

The Socialization of Spouses and Its Reflections on Children's Psychological and Social Health -Background and Dimensions-

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Abstract

Positive levels of psychological and social health among children can be reached when several factors are present. These factors give strength to a central social act. Its purpose is to preserve the human element and to maintain its role in society. Marriage, in its traditional meaning, is a conscious process. It shapes the behaviour of children from an early age. It also prepares them to assume responsibilities and to understand what is expected of them within the social group to which they belong. Society is a system of relations and functions. Each individual is therefore expected to maintain the social structure and to activate the dynamics of its human components. In social custom, marriage becomes a conscious traditional act. It is based on foundations inherited across generations through the practice of choice. This choice may rest on compatibility. It may also be more realistic, especially when adults have information about the potential partner with whom they intend to share their life. The growth of emotional and daily-life needs pushes individuals to seek independence from the family of origin. It may also persuade them to comply with social custom, to understand the traits of the other partner, and to expect a dignified life with them. In this sense, marriage aims to build a family that preserves family lineage. It also transmits the values of society from one generation to another. Socialization institutions must prepare future spouses before marriage. They must introduce them to the principles and rules of marital life. This tradition is a survival strategy. It seeks to repair the social structure and to support the continuity of social life. Within the family environment, practices emerge in which each spouse performs duties toward the other before demanding rights. This may make the whole family, especially children, more psychologically balanced and more socially harmonious.

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Introduction and Problem Statement

From a sociological perspective, the psychological and social health of children within the family is a social criterion and a value. It stands at the threshold of the existential path of society. The family is a vital cell within the social system. It cannot meet the demands of social reality unless the elements of harmony and complementarity are available.

The family resembles a cell in the body of society. The body cannot stand in balance unless its cells are ordered and aligned. Through this order, entities appear and become close to one another in an assumed emotional sense. This takes place between two adults who are cognitively and biologically mature.

There is a natural attraction between a man and a woman. Successive social practices may direct this attraction. These practices are generally called customs or social traditions. They seek to establish marriage as a necessary component of emotional life and as an existential strategy. Its background is biological need, and its dimension is value-based.

Society may therefore move toward a probable course in which it consolidates a conscious act. This act takes shape during different stages of the individual's life within the social group. Through inherited practices, this group socializes children and prepares them to assume responsibilities.

Such responsibilities may become a social necessity. They are expressed in the need to build an entity that gathers individuals who were prepared through the social appreciation of marriage and procreation.

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In principle, and according to traditional social customs, marriage is an emotional union and an organic form of independence. It is governed by religious and positive values and laws. Within it, several forms of compatibility intersect between two mature persons who understand the responsibility they are about to assume. The basis of this compatibility may be moral, psychological, or social.

Socialization may play a role in establishing and shaping this compatibility. It prepares both women and men, emotionally and sensorially, for the possibility of occupying a social role once the conditions of social need are present. Each person then fills the role expected from him or her.

The social need to find a partner may become stronger among individuals. It begins with the conviction that one can bear the state that will follow separation from the family of origin and the formation of an independent entity. This conviction is formalized through the choice of a spouse.

This means that marriage may be a vital and conscious process. It aims to preserve the structure of society and to reproduce its functions in a sequential and continuous way. This process is linked to the socialization that the individual received over the years from parents and grandparents.

It is therefore possible to assess the outputs of the social process through which the married person was formed. This is especially true when the process is consistent with the sound values of society. Couples may face fewer difficulties in forming a family or in raising children smoothly when factors of psychological and social compatibility are available within the social group and within the family.

Parents may act as a driving force. They may also become an inhibiting force. This depends on the type of upbringing they received and on the behaviour of one or both parents within their family and social environment. Circumstances may shape that behaviour and may make parents a model or a source of distress for the psychological and social health of children.

More precisely, the issue concerns the effects of spousal behaviour on the whole family environment, and on children in particular. On this basis, the following question can be raised:

What are the reflections of spouses' behaviour on the psychological and social health of children?

