family) is social reinforcement. Teachers rely on several reinforcers in attempting to shape the student's behavior and development—praise, blame, privileges, and, most important, grades. Grades represent the most concrete evidence of official (teacher's) approval or disapproval of the student's performance.

But grades may also be used to reinforce more than just the development of cognitive competencies. Bowles et al. (1975) suggest that teachers are likely to reward those students who conform to the social order of the school with higher grades and punish violators with lower grades, independent of their respective academic and cognitive accomplishments. In this case, conformity to the social order means that certain personality characteristics are rewarded (for example, dependability, consistency, perseverance, identification with school, punctuality, and so forth), while others are punished or disapproved (for example, creativity, aggression, and independency). Bowles et al. (1975) found significant positive relationships between the grade-point average of high school students and the first set of personality characteristics and negative relationships between grade-point average and the second set of characteristics. Similar evidence that grades reflect more than scholastic achievement of students is offered by Holland (1964). In a study of 855 National Merit Scholars, Holland found that differences in scholastic achievement were not
related to grades. But two personality variables were significantly and positively related to grades: "citizenship" and "drive to achieve." However, Holland found that neither of these two variables had a significant effect on actual achievement measures, and both were negatively related to measures of creativity and mental flexibility. In short, there is evidence that teachers directly reinforce certain personality characteristics and discourage others through the use of grades and other reinforcers.

Less obvious than social reinforcement, but perhaps no less pervasive, are expectancy effects and social comparison processes. Expectancy effects (Jones 1977), better known as self-fulfilling prophecies, are part of the broader process of defining situations and thereby constructing realities. The concept refers to the capacity of beliefs or expectancies to alter a state of affairs so that it comes to be congruent with the original belief. This notion derives from W. I. Thomas's (1928) insight: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." An extension of this idea to the self-fulfilling prophecy notion is provided by Merton:

The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a "false" definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come "true." This species validity to the self-fulfilling prophecy perpetuates a reign of error. For the prophet will cite the actual course of events as proof that he was right from the very beginning. ([1974] 1976)

Merton's statement gives the impression that self-fulfilling prophecies are always negative. In many circumstances they are, as attested by the literature on race relations, deviance, and status attainment. But often, this process leads to positive outcomes. The research on self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom demonstrates both effects (Wilkins 1976).

The landmark study on this topic is Rosenthal and Jacobson's influential Pignalion in the Classroom (1968), which tested the proposition that children in the classroom would show greater intellectual growth if their teacher expected them to than if he/she did not. The findings were equivocal: teachers' expectations had a significant effect on pupils' IQ gains for first- and second-graders, but not for third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders. The study aroused considerable criticism and controversy. Subsequent replications have produced mixed but generally confirming results (see Jones 1977; 1984 and, for a more critical assessment, Bocock 1978).

The fear that many people have, however, concerning the self-fulfilling prophecy in the classroom is not with regard to the effect of the teacher's high expectations, but rather his/her low expectations of certain students. Especially in schools where the student body is racially or socioeconomically mixed, parents and policy makers fear that the teacher would have lower expectations for the minority or lower-class student, and that these expectations would be communicated in differential treatment. A careful study by Rist (1970) gives credence to some of these fears. Rist followed a class of black children, in a ghetto school, from kindergarten through second grade. He describes in this report the numerous and subtle ways in which the teacher transmitted her expectations of their competencies or incompetencies to these children in a process that became self-fulfilling.

The other social process of special note in classroom socialization is social comparisons. The process of social comparisons is ubiquitous in the classroom. The age homogeneity and lack of formal status differentiation in the class cohort make it a fertile ground for the operation of social comparison processes as a means of social differentiation. This differentiation occurs largely on the basis of perceived ability and achievement, and each student knows where he stands with respect to his classmates. The class, therefore, serves as a reference group for the student, not necessarily in the normative sense (although it may indeed be a source of norms and values) as much as in the comparative sense (that is, as a standard of evaluation), to use Kelly's (1955) distinction. The family, by contrast, is primarily a normative reference group.

Richer (1976) suggests that reference-group processes (comparison processes) are more likely to operate in the classroom under conditions of greater subgroup differentiation and visibility. This is a classroom condition explored in some detail by Rosenberger (1975) for its effects on students' self-esteem. Rosenberger uses the concept of contextual dissonance to refer to the situation of being a member of a minority group in a classroom (or other contexts, for that matter) on the basis of a trait or characteristic that is disvalued by the majority group. In examining the effects of three types of contextual dissonance (social identity context such as race and social class, competence context, and value context), he found that being in the minority subgroup on any of these dimensions had a negative effect on the student's self-esteem. Rosenberger makes a strong case for the negative consequences of minority status within the classroom interaction context, because social comparison processes operate more forcefully at this face-to-face level rather than when society at large is the frame of reference. This is consistent with the findings of Bachman (1970) and Coleman et al. (1966) showing the negative consequences of school integration for self-esteem of black children, and parallel Kanter's discussion of the negative psychological consequences of minority status on the job.

Classroom organization and the learning of general social norms. Dreyfus (1968) argues for the importance of school as a transitional institution between family and job (as do Bowles and Gintis 1976 from a different perspective). His argument is based upon the observation that conduct in the family and conduct on the job are governed by contrasting normative principles. School provides the bridge between these two institutions by exposing the child to a set of experiences that facilitate learning and internalizing the norms of independence, achievement, universalism, and specificity. The goal of the school, in producing competent citizens, is carried out not only through formal program of instruction aimed at developing cognitive skills, but also through the less conspicuous development of these four general norms.

