

Socialization Institutions as a Mechanism of Social Control

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Abstract:

The study aimed to highlight the role of socialization institutions, such as the family, school, and places of worship, in achieving social control and reinforcing values and norms within society. It examined the mechanisms these institutions employ to guide individual and collective behavior and reduce social deviance. The findings concluded that these institutions play a pivotal role in shaping social identity and strengthening social cohesion. However, their influence may weaken due to social and technological changes. The study recommended enhancing the role of these institutions through integration and updating their methods to keep pace with societal transformations.

Keywords: Social Control, Socialization Institutions, Social Values.

Introduction

Within any society, we find various social classes striving for progress, with the youth being the most prominent group, as they represent the lifeblood and driving force of the nation. However, we are witnessing a noticeable decline in their role today, which can be attributed to the emergence of multiple gaps within this demographic. These gaps have led to behaviors that contradict the values of the society in which they exist, under the mistaken belief that such actions affirm their presence. Nevertheless, reality has proven otherwise. Today, we see, read about, and hear of deviant behaviors committed by young people—both male and female—that neither reason nor society can tolerate.

Deviant behavior has become increasingly common among youth, as they convince themselves that their actions are justified and serve as a means of asserting their identity and self-worth.

As a result, all societal institutions are now striving, through various means, to reintegrate this group into society and address the behaviors they exhibit in order to

achieve social cohesion. This is done through what is known as social control and its various mechanisms.

From this perspective, we pose the following research problem:

How can these institutions adapt to these challenges and develop effective strategies to regulate behavior and achieve social balance?

To answer this question, we propose the following hypotheses:

- ✓ Social control may be the most effective means of protecting youth.
- ✓ Youth behavior can be influenced by societal guidance and the environment in which they are raised.
- ✓ Socialization institutions may play an active role in regulating youth behavior and protecting them from deviance.

Research Objectives:

This study aims to:

Analyze the role of socialization institutions (family, school, media, religious institutions, and peer groups) in shaping and regulating individuals' behavior according to societal norms.

Explore the relationship between socialization and social control, particularly the reciprocal mechanisms that contribute to the formation of collective consciousness and the regulation of both individual and group behaviors.

Determine the effectiveness of socialization institutions in reinforcing adherence to social norms and facilitating adaptation to prevailing cultural values.

Significance of the Study:

This study contributes to the academic literature on social control by focusing on the role of socialization as a fundamental mechanism for shaping behavioral patterns and maintaining social order. It also provides practical insights for policymakers, educators, and social workers on how to enhance the role of educational, media, and religious institutions in regulating social behavior and promoting positive values.

Furthermore, this study is conducted in the context of rapid social changes, examining how socialization institutions adapt to new developments, particularly in light of globalization and rapid technological advancements.

Earlier studies:

- "Mechanisms of Social Control and Their Role in Maintaining the Continuity of Social Systems" – A scholarly article by Fetal Saliha in *Al-Hikma Journal for Philosophical Studies* (2021). This paper examines the mechanisms that social

systems employ to regulate the behavior of their members to ensure their survival and continuity.

- "Means of Social Control and Their Role in Achieving Positive Values Among Female Students at the College of Education, Taif University" – A study by Saleha Hai Yahya Al-Sufyani from Taif University, published in The Educational Journal of the Faculty of Education at Sohag University (2018). This research explores how various social control methods influence the reinforcement of positive values among female students.
- "The Role of Educational Institutions in the Process of Social Control" – A study by Salahuddin Maawad and others (2017). This research focuses on the role of public secondary schools as educational institutions in promoting social control.
- "Religion and Its Role in Social Control: A Sociological Approach" – A study by Saad Al-Imarah, published in Al-Naba Journal (2000). This research examines religious institutions as an informal mechanism of social control that enforces laws on individuals to achieve justice and reform.