1. What Is the Purpose of Establishing a Family?

Social life is generally governed by several structural and dynamic controls. The contexts of social existence may consist of affective and emotional contents. These contents are moved by structural factors and functional motives. At this point, the features of the family and the strategy of its social presence become visible.

The family is not only a tool. It is also a source for the renewal of human forces and for demographic continuity. In other words, society cannot repair its structural framework without the presence of the family. Human biological life is short. This imposes marriage and procreation as means of preserving the human element and avoiding extinction, as is the case for all living beings.

Within the reference cell, which is the family, spouses seek to form an entity. This entity moves toward spiral differentiation. It then attempts to pass psychologically from a state of dependent affiliation to a state of emotional stability and functional independence from the larger family entity, even if this independence is only formal.

Through this dynamic, the family can move from an initial state or from the traditional fused pattern, in which the self dissolves in the extended social group. That group originally consists of many individuals connected by kinship and blood. The family then moves toward another state that is more independent than the one in which both spouses previously lived. This state is usually described as the nuclear pattern (Al-Jawhari, Mohammed, 2007, p. 92).

This pattern would not have appeared in society without the accumulation of several factors. One of these factors is the growing tendency toward separation in order to build an individual self. This self is based on the achievement of an independent entity far from the forms of conflict that marked the life of children in the extended family space and from the dependence of children on their parents.

There are also other factors that have actively encouraged organic differentiation from the other components of the family. Some of these factors have an ideological background. They emerged in response to changes in thought, lifestyle, and ways of coexistence around the world.

This is clear in the growth of social change. It accompanied the sociological adoption of heterogeneous residential groupings. These groupings differ not only in their patterns of thought and ways of life, but also in their housing arrangements. Modern urban life imposes constraints and determinants that push individuals to follow different paths in order to adapt to unexpected situations.

For example, a family may be forced by work conditions to live in an urban centre and in a small apartment building after having enjoyed a more comfortable situation with parents. A woman may also leave the home to work because the family's financial resources are weak. She may need to face debts resulting from wedding expenses or from furnishing the home.

Such situations may push spouses to understand the new reality and to seek alternatives that respect their capacities. They may also search for solutions that suit their possibilities. These situations emerge from separation from the family and from the motivation to become independent from the larger entity. They also emerge from self-reliance in forming the family.

This may contribute to the formation of a new organic emotional life. It may renew and expand according to the family and social need for procreation and biological reproduction. This psychological and emotional need produces children. Parents must therefore plan for it in advance. They must take many factors into account before deciding to have children and before expanding the family.

Spouses are required to provide the conditions of life and growth for children. This is a biological necessity through which the family realizes its social self. The highest social purpose of acquaintance and marriage is therefore to form a family. This family first preserves the continuity of the human lineage and protects it from disappearance. It also seeks to maintain the values of society and its standing among other human communities.

Procreation within the family is therefore a central purpose. Society seeks to consolidate it according to controls and determinants that respect human nature and its human and social function.

2. The Sociology of Marriage

Marriage is a phenomenon in the life of society. It is an integrated and conscious human act. It establishes the continuity of the social system in harmony with accumulated social values. This may be linked to the necessity of establishing a marriage system that observes social controls and activates the nuclear starting points of society.

These starting points are expressed in the consolidation of the path of family formation. This path is based on showing preferential and possible contexts among individuals according to desire and life orientation. Marriage between a man and a woman may not succeed unless several social facts are present and interconnected.

The network of customs and traditions within society may play a central role. So may the dominant social practices. Together, they consolidate the principle of implicit selection and its effectiveness in transferring values between generations, whether these values are material or moral.

Marriage may therefore become a bond between the social past and social reality. This forces society to anticipate its future as an existential necessity, not as an optional choice for continuity.

Marriage has been defined in this regard as "an organized contract and a partnership between a man and a woman. It entails a set of rights and duties between the two parties. It is the only social relationship between man and woman" (Ghasbari, Yamina, 2013, p. 11).

