

# **The Socialisation Process**

## **Definitions and Examples**

- Socialisation – The process by which we learn the culture of our society.
- Primary socialisation – Intimate and influential socialisation in the early years of life (usually from parents)
- Secondary socialisation – Socialisation that occurs later in life from various different sources.
- Re-socialisation – When a person has to learn new ways when their role changes.
- Anticipatory socialisation – The process by which knowledge and skills are learned for future roles
- Internalising – Is the process that norms and values shared by society become part of a persons own personal set of values.

## **Agents of Socialisation - Parents**

Children learn about social norms from imitating their parents, as they grow up they use their parents as role models. Parents try to teach social norms by telling them how to behave and setting examples. They use sanctions (rewards and punishments) to guide and control this process.

## **Reay's Research**

Diane Reay (1998) studied 33 mothers in London. She said that middle class mothers had more time and energy to spend with their children reading, playing etc. Where as working class mothers had more of a struggle to make ends meet so therefore didn't have the same amount of time and energy. This could therefore indicate that the amount of socialisation coming from parents is fairly dependant on their class / social status.

## **Furedi's Research**

Frank Furedi (2001) studied how the roles of parents have changed over time. He said traditionally 'good' parents tried to care for and stimulate their children. But now he describes parents as paranoid because they now see their main task as protecting their children from danger (accidents, paedophiles, bullies). He said that parent's paranoia prevents children from taking certain risks, i.e. school trips and playing outside, he then goes on to say that this prevents children from developing a healthy sense of adventure. Which shows the social pressure for parents to protect their children, but could reinforce gender stereotypes, as parents tend to worry more about their daughters going out then they do their sons.

### **Education**

The hidden curriculum takes place within the school where pupils learn the expectations and background assumptions that run through the school. It unintentionally teaches children the importance of hard work, teamwork, competition and the importance of following the rules.

### **Skelton's Research**

Christine Skelton (2001) studied a primary school in the North East; it was in an economically deprived area with a high reputation for crime and theft. The school took it upon themselves of socialising the children. She stated that when young boys went to school they took with them attitudes, aggression, physical toughness and dominance, things they had seen local 'lads' doing. The school attempted to maintain social control by using firm measures, such as using locked gates, fences and security cameras. Teachers (both male and female) took on masculine roles (firm eye contact, intimidating body language) to gain 'respect' from troublesome pupils. This shows us that, schools / education play a huge part in socialisation, and have also undermined gender socialisation as even the women teachers on masculine roles to gain control. But a negative effect of that could be the fact it might reinforce the idea that men are of a higher status than women.

### **Peer Group**

In the early years of children's lives playing with each other helps them learn. They learn about social norms e.g. treating others properly. How to develop social skills, e.g. not fighting over toys, and by playing games such as shop assistants and customers they are experimenting with social roles.

As children move into teenage years they start to develop a stronger sense of their own identity through socialising with other people their age, it also helps them develop / gain independence from their parents which in turn prepares them for taking on adult roles.

### **Adler and Adler's Research**

Adler and Adler (1998) studied a group of white middle class children in the United States. They found that peer group was v a very important thing within the lives of these children. They said as cliques form and some groups gain a higher status than others certain members of the individual groups have more power and influence than others, and within each group friends are expected to be loyal to their peer values. This research shows us that peoples peer groups play a huge part in socialisation. People's peers have a great influence on the paths and choices they make.

### **Mass Media**

Marie Gillespie (1993) found that 'Bollywood' videos used important socialising functions within them. These videos create links between Asian communities throughout the world, and that the help socialise young Asian children. The videos socialise young children into Asian cultures and language, they also help reinforce a sense of Asian identity within them.

## Religion

Religion has an influence on social attitudes and behaviour. Each religion has a set of moral values, which over time become a part of society as people are exposed to them. Religious rituals and ceremonies force social unity. I.e. marriages, funerals, and baptisms bring people together and remind them of their shared values. Religions provide a moral code, which can help people guide, their behaviour. Although attendances to church are decreasing in Britain it does not mean that the country is becoming secular (non religious) as this does not automatically mean that people have abandoned religious ideas and beliefs. All of these things show that religion does play quite a large part in socialisation even though it isn't clear, as many people say they don't 'believe' but yet they still follow the values, that originally came from religion.

## Butler's Research

Charlotte Butler (1995) studied a group of Muslim girls who were born in Britain that adapted some of their religious beliefs to fit in with the circumstances surrounding them. Although they were firmly committed to their Muslim identities they modified it in certain ways, such as rejecting customs of arrange marriages, which their experience of living in Britain had showed them that such a custom was not relevant. So they were developing more independent lifestyles but at the same time they maintained their commitment to Islam. Charlotte's research tells us that although religion plays a big part in socialisation it can be affected by the place / culture in which a person lives.

## Work

- **Formal Socialisation** in the work place would be the firm's responsibility. They would usually have rules / norms about appearance and behaviour.
- **Informal Socialisation** in the workplace would be from the peer groups. They usually have their own rituals i.e. playing jokes on the newcomers etc.

## Waddington's Research

Waddington's research states that canteen culture (describes the informal culture of police officers as they spend time together) help socialise police officers. They can learn from listening to other officers telling stories of how they overcame 'tricky' situations and they can pick up practical advice. He said that canteen chat helps police officers deal with their stressful jobs. It can also reinforce their sense of mission (they're doing a valuable job fighting crime) and can boost their occupational self esteem. Waddington's research states the positive effects that certain types of socialisation can have, and that it's not always a bad thing.