Universalism refers to the use of uniform (universal) standards of treatment and evaluation. Its opposite is particularism or special treatment (a norm that operates typically in family relations). In the classroom, the norm of universalism is closely tied to the notion of fairness. Specificity refers to the scope of one person's dealings with another. Because the interaction between teacher and pupil is much more role
specific, and more temporary, the distinction between the person and the position becomes much clearer in the school than it is in the family. The child comes to see that teachers, unlike mothers, are interchangeable.

Two aspects of classroom structure are particularly germane to the development of the norms of universalism and specificity—size and age homogeneity. Parsons (1964) suggests that because there are so many more children in the classroom than in the family, and because they are concentrated in a much narrower age range, the teacher has less chance than the parent to treat them in a particular manner (p. 1). Along with the sheer logistics imposed by large numbers of socializers, the assignment of similar tasks that all pupils are to perform favors universalistic treatment.

Within the classroom, the norms of universalism and specificity refer primarily to the conduct of the teacher. Independence and achievement are norms that are more relevant to the conduct of pupils, and because they are the basis for evaluating pupils, they have greater psychological consequences for the child. Independence refers to doing things on one's own, and combines such other attributes as accepting responsibility for one's own actions and being self-motivated. Creating and formal testing are two aspects of classroom operations that bear directly on the norm of independence. Achievement is perhaps the strongest norm of all. The concept of excellence is relative and mysterious. The striving against some standard of excellence is closely tied to the main mission of the school—to teach students to evaluate the extent of their learning. As a result, the pupil's performance is constantly evaluated in the classroom, and the evaluations are public. The implications of this situation go beyond the mere learning of social norms. They go to the heart of the child's conception of self.

Success, based on one's own efforts, is good for self-esteem and builds confidence in one's abilities. Failure is not, and failure is worse. The school provides numerous opportunities to the child for public failure, as well as for success. It also has fewer resources than does the family for protecting the child's self-respect in the face of failure. But even for those who are more successful on academic criteria, school can be hard on self-esteem. They must constantly work to maintain their status, and few go through this socialization experience without experiencing some failure. In a study comparing levels of self-esteem reported by high-school students with regard to five social contexts (family, classroom, on a date, with friends, and with adults), Gecas (1972) found self-esteem to be lowest in the classroom. Surprisingly, these students reported feeling least authentic (least "real") in the classroom context.

Furthermore, the negative effect of school on self-esteem seems to occur quite early in the child's educational experience. Hales (1966) found lower self-esteem among second- and third-graders (as well as fourth- and fifth-graders) to have lower self-esteem in the school context than at home or with peers.

Strategies for maintaining self-esteem in the classroom. But students, like other socializers, are not passive recipients of the pressures that they experience. They engage in activities that alter their circumstances, either in fact or by re-defining the situation or both, to make them more favorable to their self-interests and less damaging to their self-esteem. Covington and Beery (1970) propose that two fundamentally different patterns of achievement motivation emerge in schools as a result of these pressures: one is oriented toward success, the other is oriented toward avoiding failure. It is the latter that is considered to be a major obstacle to school achievement. The reason why it is adopted, of course, is to protect one's self-esteem. There are several strategies that students use to avoid failure. The most common are nonparticipation (if you do not participate, you cannot fail); if forced to participate, putting in a minimum amount of effort, and procrastination, or putting things off until it is too late to do a good job. The objective in these strategies is to disassociate one's performance from one's ability, and certainly to deny that it reflects one's worth. It is a form of role distance, the separation of self from the behavior required of a role occupant. Failure, then, can be attributed to lack of effort or to various external circumstances, and not to one's lack of ability. In a sense, this is viewed as "failure with honor." The irony of these failure-avoiding strategies, as Covington and Beery point out, is that they are self-defeating. In their attempt to avoid feelings of failure, these students, by their actions, increase the probability of actual failure. This is one of the serious, unintended, and undesirable consequences of classroom socialization. In the process of socializing students into the norms of independence and mastery (both desirable socialization outcomes from the societal perspective), pressures are generated that lead to patterns of adaptation that are considered undesirable.

CLASSROOM SOCIALIZATION IN THE LARGER SOCIAL SETTING

The socialization that takes place in the classroom is very much affected by the nature of the school system and its place in the larger societal context. Drennen's (1968) and Parson's (1966) analyses of the development of general social norms allude to the relevance of this larger societal context. Their benign functionalism suggests a happy integration between the school system and the economic system, via the socialization of children for their future participation in the occupational sphere.

A more critical analysis of the relationship between classroom socialization and the economic order is provided by Bowles and Gintis (1976). They also see a functional link between school and the economic system. But in examining the relationship from a Marxian perspective, they deplore the character of both of these institutions as they exist in American society. Bowles and Gintis (1976) maintain that the educational system perpetuates the economic order and contributes to the integration of youth into the labor force, mainly through a structural correspondence between its social relations and those of production:

... the relationships of authority and control between administrators and teachers, students and students, teachers and students, teachers and students, and students and their work replicate the hierarchical division of labor which dominates the workplace. Students have a degree of control over their curriculum comparable to that of the worker over the content of his job.