Study Framework:

The study is divided into three main sections:

1. General Overview of Social Control
2. Socialization Institutions as a Mechanism of Social Control
3. Case Study Analysis

First Axis: General Aspects of Social Control

1 Concept of Social Control:

To grasp the concept of social control, we first present definitions of some related terms:

1.1 Definition of Social Control:

- Maurice Cusson defines social control as "a set of means used by individuals to limit or prevent deviance." (Ibrahim , p. 357)
- MacIver describes it as "a function of maintaining the social structure through effective forms of power that reinforce social cohesion and regulate individual behavior by ensuring respect for societal beliefs, customs, traditions, values, and norms." (McIver & Ali Ahmed, p. 273)
- Georges Gurvitch sees it as "a set of cultural patterns upon which society relies to manage tension and conflict." ." (Khalid , 2000, p. 27)

- Edward Ross defines it as "deliberate and purposeful social control, which plays a crucial role in establishing stability in societies. (Mohammad Salama, 2002, p. 171)
- Agyon argues that social control consists of processes and means used by the group to manage deviations from social norms, considering any method of regulating behavior as a tool of social control.

Operationally, social control can be understood as one of the mechanisms society relies upon to regulate behaviors emerging within its social groups, particularly when values and customs contrary to the principles of that society arise.

1.2 Socialization:

The concept of socialization has been defined in various ways, including:

- Madeleine Grafitz describes socialization as "the process through which individuals integrate into society by internalizing values, norms, and symbols while learning culture as a whole, thanks to institutions like the family, school, language, and social environment." (Fadhil , 2009, p. 11)
- Socialization is also defined as "the process that allows individuals to learn and internalize the different cultural elements (norms, values, social and cultural practices) characteristic of their community. This enables them to shape their social identity and adapt to the group they belong to. Through this process, cultural traits are integrated into individuals' personalities, naturally and unconsciously fostering social harmony."

From these perspectives, socialization serves as the foundation for regulating individuals' behaviors within society by instilling various values and principles.

1.3 Institutions of Socialization:

These are all societal institutions responsible for instilling proper behaviors in individuals to ensure they become responsible members capable of assuming the consequences of their actions and contributing to their community.

2. Types of Social Control:

2.1 Internal Control:

Internal control originates from within individuals and is shaped by values, customs, traditions, moral standards, and attitudes. Essentially, it is the conscience instilled in individuals by society.

"Internal control occurs when individuals accept the norms of their group as part of their social conscience and identity. It is instilled during early socialization,

particularly in family upbringing. As a result, even when alone and unobserved, individuals adhere to these norms." (Ma'an Khalil , 2006, p. 47)

2.2 External Control:

External control is embodied in laws and regulations established by modern societies. Official institutions of the state enforce these rules, and those who violate them face societal sanctions. Key institutions responsible for external control include the government and social security systems. (Akhras Mohammed , 1997, p. 41)

2.3 Formal Social Control:

This type of control is embedded within societal systems, such as the educational, familial, and economic structures. (Ahmed , 2006, p. 109)

2.4 Informal Social Control:

Informal social control emerges spontaneously within communities. Examples include gossip, rumors, social condemnation, sarcasm, spreading misinformation, rebuke, and the threat of social exclusion. This type of control is prevalent within primary groups like friends and close-knit communities.

2.5 Positive Social Control:

Positive control relies on an individual's motivation to conform. It includes rewards such as praise, collective approval, material incentives, and recognition, all of which encourage compliance with social norms. (Abdullah , 1999, p. 269)

2.6 Negative Social Control:

This type of control involves deterrent measures such as prohibitions, threats, punitive sanctions, and penalties. It ensures individuals avoid violating social norms and values. (Abdullah , 1999, p. 270)

3. Methods of Social Control:

Scholars categorize social control methods differently—some classify them as formal and customary, others as coercive and voluntary. Regardless of terminology, the core idea remains the same: societies establish rules to regulate behavior.

Two primary methods of social control are:

- **Formal Control:** This involves official institutions enforcing regulations and penalizing deviant behavior. It is imposed by state institutions through laws, policies, and legal sanctions. People often comply with formal control out of necessity rather than choice.
- **Customary (Informal) Control:** This form of control develops organically within communities. It is based on traditions, social norms, and collective values rather than institutional enforcement. Unlike formal control, it arises

from the community's intrinsic need for order and is voluntarily embraced by its members.