It should be noted here that marriage has been viewed across successive historical periods, especially in Mediterranean societies, as a synthesis of cultural patterns. From these patterns emerge renewed social roles known by custom as fatherhood and motherhood.

These roles produce a set of demands and duties. Both parties to the marital relationship must know them in advance and must respect them in social interaction, inside and outside the family. This means that prospective spouses should carefully plan the building of a social entity. Its aim is to care better for children and to raise them in a manner consistent with the values of society.

This requires commitment to the duality of duty and right in managing family situations within the social environment. Marriage is "the basic means of ensuring the stability of the family" (Al-Jawhari et al., 2007, p. 92). It is also defined as "a sexual relationship between two persons of different sexes, which society legitimizes and justifies" (Wasfi, Atif, 1964, p. 210).

On this basis, the family becomes the basic unit of social organization. It is also one of the most important institutions of socialization. Within it, the personalities of children are formed. It enables them to acquire abilities that help them adapt to a changing environment.

The family is also a source of morals and an initial support for regulating behaviour. It motivates the young to persevere and to progress. The child, or the son or daughter, becomes more prepared to occupy future social roles and responsibilities in line with what society expects.

3. Theories of Marriage

Several theoretical perspectives in sociological research have addressed marriage and its effects on children's perceptions and social status. The following theories are among the most relevant to the present discussion. They help to frame the subject more clearly.

3.1. The Homogamy Theory

This theory focuses on specific contents that the husband seeks to find in his wife. It explains the tendency to choose a spouse according to a set of characteristics and criteria that should be present in him or her.

These criteria include similarity in general social characteristics and homogeneity in physical and personal traits. They may include belonging to the same nationality and religion. They may also include similar social level, close age, educational level, height, and skin colour (Saati, Samia Hasan, 1988, p. 48).

3.2. The Spatial Proximity Theory

This theory proposes that a man may prefer a wife from his nearest geographical environment. He may start from the closest surroundings within the place in which he lives.

This preference is linked to his prior knowledge of the customs and traditions that she may share with him in several areas. Similar social and economic levels among residents of the same or neighbouring region may also facilitate marriage. This proximity may make it easier for him to know her and to obtain the information needed for his decision (Ghasbari, Yamina, previous reference, pp. 57-58).

3.3. *The Theory of Complementary Needs*

This theory focuses on a set of needs that surround and frame the process of marital choice. In this case, the spouse does not require the presence of a general similarity in all characteristics.

The theory rather focuses on specific qualities that satisfy the partner's need. The greater the expected satisfaction, the stronger the motivation to choose the partner and to enter the marital relationship (Al-Hussein, Husni Al-Sayyid, 2015, p. 22).

3.4. *The Psychoanalytic Theory*

This theory is based on Freud's view that marital choice may be motivated by resemblance. Choice is therefore made on a narcissistic basis, that is, on the basis of similarity.

According to Freud, when an individual falls in love with someone, the loved person may become a form of perfection for that individual (Ghasbari, Yamina, previous reference, p. 33).

4. *How Parents Prepare Children for Marriage*

The different socialization institutions of society seek to consolidate social values. Parents, whether fathers or mothers, are urged to socialize their sons and daughters in a way that prepares them to become aware entities capable of understanding their future. Among the most important tasks parents perform toward their children are the following (Ali, Hammuda, 2025, p. 38):

1. Parents should be models for their children in daily family interaction. A son should see his father treating his mother with courtesy and respect. A daughter should see the same pattern in her mother's treatment of her father, and vice versa.
2. Children should be socialized and prepared to understand that marriage is not a material or lust-based relationship. It is a relationship of good and sincere companionship.
3. Children should be encouraged to preserve the relationship and to live with the spouse in kindness. They should also respect the principle of prior agreement when building marital life. This means agreeing in advance on the bases of mutual interaction.
4. Parents should explain to children that perfection in the marital home is impossible because of human nature.
5. Children should be urged to use reason in managing the affairs of the marital home. This requires mature thinking and restraint from irritations and mistrust. The man, as head of the family, is asked to exercise more patience than the woman because of her vulnerability.
6. A father should teach his son not to exaggerate in correcting his wife. Excessive correction may break the woman and may even lead to divorce.
7. Children should be guided to remain calm during anger. Affection and mercy within the marital home can only be achieved through calm behaviour.
8. Children should know that a happy life is built on the extent to which both spouses understand their rights and duties toward each other.

