How socialization develops our society
and the effects COVID-19 has had on it.
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Socialization is the process of people adapting to the norms and expectations of a society in order to be part of it and participate accordingly. By socializing we are able to become members of a society, and act according to the norms a society is enforcing. It can be seen as the ticket to entering society. Due to socialization our society is able to work in harmony,it gives us an outline on our role in society, whether it's dressing appropriately for an occasion or acting according to the scenario, socialization and all its roles dictates the right decision. As we become socialized we are able to socialize others and they continue the cycle.

But how does the process of socialization come about? Socialization is broken down into 6 agents of socialization, they are religion, family, peers, school, mass media and work. These 6 agents all play different parts in making a person whole. They each individually develop a person in its own way. We experience these agents through different times and stages of our life.

The first agent of socialization we experience in our lives is family. This is important because it is the first moment in our life in which we experience socialization. This is where we pick up behaviors we will be using for the rest of our lives, where our norms, values and ideas are influenced. Family starts with parents and siblings at home. This is where our ideas on how we view the world are shaped. If an individual grows up with opinionated parents they are more likely to be opinionated as well. If someone grows up with older siblings, they will use their siblings as a guide in what is considered acceptable in the modern social group. Parents may also share cultural values that influence how to act within society. For example, in many cultures elders are treated with the highest of respects because they have become wise through all their years of learning. They are to be put first and always be attended to. This can warp a young child's mind into thinking all elders ,no matter what culture, must be treated with such dignity. Whereas a child who was not brought up in such culture will treat elders fairly but won't take much importance in going above and beyond.

Another factor that contributes to a household family's environment is the sex of the parents. In this new day and age same sex couples are starting to make their stamp in society, and although society is becoming more open towards the LGBTQ+ community there is still backlash against these families. Families with same sex parents are more likely to be excluded, and their children are more likely to be teased and questioned at school. A child might negatively be affected by this and may experience embarrassment towards their own family. But researchers have identified that the unordinary family isn't the cause of the downfall in confidence of a child, rather its not being accepted by society. "It is family processes, rather than family structures that make more of a meaningful difference in a child's life"[2] Although this hardship might take place same sex families often have a defense system ready as most of them have expereinced this issue throughout their life which leads to a mature outlook on gender, sexuality and family variety from a young age. "these studies conclude that children raised by same-sex couples show better psychological adjustment, and greater open- mindedness towards sexuality, gender and family diversity."[2]

When looking beyond household family we find extended family that includes cousins, uncles, aunts etc. Extended family is different from a household family because the amount of time spent together is different and the scenarios are different. In a way extended family is like a "mini society" that acts like a transition into society while still being in the comfort of a safe space with people you trust.[3] While household family may see you at your most vulnerable, extended family will watch you grow up from a distance.

Regardless of the type of family, this agent of socialization is responsible for teaching an individual their first real view of cultural norms and values. Depending on a family's presence and involvement , an individual is already at an advantage or disadvantage when they enter society. A person heavily involved in their family will be more emotionally and mentally stable to be more involved in social settings, whereas a person in a neglective family will tend to be more alone and isolated. Family is the foundation of a person's life and will dictate how

they start their social life. Family is responsible for building up an individual and preparing them for the next step of socialization, religion and school.

Religion is very often intertwined with culture and more importantly, family. While an individual is being influenced by family opinions and ideals , they are simultaneously experiencing religion. For many families, religion is the backbone of their principles. It is mixed with their culture and takes pride and importance in not only practicing it but making sure it is practiced by the next generation in order to keep the tradition going. In some religions gender norms and expectations are significant. In others family based ceremonies such as marriage, births and bar mitzvahs are tied to religion.[4] These celebrations, although they happen at different stages, are all important steps in a person's life that must be honored through religious ceremonies. Religious practices are highly influenced by how they saw their parents practice religion throughout their childhood. Research shows that a consistency in religious activities as a family results in a higher chance of adults practicing the same religion as adults. Part of this unity also involves parents enrolling and pushing towards religious based extracurricular activities. By doing so parents are more ensured to have their children learn about the religion and hopefully practicing it throughout their life. Research shows this tactic works because children are more likely to form an emotional connection with religion that enclines them to continue to practice and learn about it. Religion is a connection between culture and family.