Both methods play crucial roles in resolving conflicts, as some individuals prefer formal legal proceedings, while others rely on customary methods. Many societies adopt a hybrid approach, employing both formal and informal mechanisms depending on the nature and intensity of the conflict. (Ahmed M. M., 2014, p. 50)

Second Axis: Socialization Institutions as a Mechanism of Social Control

Before discussing the relationship between these two variables, it is essential to highlight the importance of social control:

- Social control is crucial for maintaining balance and stability in society. No society can achieve equilibrium without mechanisms ensuring compliance with prevailing values and cultural traditions. (Samia , 1997, p. 35)
- It regulates interpersonal relationships, reinforces social order, and prevents chaos and deviance.
- It ensures oversight and discipline through socialization by teaching individuals to accept social constraints and norms.
- It plays a key role in monitoring those who challenge societal laws, customs, religious beliefs, and moral standards.
- Social control helps mitigate conflicts and social injustices while addressing deviant behaviors to restore societal stability.

Although families play a significant role in raising children and instilling values, schools further refine these values by shaping students' personalities in intellectual, emotional, social, and ethical dimensions.

However, the value system is often disrupted due to political and economic transformations. Shifts from socialism to liberalism, for instance, introduce conflicting principles and values. Similarly, globalization has introduced new ideologies, creating a value system that often results in cultural conflict. (Rabah , 2012, p. 07)

Socialization institutions have struggled to effectively shape individuals, as societies grapple with widespread issues such as dishonesty, corruption, favoritism, fraud, and deception. These societal problems often erode individuals' adherence to their learned values, making them feel isolated and unsuccessful when they attempt to uphold ethical standards. This leads to psychological conflict, negatively impacting their behavior and increasing the likelihood of deviant conduct.

Roles in Preventing Youth Deviance:

Given that youth comprise the majority of populations in many countries, they require special attention across various social, educational, and recreational domains to prevent deviant behavior.

First : Role of Individuals:

Individuals must safeguard themselves from engaging in deviant activities and avoid association with delinquent groups. Constructive participation in social and economic activities, pursuing productive hobbies, and effective time management can serve as protective measures.

Second : Role of Families:

Families act as the primary socialization agents, instilling cultural and moral values. Strong familial bonds, conflict avoidance, and holistic care—including financial, educational, and emotional support—are essential. Parents must encourage positive peer associations and instill discipline without excessive strictness or negligence.

Third : Role of Schools:

Schools should align curricula with students' psychological, social, and professional needs while promoting ethical and civic values. Schools and other educational institutions must reinforce tolerance, justice, national identity, and respect for the law.

Fourth: The Role of Media

Media is one of the most influential tools affecting the minds and souls of young people. This influence lies in the fact that media enters homes at any time and without permission (as commonly said), often destroying more than it builds. Thus, the content of our media must align with our society and stem from our faith and religious traditions to safeguard our youth from the dangers of deviation. Media should adopt a clear policy to serve young people, ensuring that it provides them with the following essential elements:

1. The necessity for media to play its role in properly guiding youth according to the teachings and values of Islam.
2. Media institutions must exercise caution when selecting foreign content to preserve our identity and counter media influences that could negatively impact our youth's culture.
3. Providing youth with adequate exposure to modern sciences and their intricacies to help them understand the world around them.
4. Strengthening and deepening the principle of national loyalty in young minds, encouraging them to fulfill their expected social roles.

5. Enhancing sports and cultural sections, selecting beneficial content, and adding entertaining material that fosters young people's curiosity and desire for knowledge.
6. Avoiding unethical and purposeless TV series that lead to the wastage of young people's time.

Fifth: The Role of the Police

The police represent the natural embodiment of society's authority, derived from it to protect and lawfully defend it against crime, deviation, and violations of public morals and ethics. As a mandatory authority, the police act as guardians of public conduct within society, striving to maintain security, promote virtue, combat vice, and prevent crime and delinquency.