5. *Characteristics of Parents Qualified for Marriage*

An individual who is about to marry, whether male or female, usually possesses a base of social values. This base may qualify the person to win a life partner according to what is expected.

Socialization received from the father may play a decisive role in the decision to marry (Mohamed and Ekram, 2010, p. 519). In this case, the individual is marked by certain characteristics that make the partner accept him or her. These include the following:

1. Psychological readiness for marital responsibility.
2. The ability to communicate openly.
3. Agreement on important matters.

5.1. Psychological Readiness for Responsibility

- a. Both spouses should be fully ready to accept and bear the responsibility of marriage and childrearing.
- b. Responsibility should be shared. Each spouse must know his or her responsibilities toward the other partner. These responsibilities include duties and rights within the family, which both spouses agree to view as a unified unit. Each partner should also understand the role assigned to him or her within it.

5.2. Open Communication

Both husband and wife should be able to approach each other and communicate directly and openly about everything related to marital life and family affairs. This begins with understanding the real meaning of marriage and extends to the management of routine matters in daily life.

Open communication also means giving priority to the interest of the family over the private interest of the self. This is achieved through tactful and positive communication.

5.3. Agreement on the Essentials of Life

In this important area, traditions should be established within the family environment. Broad dialogue between spouses is one of these traditions. Everything that strengthens the relationship within the family should be discussed, including the following:

- a. Family planning, including the number of children and the way they will be raised.
- b. The management of family finances, the way the budget will be handled, the determination of financial responsibility, and the setting of common goals. These matters affect the quality of family life.
- c. Respect for the privacy of the other party. This means avoiding excess and not violating the space that the husband or wife needs for rest or reflection.

5.4. Planning for the Future

a. The professional path of both spouses should be discussed if both work, or if one of them works. This means discussing the possible effects of the professional life of spouses on family life. Reasonable solutions should be sought to reduce the suffering of the other party. This is particularly important when the woman works outside the home, works at night as is common in hospitals, or when the husband works far from home for several days.

b. The language of love should be understood by both spouses. Good companionship requires each spouse to know the form of interaction preferred by the other in marital life. It also requires knowing how the other receives feelings through expressions of love and mutual respect. This allows the family to live in a healthy and intimate atmosphere.

c. Family obligations should be distributed. Husband and wife should establish dialogue in all paths of family life and determine the role of each partner. Mutual support and organic and emotional understanding among family members are necessary.

Based on the above, a basic idea can be emphasized. Parents who are about to marry are two aware persons who understand the reality that requires them to bear a great responsibility. They cannot carry this responsibility without preparation and patience.

One of the most important characteristics that should be consolidated is awareness of the scope and weight of responsibility. This includes caring for the partner and treating him or her with a language of love, kindness, and understanding. Such preparation is needed before receiving children and raising them properly so that they benefit in the future and become parents qualified for marriage.

Other essential conditions are also necessary for the continuity of the family entity and for the continuity of social life in its normal state. These include understanding the meaning of marriage and recognizing its social implications. This requires careful reflection on its contents, such as prior agreement on spending, family economy, and the management of family affairs during difficult times through a positive mentality that avoids conflict and hatred.

Spouses should also agree on the degree of the family's independence from its wider kin environment. They should know how to manage minor disputes with neighbours and friends in a skilful way.

Another basic determinant must be mentioned. It concerns prior knowledge of the other party in case he or she suffers from an organic or psychological illness. It is very important for each partner to know the nature and type of illness from which the other suffers before marriage, during the stage of acquaintance and not after marriage.