 Professor Darren Sherkat states "Agents of socialization influence individuals only if the source is a trusted and valued connection, and experiences can only inform religious understandings if they are salient for religious faith." [5] By this he means a person can't be forced into a religion no matter how hard they are pushed , but they must want and see the importance in it in order to follow it. As previously stated, when a person is attuned with a religion, all their life accomplishments are celebrated how their religion sees fit.When people use phrases like "thank god" and "mashallah" they are reinforcing their faith and giving credit to their religion for things going the way they were hoping. Religion is a safe haven for many, it gives people hope when in hard

situations, strengths to continue and reason when things don't make sense. It is a bridge to create connections with similar minded people and builds communities to expand our society.

The third agent to discuss is school. In America children spend roughly "7 hours a day 180 days of the year" making school very important in a child's social life.[4] Although a school's purpose is to teach students materials such as math and english, it also plays a part in introducing students to work as teams, collaborate with others, follow timed schedules and behave properly in public scenarios. "These kindergarteners aren't just learning to read and write; they are being socialized to norms like keeping their hands to themselves, standing in line, and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance." [4] School introduces socialization from the very beginning, and increases as age does. As students learn their materials they are being socialized to behave and act accordingly as they would outside of school. Students learn roles, like teachers being role models and learning and respecting them. They learn their role in this scenario is to pay attention and behave. They learn to work well with others and respect each other and their space.

The two agents, school and peers go hand in hand. By definition a peer group is a group of people roughly the same age and social status . A good example would be a classroom. As students are learning new societal norms in school they are learning them with new people alongside them. While in school students and their peers learn to socialize with one another in a safe way just like they would in society.

While peer groups are important for all ages, peers are particularly important during teenage years. Peer groups have a special role for teens because it is the time in their lives where they begin to give importance to what others think of us. As teenagers, social status starts to become more important, cliques start to become apparent and there is a want to fit in or be a part of a peer group. "Peer groups provide adolescents' first major socialization experience outside the realm of their families."[4] In peer groups, teens are able to share traits they have in common as well as learn about new ones. They are able to see different perspectives apart from their

own and even learn about new cultures and religions. Peer groups are essential in social growth because it broadens a person's knowledge of society and its diversity as well as how to act in different sub sections of society. By being involved in various peer groups a person is socializing and practicing all the agents learned so far unknowingly. Peer groups evolve society and propers socializational growth.

In continuation of young adult development the fifth agent, media, compliments peer groups in teens. Media has many areas including books/magazines,newspapers , TV shows/movies, music and the most popular, social media. Now more than ever media and social media are at its peak. Teens and young adults are fascinated with the idea of sharing details of their life, expecting others to share part of theirs and getting all their news from social media even if most information is fake. Even if you aren't a fan of social media there is no denying that it has completely changed the way we socialize. It has affected family interactions, dating, communication and even the way students learn. Unlike the other agents of socialization discussed previously, media has more of a choice an individual makes. An individual chooses to participate in social media, they choose who to befriend on Facebook and Instagram and they choose what kind of information to believe.

 Another important detail of media in recent years is the way it has been affecting young adults' self confidence and outlook on what they should be looking like. But although social media has some cons it also contributes pros. Thanks to social media, people are able to talk to families from other countries and keep connected and updated on their lives despite being hundreds of miles away from each other. It is also more accessible to get news and important updates on any dilemma. Media has has changed drastically over the last few years but it has developed socialization in a very unique way.

The last agent of socialization to be discussed is work. This agent is typically the last of the agents to be experienced since most people start working in their late teens. But just like school work is a great size of a person's time, especially if it is someone's profession. "Different jobs require different types of socialization."