In elaborating on this correspondence, Bowles and Gintis point out that for students as for workers, their degree of autonomy and freedom from
supervision increases as they move up the educational or occupational levels.

There is little doubt that the economic system has a powerful influence on the school system and classroom socialization, both because of social structural and ideological factors (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) and ideological factors (Dreeben, 1988). But there are also other important influences from the larger social context that have a bearing on classroom socialization, such as political factors (for example, busing), technological innovations (teaching machines), demographic changes (declining enrollments), and family influences (ethnic diversity). I do not have space to consider these various social factors here. However, the relationship between family and school requires further comment.

Classroom socialization has been treated here as an example of "developmental socialization"—that is, as a progressive continuation of the child's development, building on the foundation established by the family. This is too simple a view. There is enormous variation in the degree to which the transition from family to school is smooth and "developmental" for some children or disjunctive for others. For the majority of children, classroom socialization may indeed be a developmental process. But for children from ethnic-minority families, especially in the poverty segment of society, the school may be a harsh and alien place that devalues much of what they have learned in their family contexts. For these children, the school may be more accurately viewed as a re-socialization context.

Childhood Peer Group Context

Within contemporary American society, the emergence of childhood peer groups as socialization contexts is intimately related to the existence of public schools. Along with neighborhoods, the school grounds and adjacent areas are the natural habitat of peer groups. Several features of schools (especially high schools, although this certainly applies to grade schools as well) contribute to the emergence of peer groups among the youths. Schools are the locus of a large concentration of children falling within a narrow age range, all are there voluntarily, and all are exposed to similar academic pressures. These are some of the conditions that Wheeler identifies as conducive to social organization and the development of countercultures among the recruits. Cohen (1972) no doubt expressed the sentiment of many schoolteachers when she described the student peer groups as "the netherworld of the classroom."

Social Organization of Adolescent Peer Groups

The most important feature of the peer group is that it is a voluntary association. For most children, it is their first. This permits greater free-

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dom of choice regarding associations in the group. The child does have the option to leave the group, a choice much less possible with regard to family or school. As a result, the boundaries of peer groups are more fluid, with individuals drifting in and out.

The peer group is an arena for the exercise of independence from adult control. Where this is to some extent as a reaction against adult control, it is often the context for the development of contra-values and the expression of behavior that is disapproved by adults (such as shoplifting). Coleman (1966) and much of the literature on juvenile delinquency

A second important feature of peer groups is that association is between status equals. Consequently, interaction is more likely to be based on egalitarian norms. This is not to say that differential specialization and stratification do not occur in peer groups. On the contrary, informal status hierarchies typically develop based upon achievement in activities considered important by the group. Status within the peer group is more fluid than in more structured contexts and depends much more on negotiation. But the basic relationship within peer groups is not a hierarchical one, but instead is the friendship bond, based on equality, mutual tolerance, and concern. Role-taking is more fully utilized and required in this context because of the greater opportunities for role-making, which requires a greater sensitivity to others in the situation in constructing one's own role (Turner, 1965).

A third feature, having special implications for the content of socialization, is the observation that adolescent peer groups are typically segregated by sex. Intensive association with same-sex peers and involvement in sex-typed activities strongly reinforce identification and belongingness with other members of the same sex (Parsons, 1964). Not only sex-role identity, but much of the sexual socialization occurs in the context of peer rather than parent-child associations (Gagnon and Simon, 1973).

Processes and Outcomes of Peer Group Socialization

What is fairly distinct about socialization in childhood peer groups is the effect it has on three broad areas of the child's development: (1) the development and validation of the self; (2) the development of competence in the presentation of self through role-taking and impression management skills; and (3) the acquisition of knowledge left residual or avoided by adults in their socialization of children. To be sure, each of these aspects of the child's socialization are also important products and concerns of other contexts (especially family and school). But it is the unique nature of the peer context that makes this context the most effective arena for the development of these three domains.

The key to the importance of the peer group in the socialization of these three domains is the friendship bond. Friendships are based on egalitarian relationships of mutual support and acceptance, where a wider latitude of behavior is allowed than in most other relationships, and where there is no explicit responsibility on the part of friends to change or shape each other's development (as in contrast to parent-child relationships). Since a great deal is tolerated in friendships, the individ-
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Extensive studies (as well as Bronfenbrenner 1970) describe the process of age segregation in our society that gives rise to a separate youth culture. Coleman shows that peers constitute an important reference group for the child, both in the normative as well as in the comparative sense. He found that the aspirations of high-school students were mainly determined by the "leading crowd" in school, rather than by their parents or teachers. Success in athletics, rather than in academics, was most important for boys; being popular with peers was most important for girls. Hence, status in the peer group was based upon quite different criteria from that of the classroom. One function that this serves for the pupil is to provide an alternate source of self-esteem and perhaps to repair self-esteem damaged in the classroom (Gecas 1972).

**Occupational Context**

The previous three contexts of socialization have been relevant mainly to the socialization of children. The next two deal with adults. For most adult men in our society, and increasingly for women, work (in the form of paid employment) is the dominant activity and setting in their lives, outside of the family. It is where much of their time is spent. It is an arena for the development and expression of competence and sense of worth as well as a source of identity. Work provides an interesting contrast to family, school, and peers as a context of socialization.