Failure to disclose such information may disturb the relationship. It may also lead to complications for children, especially in cases of hereditary or psychological illness. Prospective spouses should therefore discuss physical and psychological illnesses before marriage, especially after the first stage of acquaintance and at the beginning of familiarity and acceptance. This should happen before moving too far into emotional commitment.

The Algerian legislator has encouraged this direction. Several preventive and precautionary measures were established for the benefit of the future family. Among these measures is the need to conduct specialized medical examinations and analyses before the marriage contract. This helps avoid future problems that may lead to congenital malformations in children and possibly to divorce.

6. Psychological and Social Health of Family Members According to Parental Socialization

Before addressing this section, it is useful to clarify some concepts included in the title.

a. Psychological Health

The World Health Organization defines psychological health as a relatively permanent state in which the individual is psychologically adjusted, feels happy with the self and the environment, and is able to achieve the self and use abilities and potentials to the greatest possible degree. The individual's behaviour is also normal (Zahran, Hamed Al-Salam, 2005, p. 9). This means that the individual is internally balanced, calm, and positive in behaviour because several factors marked by positivity and dynamism come together.

b. Social Health

Sociology defines social health as our ability to perform social roles, build human relations with others, realize the principle of cooperation, solidarity, and social support, and develop civilizational, human, and moral attitudes. Social health and its components aim to care for and improve human health in its physical,

mental, psychological, and spiritual dimensions so that it reaches its best possible state (Hasan Abd Al-Hamid, 2007, p. 21).

7. Parental Characteristics and the Psychological and Social Health of Family Members

After acquaintance and marriage, the family is formed and children are born within it. The purpose of marriage is the psychological and social stability of parents, the birth of children, the continuity of the human lineage, and the transmission of values from one generation to another.

Within the family, relationships arise among family members. The parents form the centre and the support of these relationships. On this basis, we may anticipate the path and outcomes of the family according to the qualities it possesses.

The socialization of parents before marriage and their preparation for marital life occur within a social environment adapted to sound social reality (Coton and Jasmin, 2025, p. 14). These factors may be reflected in the nature of life inside the family.

Sound socialization of the father and mother may have direct effects on family members. It may make them normal individuals who are capable of building a family entity with positive social qualities. A family that carries the values of tolerance, cooperation, and mutual support may be described as a sound family.

The effect of this is clear in the behaviour of children. Their behaviour becomes marked by positivity because disturbing factors decline. The opposite may also occur. Relationships inside the family environment may become conflictual and revengeful. This may affect the personality of children and may turn them into unsound social phenomena.

As noted above, social relations inside the family may take several qualities and paths:

1. The relationship between husband and wife, or between father and mother. This relationship is based on mutual love. Each party is careful to observe duties before rights toward the other party. These include sexual rights, shared responsibility toward children in terms of support and upbringing, and the division of roles.
2. The relationship between father and son. This relationship is based on the father's responsibility toward his son. It includes roles such as sound and continuous socialization, education, and training so that the son becomes ready for future responsibilities. In return, the son is expected to respect and obey the father.
3. The relationship between father and daughter. His responsibility lies in giving special attention to the daughter and helping her as a gentle and delicate person who may be easily hurt. This makes her worthy of special care even after her possible future marriage.
4. The relationship between mother and son. It includes his socialization and material and moral care through balanced affection. In return, obedience, respect, and appreciation are expected.
5. The relationship among brothers. In childhood, it is based on brotherhood and companionship. In adulthood, it becomes a relationship of cooperation and mutual support.
6. The relationship among sisters. Its content revolves around care and effective contribution to helping one another under parental supervision. It also includes participation in managing family affairs within an atmosphere of affection and tenderness that parents seek to establish inside the family environment.
7. The relationship between sister and brother. From childhood, this relationship is based on brotherhood, companionship, restraint, and respect in behaviour. The brother should protect his sister and help preserve her life from factors that may harm her. This includes standing by her in managing her public life and contributing to the achievement of her private affairs, such as study and marriage.