From this perspective, the police play a crucial role in protecting young people and preventing them from going astray by maintaining public order, monitoring high-risk areas, and apprehending individuals—whether juveniles, youth, or adults—who frequent such locations. In this way, the police impose necessary restrictions on all lawbreakers, regardless of their age group.

If a young person reaches the age of eighteen, they become legally accountable, and law enforcement officers must perform their duty of apprehending any youth attempting to violate laws and regulations, handing them over to the relevant authorities.

Since the police are the first institution that comes into contact with a delinquent youth, many law enforcement agencies worldwide have established Juvenile Police Units. These units follow specific procedures for handling juvenile cases from the moment they enter police stations, ensuring humane and educational treatment to prevent psychological trauma that could worsen their condition. Having a specialized juvenile police force contributes to safeguarding youth from deviation—if we protect them during childhood and adolescence, shielding them from deviation at this stage, we create a strong barrier against them engaging in delinquent behavior in youth or adulthood.

Sixth: The Role of Society

Society bears the responsibility of shaping young minds, refining their personalities, and instilling in them the values and principles that make them good citizens.

Society is obligated to nurture the intellectual and mental growth of its youth, preparing them appropriately without sparing any effort or resources. Several measures must be taken by society to protect young people from deviation, including:

1. Eradicating all forms of administrative and social corruption, whether minor or major, as they negatively influence young people due to their limited real-world experience.
2. Instilling a sense of realism in youth, particularly those with ambitious yet reckless aspirations.
3. Reducing parental and societal rigidity in dealing with young people, especially among administrative officials who often view youth with superiority and arrogance.
4. Eliminating feelings of failure and frustration among youth, making them feel valued in society, and granting them their legitimate rights.
5. Assisting young people in achieving their goals and ambitions through lawful means so that they do not resort to deviation as a way to gain recognition and success.
6. Enforcing press and publication laws while monitoring media outlets that promote sexual violence, discourage beneficial reading, and instill rebellion, dissatisfaction, and loss of trust in the nation and its leaders.
7. Reducing academic failure rates, expanding education, and combating illiteracy, as psychological studies indicate that violence and delinquency often stem from failure and frustration.
8. Instilling religious teachings in children from an early age, emphasizing tolerance, mercy, justice, chastity, honor, and honesty while discouraging violence, crime, and deviation.
9. Establishing permanent committees to study youth issues, composed of religious scholars, psychologists, educators, sociologists, legal experts, and parents.
10. Combating unemployment to prevent young people from falling prey to it, as unemployment fosters regret and resentment, pushing them toward deviation. Additionally, efforts should be made to minimize family conflicts, divorces, and family disintegration. (Center National Information, 2024, p. 03)

If all these institutions unite their efforts and mobilize their human and material resources to address this grave issue threatening the lifeblood of the nation—**protecting young people from deviation**—they will have secured the greatest asset

of their existence. When integration occurs, cases and incidents of deviation within society will significantly decline.

Third Axis: Case Study

The researchers conducted a case study by selecting a random sample of young individuals to answer a set of questions related to social values and their impact on social control. After processing the participants' responses, the following tables were obtained:

Table 01: The Impact of Social Values on Deviant Behavior

Examples of Influenced Behaviors	Rate of Influence on Deviant Behavior	Social Values
Reduction in theft, decreased violence, adherence to laws	70	Religious Values
Respect for elders, commitment to family values	65	Cultural Values and Traditions
Dedication to work, reduction in poverty	60	Economic Values
Decrease in deception and fraud, promotion of honesty and justice	80	Ethical Values

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the presented questionnaire.

From our reading of the table, it becomes clear how different values influence the daily behaviors of young people, indicating that these values have an effective role in shaping citizens' attitudes. Therefore, adopting these values as much as possible can contribute to reinforcing social order.