Typically, the primary goal of work organizations and work settings is not that of socializing those who work in them. The main goal usually involves producing goods or providing services for a certain public. Some of these services may indeed involve socializing various categories of people, for example, students, inmates, patients, and so forth, but typically not the organization's workers themselves. The socialization experienced by workers on the job, therefore, is incidental to the main purpose of the organization and frequently inadvertent.

It should be clear that I am not speaking here of socialization into a profession, such as doctor or teacher. Most of the occupational socialization undergone in preparation or training for a career takes place in specialized schools. These, too, are important contexts of socialization which, if space permitted, would be examined, since they are especially relevant to adult role learning and commitment to occupational identities.

**Social Organization of Occupational Settings**

Occupational settings vary considerably with regard to a wide range of features, such as, power and authority relationships, degree of bureaucratization, extent to which co-workers are present and involved in one's job, degree of coordination of work activities, and the nature and com-
complexity of the work involved. Most jobs in contemporary industrialized societies are located in large, bureaucratic organizations, with hierarchical authority and specialized division of labor (Bowles and Gintis 1976). Generally, as jobs increase in status and prestige, they also increase in the degree of autonomy, creativity, and discretion allowed the worker. They also tend to be more satisfying and rewarding. These differences, however, are not strictly linear with regard to the organizational hierarchy. An important categorical distinction, especially within large organizations, is between labor and management, or line and staff positions. This distinction is important, not only because it reflects categorically different patterns of authority and work activity, but also because it reflects differences in worker identification. Workers in management are more likely to identify (and to be identified with) the company or organization as a whole, whereas workers in labor are more likely to identify with each other collectively (as in labor unions) and frequently to see their interests in conflict with those of management. These differences in loyalties and identifications between labor and management are an important part of the stratification system of work settings, and they contribute to much of the dynamics of life in work organizations.

Processes and Outcomes of Socialization

A number of scholars have argued that there is a functional relationship between the conditions experienced on the job and the attitudes and values that one holds—that values are adaptations to work requirements. The most persuasive work along these lines is that of Melvin Kohn and his associates (1965, 1969, 1967, 1978). Through a series of impressive studies, Kohn has shown that certain structural features of work (for example, the amount of autonomy, the degree of supervision and routinization, and the amount of substantive complexity experienced on the job) give rise to values of either autonomy or conformity in workers. In general, the greater the freedom experienced on the job and the more complex and challenging the work, the more likely is the worker to place a high value on individual freedom and self-direction. On the other hand, the more constraining, routine, and simple the work, the more likely is the worker to value conformity (that is, obedience, order, and discipline). These work-generated values, Kohn found, become generalized orientations that adults have for themselves and that influence the socialization of their children. Parental values, then, tend to be extensions of the modes of behavior that are functional for parents in their occupational spheres. This transformation of work-generated values into parental practices constitutes an important link between the occupational and the family contexts of socialization. The relationship between occupational conditions and values, along the lines proposed by Kohn, has received rather wide support (see Kohn's review 1977 of these studies published since his original monograph, Gecas 1977a for an assessment of this research literature, and Lee 1977 for a synthesis of cross-cultural research reflecting a similar thesis).

In his more recent writings, Kohn has given more prominence to the substantive complexity of work. He has also expanded his interest in the consequences of this "structural imperative of the job" beyond values per se to a wider range of psychological variables, especially to one called "intellectual flexibility." The argument, again convincingly supported by empirical evidence (Kohn and Schooler 1978), is that substantive complexity of work positively affects the intellectual flexibility of the worker, as well as contributing to the development of values of autonomy. In short, these job conditions that Kohn stresses are instrumental in creating individuals who play a larger part in their own socialization and self-creation.

Important as the occupational conditions identified by Kohn may be in their socializing effects on workers, there are other conditions of work situations that are consequential for the individual. Kanter (1979b) proposes a theory of individual attitudes and behavior in organizations based on three structural features of the work situation: the opportunity structure, the power structure, and the social composition of peer clusters. The adaptation of individuals to their work circumstances, and their degree of commitment to work or alienation from work, is, according to Kanter, largely a function of their location on each of these three structural dimensions. For example, people in work situations that provide little opportunity for upward mobility tend to limit their aspirations, seek satisfaction in activities outside of work, create strong peer associations in which interpersonal relations take precedence over other aspects of work, and develop loyalties to the local unit rather than to the larger organization. The second dimension, being low in organizational power, also has negative psychological and behavioral consequences for the individual. For example, these individuals become petty, bossy, and more authoritarian in their subordinates for their frame of reference, and rely more on coercive than persuasive techniques of control. The third dimension, the social composition of one's work peers, refers to the proportion of women, men, blacks, ethnic minorities, or some other socially relevant category. Kanter proposes that people who are a minority in the work setting find it harder to be taken seriously, are more isolated and excluded from informal peer networks, and are less effective (1977b:45-49). All three of these clusters represent behavioral consequences of disadvantaged position on the three structural dimensions.

The relationship between social structure and individual behavior is highly reciprocal and dynamic in Kanter's model. It leads to upward cycles of advantage, or downward cycles of disadvantage (1977b:249). Breaking these cycles of development is difficult because: (1) the tendency is for the individual's competence, confidence, and power progressively to increase (or decrease); and (2) the perceptions and expectations that others have of the individual become solidified. Kanter's model, like Kohn's, provides a set of structural conditions that contribute to the development of "self-actualizing" or "self-defeating" people.