[4] Although every job is different, what they all have in common is adjusting to the work environment and learning how to work with coworkers and bosses. Young Adults with jobs will most likely only have a part time job in order to gain experience in a work setting. College students these days will often change from job to job to build up their resume in order to have a more broad range of skills and experience. As for graduated college students working in their profession, or adults working in their field there is more of a focused and pressing view on the job because it is what they have studied for. There is more importance in this job because in theory it should be the job you should be working in for the rest of your life. There is more competition between co workers and more pressure to succeed in order to get a sense of fulfillment from that job. But whether it is a 20 year old working part time at a supermarket or a 30 year old at a law firm, the workplace still teaches socialization. Socialization strengthens the workplace and bond between co workers thus leading to better teamwork and flourishment of the company. By socializing between people in the workplace there is better understanding and communication which allows employees to get tasks done faster and more efficiently. The workplace is an important part of socialization specially for adults because it is the last new way of socialization to be experienced. In a workplace a person can develop new friendships, they can learn or enhance abilities and even accomplish long life dreams. It grows our society and expands socialization.

Socialization is what drives our societies and builds communities. Socialization is divided into different areas in order to learn more on how it helps us become part of society. To begin, family is the backbone of a person's ideas, norms and values. This is the first instant in our lives where we hear about views on the world. Family is one of the strongest agents because it will remain mostly the same throughout a person's life. There will always be the desire to be accepted and make a family proud no matter what age. In connection to family there is religion. Religion and the culture a person is brought up in will dictate how a person sees everything. It will control if a person will thank one god or a particular one of the many they praise, and it will push towards what kind of people they will associate with. To continue, school is the first time a person will experience a new way of socialization. School will not only teach a student materials but it will show teamwork and collaboration,

friendships and competition, obeying rules and using creativity. School allows a person to grow socially and develop an individually unique personality that will be used to socialize with other peers. Peer groups allow children to work together and use their differences to learn more instead of letting it divide them. Media is now the center of what it feels like the world. It allows for new ways of communication and new ways to be updated on news. Finally the workplace is where a person is mature enough to combine these traits and fully be accepted into society.

For the past year we have been enduring a worldwide pandemic that has changed our lives in many ways. In terms of socialization there are vast differences in how we were socialized before the pandemic than how we are now. We are forced to practice religion in a safer yet distant way, our interactions with peers and family has had to be limited and the media has been bombarded with nothing but updates on the pandemic.School and work have been moved to online erasing the fundamental purpose of both.

 In order to get a view how others have felt about the lack of socialization during the pandemic, I conducted a survey on 3 individuals. Each individual was asked the question " How has the pandemic affected the way you socialize with people ?" Individual number one responded " I keep my social gatherings in small groups, and only with people I trust in order to protect ourselves from the virus." Individual number 2 answered "I'm honestly still scared about being in big crowded places. I haven't gone out much like I used to. I lost a close uncle in the start of the pandemic so that really shaped my view and i've been taking extra precautions just in case ." Individual number 3 answered " Its definitely changed because now it feels like we can't trust each other. There is definitely a barrier now between everyone that wasn't there before. Everyone has their guard up." After conducting this interview and hearing what just three individuals had to say there was definitely a correlation between their answers. Although these three individuals can't speak for everyone they do express the most popular opinion of which people are keeping their guard up and aren't socializing like they used to. People are keeping their distance, they are staying home more often and questioning people's trust.

HOW SOCIALIZATION DEVELOPS OUR SOCIETY

The pandemic has changed the way we live our lives, whether it's taking classes from home or working from home but mostly it has damaged our connections to one another. This can cause an issue in the future of our society because there will be a lack of trust between us creating a divide. Even though things are getting back to normal as vaccinations are allowing things to open up again it will still be some time before we fully accept things the way they used to. Socialization will be warped for years even after the pandemic has subsided.

Socialization is what pushes our society to continue. Without socialization there would be no communities, our society would diminish. Thanks to socialization we not only become ready to enter society but we learn how to contribute to it. We are unknowingly being socialized throughout our years and we unknowingly socialize others just by being part of society. Socialization is experienced differently by everyone due to their upbringing and the community they grew up in. Socialization by family teaches us the basics, it gives us a start in life and is the first look we have at gender norms, social norms etc. Religion can influence a person even further with dictating their actions in everyday scenarios. Religion and peer socialization allows us to surround ourselves with people who share our beliefs. Workplace and Media allows us to understand our surroundings, how our society works and what's happening everyday. All these subgroups come together and socialize every person individually through their own ways. By socializing we learn to live in a community together and still have our own opinions and be individuals.