Table No. 02: The Role of Social Values in Increasing or Decreasing Social Control in Society

Observations:	Weak Social Control	Strengthening Social Control	Type of Values
Religious values provide clear standards for acceptable behaviors.	15	85	Religious values
Traditions grant societal stability but may face challenges in diverse communities.	25	75	Cultural values and traditions
Ethical values are essential for fostering internal discipline among	10	90	Moral values

individuals.			
Economic and social values influence individual behavior by shaping social and economic conditions.	30	70	Economic values

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the presented questionnaire

From the table, we observe that the role of social values in either increasing or decreasing social control depends on the extent to which these values align with the social reality and the strength and effectiveness of the social system that upholds them. Harmonious and shared values contribute to reinforcing social control, whereas contradictory or rigid values may lead to its disintegration. Therefore, balancing social values with the need to adapt to social changes plays a crucial role in maintaining the stability and well-being of society.

Table No. 03: The Impact of Social Values on Reducing Crime and Social Deviation

Types of Crimes	Rate of Decrease	Type of Value
Thefts, domestic violence, smuggling	65	Religious Values
Murder, assaults, drug-related crimes	60	Cultural Values and Traditions
Economic crimes, fraud	55	Economic Values
Bribery, deception, administrative corruption	70	Ethical Values

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the provided questionnaire.

Social values play a fundamental role in reducing crime and social deviance by providing a reference framework that enhances respect for others, ensures justice, and creates equal opportunities for members of society. They also contribute to strengthening social bonds and guiding individuals toward positive behaviors that serve the public interest.

Table No. 04: The Percentage of Social Values' Influence on Youth Interaction with Social Control

Age Group	Economic Values	Ethical Values	Cultural Values	Religious Values
18-24	50	70	60	55
25-34	60	75	65	70
35-44	65	80	70	80
45-54	70	85	75	85

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the provided questionnaire. From the table, we observe that youth interaction with social control is significantly influenced by the life stages they go through, as well as the social values they are exposed to.

Table 05: Comparison of the Impact of Social Values in Conservative and Modern Societies

Phrases:	Modern Societies	Conservative Societies	Type of Values
Conservative societies place religious values at the forefront of social control.	60	90	Religious Values
Traditions have a greater influence in traditional societies compared to modern ones.	50	80	Cultural Values
Moral values are highly regarded in both societies, but to varying degrees.	70	85	Ethical Values
Modern societies may rely more on legal systems compared to internal social control	65	75	Economic Values

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the provided questionnaire.

The reader of the table will notice that religious values in conservative societies are the main pillar on which they are based, followed by moral values in second place, and so on with the rest of the other values, while in modern societies we find moral values to be the most influential, followed by other values according to the degree of strength and influence

Thus, it can be said that social values in conservative societies revolve around the preservation of traditions and social harmony, while social values in modern societies revolve around individual freedom and diversity.

Conclusion:

Every institution or system, whatever it may be, includes a set of laws and behavioral rules that are dictated to its members and to which these individuals respond in a certain way, agreed upon because they define the behavioral framework that must be followed, and since these individuals belonging to this system exist

together within this system, this certainly entails social interaction and social relations between these individuals within the social structure of this system, and this is due to the human ability to learn and acquire civilization.

The human ability to learn, acquire, develop and transfer civilization, which makes him amenable to control and adapt his behavior, as long as he sees this as his security and reassurance.

In this regard, we propose the following recommendations

- Focusing on teaching basic values and ethics such as honesty, cooperation and respect from the early stages of childhood.
- Organizing workshops and awareness seminars for parents and educators on how to guide children and teach them proper social behaviors.
- Support activities that promote youth interaction with each other in various environments such as schools and local communities.
- Adopt discipline methods based on dialogue and understanding instead of physical punishment, while emphasizing the importance of reinforcing positive behavior.
- Promote communication between parents and children to understand the needs and expectations of each party, which contributes to improving the socialization process.
- Providing opportunities for children and youth to participate in cultural and artistic activities that help develop their social skills and enhance their sense of belonging.
- Provide opportunities for children and youth to participate in cultural and artistic activities that help develop their social skills and enhance their sense of belonging.

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