Kanter has used her theory of behavior in work organizations to explain the problems of women in male-dominated work organizations. She makes a strong case for the primacy of structural disadvantage in the development of such "typically female" attributes as pettiness, bossiness, low aspirations, loyalty to immediate work groups, and con-
cern with emotional ties with workers. Earlier patterns of sex-role socialization are typically invoked to account for these characteristics of women in organizations. But Kanter (1976) found that they are as descriptive of the behavior of men in structurally disadvantaged positions in the organization as they are of women.

There are a number of similarities as well as some interesting differences between Kanter's theory and Kohn's. Both, in the tradition of Marx, root consciousness in experience, rather than the reverse. For that matter, consciousness (in the sense of beliefs, values, attitudes, self-conceptions) is considered a product of, and an adaptation to, the experience of the work situation, and this consciousness, in turn, has behavioral consequences.

They differ, however, in what each considers the most important features of the work situation and the content of consciousness to which they give rise. The major difference between Kanter's theory and Kohn's is that the former focuses on the larger system of structural (organizational) relations within which a person's job is located. The structure of opportunity, the structure of power, and the social composition of peer clusters as analytical dimensions of the work setting only make sense if the larger organizational context is used as a frame of reference. Kohn's theory, by contrast, focuses essentially on the nature of the work that an individual does (substantive complexity of the job) and the amount of freedom that one has in doing it (degree of self-direction on the job), largely in isolation from the larger organizational context. Another important difference is that Kanter brings a temporal dimension into her analysis. The structure of opportunity brings in the worker's assessment of the future, via prospects for upward mobility, as a factor in present adjustment. Kohn states: "People relate to the present in part in terms of their expectations and prospects for the future... to be 'stuck' is a very different work experience than being 'up and coming.'" (1977:251).

As a result, Kanter focused on careers; Kohn on jobs.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. Kanter's theory was developed out of an analysis of managerial positions in an organization, and seems to be well suited to this organizational level. It is probably less appropriate to blue-collar workers, and inappropriate to individual entrepreneurs. Kohn's theory, on the other hand, was developed to encompass a wide range of occupational contexts, but at the cost of ignoring the systemic or organizational characteristics within which occupations exist. Taken together, however, they constitute the best current work on socialization in work settings.

WORK IN THE LARGER SOCIAL SETTING

Work settings, like most other socialization contexts, are affected by the larger society within which they exist. The nature of the economic system in a society is one of the most important of these larger contextual considerations. For example, the degree of industrialization, mechanization, and bureaucratization, as well as the predominant form of social relations in the economic system (capitalism, communism, feudalism, slavery), have a pervasive effect on the socialization experience that work provides.

Much of the sociological literature on the psychological consequences of work has dealt with the alienating effects of capitalism (Bowles and Gintis 1976). As developed by Marx, the idea of alienation labor stresses the extent to which the individual has control over his labor and its product. The ideal of labor, for Marx, was the active, self-realizing individual in a social process of production where the work is a goal in itself. Labor that is strictly instrumental becomes alienating labor. This is most likely to occur in economic systems where labor is bought or owned (that is, where there is a distinction between owners of the means of production and workers, such as in capitalism, feudalism, and slave economies) and where the work is highly mechanized (as in industrialized societies). These conditions are conducive to the alienation of workers.

There is ample evidence on work in American society to suggest substantial dissatisfaction and alienation of workers from their jobs (Kornhauser 1965; Bowles and Gintis 1976). In a recent Department of Health, Education, and Welfare report (Work in America 1975), only 43 percent of white-collar workers and 24 percent of blue-collar workers said that they were satisfied with their jobs.

The socialization consequences of work settings can reflect either processes of relatively passive compliance and adaptation to external exigencies or processes of self-determination and expansion. The Marxist critique of work in capitalist America clearly stresses the predominance of the former process. But in the analysis of Kohn and Kanter, discussed above, it is clear that both aspects of socialization are present. They are not, however, equally distributed across occupations: there is a decided shift from the adaptive/compliant pole to the creative/self-determinative pole of the socialization continuum as one moves from occupations of lower to higher prestige in society.

Radical Re-Socialization Contexts

The focus of this section is on socialization contexts in which the explicit goal is the transformation of the individual. Whereas the previous four contexts could all be viewed as generally reflecting what Wheeler (1966) called "developmental socialization," the contexts considered in this section deal with "re-socialization." The changes which an individual undergoes in these contexts, therefore, represent a more radical discontinuity with the past.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF RE-SOCIALIZATION CONTEXTS

Re-socialization can take place in various institutional settings established for this purpose, such as in prisons, mental hospitals, and compen-
Processes and Outcomes in Re-socialization Contexts

The range of processes and outcomes in re-socialization contexts is about as broad and encompassing as it is in the family. In both settings, the person as a whole is the object of development and change at a fundamental level (that is, basic values, motivations, beliefs, and self-conceptions). In re-socialization contexts, however, the processes of socialization are typically more concentrated, more intense, and directed toward the transformation, rather than the formation, of the person.