8. Parental Methods within the Family and Their Reflections on the Psychological and Social Health of Children

In this article, parental characteristics are considered in a positive sense. This is important for ensuring the psychological and social health of all family members, including husband, wife, and children. It is also important for social advancement and well-being.

Several socializing and supportive methods may appear within the family space. Parents may seek to establish them implicitly or in a more explicit way (Gray, John, 2011, p. 88). The outcome of these actions may be positive. Many positive methods can strengthen life within the family. Other methods may have destructive effects on the family entity.

Some of these behaviours may be summarized from two different directions as follows:

1. Acceptance. In this method, the child feels that the parents focus on the good aspects of speech and action. The parents also understand the child's problems and worries. This makes the child a positive person who tries to return this feeling through obedience, respect, and improvement of behaviour according to what the parents expect.

2. Tolerance. This method is based on leniency, calmness, and the refusal to exaggerate matters. Problems are balanced and made solvable. A child may behave in an unsound way, but the parents do not necessarily respond with rebuke or harsh reprimand.

In unsound family situations, several methods may appear. Their source may be the father, the mother, or both parents. They may produce reactions that are unexpected inside the family environment and even outside it.

3. Rejection. The child feels within the family environment, especially internally, that he or she is unwanted, rejected, and not accepted by one or both parents. This may be shown in the refusal to accept the child's behaviour. At certain stages, it may push the parents to avoid the child, dislike the child, complain about the child, or punish the child.

4. Neglect. The son or daughter feels that the father, the mother, or both parents do not give attention to his or her condition and needs. They may look at the child with inferiority and consider him or her merely a person living with them. This may produce an irresponsible and frustrated individual who develops a negative view of family life.

Conclusion

In light of what this study has addressed, it becomes clear that the socialization of spouses is not limited to an individual process related to the acquisition of life skills before or after marriage. It is also a social and cultural construction. The family, educational institutions, religion, the media, and the social environment all take part in shaping it.

From this standpoint, the quality of marital socialization is reflected directly and indirectly in the nature of family relations and in the psychological and social climate in which children grow. From a sociological perspective, the family is not merely a framework for satisfying biological needs. It is the first institution for producing values, transmitting norms, shaping personality, and reproducing the social order across generations.

The sociological reading confirms that the psychological and social health of children is not built apart from the nature of the relationship between spouses. It is formed through patterns of daily interaction, methods of communication, the management of disagreement, the level of family cohesion, and the feelings of safety, support, and trust that prevail in the family.

When the marital relationship is characterized by mutual respect, dialogue, and cooperation, this reflects positively on the emotional balance of children. It also supports their ability to adapt socially and to build sound relations with others. In contrast, the absence of sound marital socialization, the persistence of family conflicts, and forms of violence or disintegration may contribute to psychological, behavioural, and social disorders. These disorders may affect the growth of children and their integration into society.

The study also shows that the social and cultural transformations experienced by contemporary societies, including changes in family roles and the growing influence of media and digital spaces, have imposed new challenges on the family. They have also reshaped patterns of socialization and marital relations.

This requires moving beyond traditional perceptions of the relationship between spouses. It also requires moving toward a family culture based on partnership, shared responsibility, and effective communication. Such a culture can ensure a stable family environment that supports the sound psychological and social development of children.

Accordingly, investment in the socialization of spouses should not be viewed as a private matter. It is an investment in building the human being and society. It has long-term effects on social cohesion and on the quality of family life.

It is therefore important to develop premarital preparation and qualification programs. It is also necessary to activate the roles of educational, social, and media institutions in spreading awareness of the culture of marital life. Sociological and field studies should be encouraged to explore the transformations experienced by the Arab and Algerian family. Such studies can help build social policies that are more capable of protecting the family, preserving the psychological and social health of children, and strengthening the stability and cohesion of society.

Despite the transformations and challenges surrounding it, the family remains the social institution with the greatest influence on the formation of individuals. Its success in performing its functions depends on the maturity of marital socialization. It also depends on its ability to produce a balanced human environment that raises a generation marked by psychological health, social competence, and the ability to contribute positively to the development of society.

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