HOW SOCIALIZATION DEVELOPS OUR SOCIETY

The topic of my paper is how socialization affects our society as well as how the COVID-19 pandemic has warped it.

In my essay I explained how socialization is the process of people adapting to the norms and expectations of a society in order to be part of it. I discussed each individual agent of socialization which includes family, religion, school, peers, media and work. Each agent individually develops a person in its own way and prepares an individual to eventually be a part of society. In order to get a view of how others have felt about the lack of socialization during the pandemic, I conducted a survey on 3 individuals. Each individual was asked the question " How has the pandemic affected the way you socialize with people ?"Although these three individuals can't speak for everyone, they do express the most popular opinion in that people are keeping their guard up and aren't socializing like they used to. People are keeping their distance, they are staying home more often and questioning people's trust. This is a threat to our society because we need to socialize in order for it to prosper. By socializing we learn to live in a community together and still have our own opinions and be individuals.

1. Grusec, J., Hastings, P., & Anderson, C. (2015). *Handbook of socialization : theory and research* (Second edition.). The Guilford Press. [LINK]

   My first reference is from a handbook written about socialization as a whole through the different ages of a person. Joan E. Grusec and Paul D. Hastings wrote in detail about socialization, its percs and how it affects families. The authors specifically focus on the biological side of socialization. I chose this book as a reference because I saw it was detailed with information on the agent of the family. It helped me understand how family and culture are intertwined when being socialized.

2. Knight KW, Stephenson SE, West S, et al. "*The kids are OK: it is discrimination not same-sex parents that harms children.*" The Medical Journal of Australia. 2017 Nov. [LINK]

   This little article explains the same-sex parent dilemma happening. It goes a little into depth about children with same-sex parents and how they are different than kids with a mom and a dad. I chose this article because I wanted more information on the different types of families. I wanted to compare them and get a different point of view. I learned that kids with same sex parents are more emotionally stable and might be more mature than other kids.

3. "*Roles of Family in Socialization.*" Assignment Point, [WEBSITE]

   This article is about families and how they are the first ones to teach us about norms and values. I found this article very useful for researching how families build someone's character. The article explained that culture also had to do with families and that it should be taken into consideration when talking about this agent. I liked that this article gave examples on different families and their upbringings. It allowed me to expand on my knowledge of how families contribute to socialization.

4. Griffiths, H., Keirns, N., Strayer, E., Sadler, T., Cody-Rydzewski, S., Scaramuzzo, G., Vyain, S., Bry, J., & Jones, F. (2012, February 1). *Agents of Socialization*. Introduction to Sociology 2e. [WEBSITE]

   This article was the most helpful of all. The article which has many different authors talks about all the agents of socialization. It connects them to one another yet it explains why each is so important. I wish it

had been longer but the information was still useful for my paper. It also had short questions in the end that i found were thought provoking when i was at a writers block.

5. Sherkat, D. E. (2012, June). *Religious Socialization (Chapter 12) - Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. Cambridge Core. [WEBSITE]

This summary, although it was small, helped me think of new ideas. Although I did not have access to the full text the summary was enough to help me keep writing. The summary talks about religion and how it affects individuals. The line I took from this described that religion could not be forced on someone rather it needed to be accepted by the individual. It also combined other agents to further the importance of religion in socialization.

6. Pearce, L. D. (2015). *Religious Socialization*. Religious Socialization - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics. [LINK]

This article written in 2015 goes into depth on how youth sees religion. This was helpful towards my paper in that it explained in detail how when in someone's life religion can have long term effects. It explains that when a child is exposed to religion from a young age they are more likely to continue practicing it in their adult life. The article also talks about how religion influences political views and views on society. Overall this article helped me develop a good point on religion in youth how it affects an adult.

References

1. Grusec, J., Hastings, P., & Anderson, C. (2015). *Handbook of socialization : theory and research* (Second edition.). The Guilford Press. [LINK]
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4. Griffiths, H., Keirns, N., Strayer, E., Sadler, T., Cody-Rydzewski, S., Scaramuzzo, G., Vyain, S., Bry, J., & Jones, F. (2012, February 1). *Agents of Socialization*. Introduction to Sociology 2e. [WEBSITE]
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