Assault on identity: the process of death and rebirth. Within re-socialization contexts, there is an acute focus on matters of identity. The identity in question is usually a pivotal one, involving a core aspect of the individual's self-concept and sense of reality, such as "American," "professor," "moral person," or "Christian." The identities in question tend to be cast in strongly positive or strongly negative terms, and the language in general is heavily charged with value connotations. The new identities toward which the individual is re-socialized are not only different from the old, but typically antithetical to them. A common theme found in the literature on radical re-socialization is that the old self must "die" before the new self can emerge—the old and the new identities cannot coexist.

The agents of socialization in these conversion contexts define the situation as one in which it is their mission to help the individual "see the light." They view the individual as being someone who is in error or in ignorance, and who needs their help in order to be saved. Salvation, however, can be a painful experience, especially if the task involves first dislodging the individual from his old identities. The assault on present and past identities takes place through a combination of physical and psychological coercion, which induces fear and stress in the individual, and through forced participation in the process of constant self-scrutiny and re-examination of one's past from the perspective of, and with the language provided by, the agents of socialization. The power of the group to influence the attitudes and perceptions of the individual member has been the subject of several classic studies in social psychology (Asch 1946; Sherif 1936). Its power is that much greater when operating in a closed, totalitarian environment toward a clear goal, such as the ideological conversion of a new recruit.

Lifton's (1963) description of the Chinese Communist program of thought reform or brainwashing is illuminating. Along with the physical coercion, the lack of sleep, and the various forms of psychological stress used to weaken the prisoner's hold on past beliefs and identities, Lifton describes the process of identity casting used in the situation (1963:65-76).

From the beginning, it was made clear that the "reactionary spy" who entered the prison must perish, and in his place must arise a "new man" resistant to the Communist mold. A person's major status identifications, such as doctor, priest, teacher, as well as his name, were undermined and replaced by the identity of "criminal."

Perhaps the most significant assaults upon the prisoner's identity occurred during the process of confession. Confession, which was the major technique employed by the captors to involve the prisoner in the process of his own reform, required thorough and compelling self-examination of every action, attitude, and thought, and always from the "people's perspective." A series of denunciations of friends and associates was required as an essential part of the confession. Making these denunciations not only generated feelings of guilt and shame in the prisoner but subverted the structure of his own life. Even when the prisoner was aware that his confession was "wilde" and his denunciations invalid, he began to behave as if he were a criminal. The prisoner found himself first announcing, and then experiencing, the refashioned identity that was emerging. This may be considered the "rebirth."

The assault on identities is less dramatic in Empey and Rabow's (1961) description of the Provo Experiment in delinquency rehabilitation, but some of the same elements are present. Like the prisoner of thought reform, the delinquent boy's initial situation was purposely amorphous: "They are left on their own to figure out why authorities are doing what they are doing and what they must do to get out of trouble" (1961:888).

The new concept soon discovered that the only avenue for release was through participation in the delinquent peer group, which was the primary source of pressure for change. The main interactions took place in daily group discussion sessions. In these group sessions, the essential ingredients of identity assault included confession of past transgressions through a minute re-examination of the past, including one's former identities, with the aid of a reform vocabulary and the constant pressure of the peer group. The parallels between this delinquency rehabilitation program and the Chinese thought-reform program have been suggested by several scholars (Gordon 1962 and Empey and Rabow themselves 1962).

Within religious conversion contexts, assault on identity is not as harsh, as concentrated, or as stressful as in these other conversion settings. One reason for this is that the religious contexts are usually voluntary associations—new recruits usually have the option to leave if the situation gets too stressful. But more important, there is less need to use harsh tactics or much effort to alienate the individual from his past identities. Most of them are already alienated, unhappy with themselves or
their lives, lack a strong sense of self and identity, and carry a burden of guilt (Richardson et al., 1972; Lofland 1965). The main task for the religious group is to channel this discontent into the creation of the new religious self. To be sure, denunciations of past identities and behaviors are still expected, but this is typically done without the coercion reported in forced political conversion contexts. The task of building a "new self" is therefore easier in the religious context. But in both types of re-socialization contexts, it is built largely on the rubble of the old self."

Mechanisms of conversion. There are some striking similarities in the mechanisms used for conversion in the various contexts discussed: total milieu control, group pressure for change, forced participation, either through "discussions" of Marxist doctrine (as in the thought-reform programs of the Chinese) or through group songs and games (as in the Unification Church); emphasis on self-revelation and the denunciation of one's past.

But there are also some interesting differences in the methods used by the various groups. All of these groups approach conversion initially at the effective rather than the cognitive level. The nature of the affect tends to be either strongly negative or strongly positive. In Lofland's description of the methods of thought reform, the major technique used to make the prisoner receptive to change was fear. Initially, it was simply fear of physical punishment and harassment. But as the effects of confession, self-betrayal, and group attack began to take hold, it became a fear of psychological annihilation (Lofland describes this as hitting rock bottom psychologically). At this point, the group tactics changed in the direction of greater leniency, offering the prisoner a way out of his misery.

By contrast, the method more characteristic of religious conversion groups is to overwhelm the new recruit with positive affect. Lofland describes this initial strategy as used by the followers of the "Divine Principles" as follows:

The conscious strategy of these encompassing week-end camps was to drench prospects in approval and love - to "love bomb" them, as the DPs termed it. The cognitive hesitations and emotional reservations of prospects could then be drowned in calls of loving solidarity (p. 82).

Lofland goes on to observe: "We learn again from looking at the DPs that love can be the most coercive and cruel power of all" (p. 82). Either love or fear can be used to strengthen the group's hold over the individual and make the individual more vulnerable to radical re-socialization.

Re-socialization contexts in the larger societal setting

Since one of the key features of the re-socialization contexts examined in this section is isolation from the larger society, the effect of the larger social setting on socialization in these contexts is minimal compared to the other contexts considered. But even here, the larger social setting has some effect. For example, antagonism or hostility of the larger society to the re-socializing group may have a solidifying effect on group members, strengthening their commitment and identification with the group. On the other hand, where the re-socialization context is supported or even legitimizing, the larger society, we would expect a greater reliance on physical coercion of the inmates, especially if they are in the situation involuntarily. In general, however, the more totalistic the re-socialization context, the less it is influenced in its socialization processes and outcomes by the larger society.


Conclusion

Most of the general principles of learning (such as reinforcement, modeling, role-playing, and direct instruction), as well as processes of social influence (such as labeling and expectancy effects, social comparisons and reference-group influences, and group pressure in creating norms and constructing realities), operate to some degree in each of the socialization contexts examined. But it is also apparent, even in this brief review, that these contexts constitute different socialization experiences for individuals. Some of this is undoubtedly due to the association of these contexts with individuals at different life stages: children are more involved with family and school contexts; adults are more involved in occupational and re-socialization contexts.

But the main contention in this essay is that differences in the socialization experiences provided by these contexts are due largely to differences in goals, functions, and social structural features of these contexts. They constitute the parameters within which the two general aspects of socialization (adaptation and self-assertion) take place, and also bear on the effectiveness of the socialization processes. In this regard, the structure of the family, as a small, intimate group of relatively long duration with strongly affective bonds between members, is a relatively effective context for socialization. Processes of modeling, identification, and reinforcement are especially evident in this context, but most of the other processes also apply. Adolescent peer groups are small, voluntary associations between status equals that provide an arena for the exercise of independence from adult authority (especially parents and school).

The development of intimate friendship bonds and the ability of the group to exert pressure toward conformity are key features of the socialization experience in this context. School and occupation are not as encompassing or as effective in their socialization outcomes as are family and peers. Yet, individuals spend much of their lives in these settings, and they do leave their mark on the personality. Both school and occupational contexts are more formal, public, and judgmental than are family and peers. Through the individual's adaptation to the particular features of these contexts, they give rise to general norms, values, and behavior patterns. In addition, one of the important things learned in the acquisition of institutional roles is how to maintain self-esteem even under adverse organizational circumstances.

The re-socialization contexts considered here are the most dramatic in their socialization outcomes. They highlight one of the most important features of a socialization context - the socialization ratio. In general, the
higher the ratio of agents of socialization to socializees, the more effective is the context of socialization in bringing about changes in individuals. Since one's sense of reality (especially sense of self) is dependent in large part on social confirmation, the concerted efforts of group members to change a person's self-concept can have a powerful effect. In a sense, the radical re-socialization context is a combination of some of the most important socialization features of family and peer group. Like the family, it treats the socializee in holistic terms in the context of intimate, effectively charged relations. Like the peer group, it has the force of numbers in the socialization ratio. 

To the extent that the socialization ratio is low, the organization is less effective in achieving its socialization goals. There are two main reasons for this: (a) the agents of socialization have less direct exposure to, and impact on, any one socializee; and (b) the socializee cohort is likely to organize in a context of socialization itself: developing goals and norms that frequently are antithetical to those of the organization. This is evident in such institutional contexts of socialization as schools, prisons, and even within large families.

There are a few other general observations that can be made concerning factors affecting the efficacy of socialization contexts. Mortimer and Simmons observed in their review of the socialization literature (1978: 494) that socialization is most likely to succeed in situations of high affectivity where the socializing agents have considerable power over the socializee. These are conditions most closely approximated by the two most powerful contexts of socialization examined here: family and religious-conversion groups. Within the family, it was found that high parental support combined with high control produced children most effectively socialized to adult standards. Positive affect, however, is not a sine qua non for effective socialization. The political re-socialization contexts suggest that fear combined with total control of the socializee can have similar powerful socialization consequences.

The more the individual is involved in the socialization process, the more effective is the socialization context. Even if the individual's acts are initially coerced and do not reflect the sentiment or attitude that is desired by the socializers, the appropriate behavior often eventually instills the intended psychological response. This proposition becomes more evident in situations where the socializer becomes responsible for socializing others—a common circumstance for older siblings in the family and for "advanced" socializees in conversion contexts. In the process of socializing others, they become more effectively socialized themselves.

Some Directions and Trends

A number of years ago, Sewell (1944) observed that sociology's contribution to the topic of socialization is its emphasis on the importance of social structure in human development. This has not always been apparent, and some might still disagree with Sewell's assessment. The reason is that much of the sociological work on socialization has been done out of the symbolic interaction tradition which has emphasized social process rather than social structure. One of the promising trends in the area of socialization is a gradual convergence between these two positions—between the classical sociological concern with the social structural bases of human experience and behavior, and the interactionists' concern with social process as the matrix for the creation of meanings. Actually, this is not such a drastic convergence. A number of scholars have argued for the compatibility of symbolic interactionism with social structural concerns (Moines 1977; Lewis 1976). Good examples of this convergence can be found in the works of Turner (1975), Rosenberg (1977), and especially Sykles (1981). Focusing on contexts of socialization requires a consideration of both social structure and social process.

But perhaps the most significant trend in the area of socialization (within both sociology and psychology) is an increasing shift from a passive to an active view of the individual. wrong's (1961) criticism of sociology as having an "over-socialized view of man" is becoming less true. The active, creative self has always been conspicuous in symbolic interaction theory, if not as evident in its research. The problem for the interactionists has been in translating this theoretical stance into research on socialization (Gecas 1984). The emergence of exchange theory and conflict theory on the socialization scene has given new impetus to the self-as-agent and self-creator themes (Tullman 1975; Mortimer and Simmons 1978). It has led to increased attention to the reciprocal effects between socializers and socializees, between social structure and the individual.

This shift to a more active self in the socialization process is even more evident in psychology. In a large extent, it is associated with the increasing influence of cognitive developmental theories and to the cognitive revolution in psychology in general (see especially Bandura 1977, 1978). As applied to socialization research, there is increasing emphasis on cognitive competence, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and the sense of personal causation in determining outcomes. For example, in parent-child interactions, there has been an increased focus on how parents influence their children and how patterns of interaction become stabilized (Zigler and Seif 1978). There is a clear convergence of sociological and psychological thinking in the direction of a more active self. The direction for future research on socialization is to exploit the reciprocal relationships between the individual and his environment, and, in the process, to show how contexts of socialization shape and are shaped by those passing through them.

Notes

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1. We must use caution, however, in interpreting these relationships because differences in family size reflect in some extent differences in the values, goals, and standards that parents hold, which are related to religion and social class. Yet family size does seem to have an independent effect on family patterns beyond its association with such factors as religion (Elder and Bovianer 1956).

2. The reference here is to elementary and high schools, not to colleges and schools for professional or technical training.

3. Teachers, of course, are also socialized in the classroom (Dreikurs 1953 and Jackson 1957). In the present analysis, the role of the teacher’s predilections in the classroom is less relevant than the preoccupations of the socialization process.

4. In the writing of the “culture of poverty” and “cultural deprivation” advocates, the family is typically seen as the source of the child’s inadequacies, which are then overcome (Valentine 1958).

5. There is a considerable body of research on socialization. For example, the work of Becker and his colleagues (1968), and Bloom et al. (1973).

6. The clearest that Kohlman comes to a consideration of the social relationships in the work setting is in his study of “bureaucratic man” (1951). Yet even here, the major influence is on the content of the job, especially its degree of complexity, rather than on the social organizational properties of the work group.

7. There are, of course, many other important analyses of the effects of work on workers. Thus, the literature in this area is quite extensive (see, for example, Shepherd 1957 and Blau and Blau 1964) on technology and alienation; Korczner 1969 on job stress, and the Work in America report (1973) on worker satisfaction.

8. Bowles and Gintis (1976) also point out that the nature of social relations characteristic of capitalist economies is also generally found in communist countries. The worker is used to the extent of his controller or industry, and the product of labor is in the hands of the state rather than the private corporation.

9. In this section, I have relied primarily on the following empirical reports of socialization processes in these small, intensive groups. Lofland’s (1966) extensive research on “social control” of Western civilization and Chinese intellectuals by the Chinese Communist after the Korean War. Empey’s (1961, 1967) research on the use of peer groups in delinquent rehabilitation, and Lofland’s (1966, 1977) work on religious conversion.

10. Assault on identity as an initial stage in the re-socialization process is also evident in the context of large, bureaucratic socialization institutions. Goffman’s Asylums (1961) is the classic work on this topic. In these settings, it is accomplished less by direct assault than by processes of de-personalization stemming from the regimentation and standardization of life on the ward. Much of Goffman’s analysis is an examination of the role of the institution and the staff as unique factors in the various supports for the patient’s self.

11. The voluntaristic, self-determine conception of religious conversions has been by several scholars (Richardson 1973, 1976; Strauss 1975). Richardson (1974) distinguishes the “old paradigm” of religious conversion from the emerging “new paradigm.” The former is a conversion viewed as the passive and helpless pawn of forces beyond his control and understanding. By contrast, the “new paradigm” offers a view of the religious convert as an active seeker of salvation and purpose, of a very much an agent in the process of religious conversion. Translating this distinction into our own terms, the “old paradigm” of religious conversion emphasizes adaptation as the socialization or conversion process: the “new paradigm” stresses self-assertion and self-definition.

12. There is ample evidence in the social psychological literature that behavior initiated for whatever reasons gives rise to self-attitudes and beliefs (Goffman 1972) is most closely identified with this position.

13. Although the socialization in these contexts is more dramatic and occurs within a shorter period of time than in other contexts, it frequently does not have the same long-term effects. The force of the socialization experience seems to diminish the longer the individual has been away from the closed group context (see Empey 1961, 1967; for an assessment of the long-term effects of the experiments in group delinquency rehabilitation and Lofland 1977; for those released from the Chinese thought-reform programs).

14. There may even be a “bureaucratizing effect” under these circumstances, in that the socializers may develop in ways appropriate to those intended by the agent of socialization within these contexts (Rosenberg, personal communication).

15. The concern with the self as cause and as consequence goes back to the very beginnings of sociology as a discipline. Cartwright points out that Comte viewed man as both a creature and a creator of his social world and identified the central problem of social psychology as addressing the question of how the individual can be both the cause and the consequence of society (1979, 46).