Addendum

The Socialization of Children

The socialization process involves the development of certain skills and the inculcation of various values, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies that underlie what is generally called "moral" or "prosocial" behavior.

Essentially, prosocial behavior involves subjugating one's own needs, interests, and desires to those of other people and to society as a whole, so that one does not derive personal pleasure and fulfillment at the expense of others. It reflects such phenomena as respect, love, compassion, sympathy, altruism, kindness, sharing, honesty, tolerance, justice, fairness, mercy, and forgiveness. Levels or degrees of these phenomena are reflected in various levels of traits such as the social and benevolence values, dominance, social conscientiousness, adaptability, social maturity, and self-control. They are also reflected in various levels of interpersonal dimensions such as status, dependency, self-disclosure, expectations, connection, emotionality, resources, and conflict.

Psychologists and sociologists do not all agree on (a) when moral development starts, (b) the relative importance of various aspects, or (c) the processes involved. Nevertheless, we have pieced together a variety of opinions in an attempt to develop an adequate model of the basic aspects and processes involved.

As shown in ***Figure 6.8***, we think that there are actually four distinct but interrelated processes involved in the overall socialization process:

a. the development of a capacity for empathy;
b. the imprinting (learning) of basic, socially-oriented values, attitudes, and behavior patterns;
c. the development of a self-image or identity; and
d. the development of an ability to make moral judgments (and of the underlying logical abilities involved).

Note that these processes—and the various phases involved in them—tend to occur during certain time frames, which often overlap. Also note that each developing capability or aspect contributes to the development of others. In addition, note that adult inputs, behavioral examples, and feedback contribute to all aspects and processes involved in social development.

The Development of a Capacity for Empathy

In their two separate studies, Marion Radke-Yarrow and Carolyn Zahn-Waxler, developmental psychologists at the National Institute of Mental Health, and Nancy Eisenberg, a developmental psychologist at Arizona State University, have researched children's ability to empathize ("feel" others' feelings). They believe that emotional sensitivity to other people's feelings exists in young children and is key to their moral development.

The two separate research efforts have indicated that children do display certain general patterns of empathetic behavior. Between ten and fourteen months, children's responses to another person's distress tend to be silence, tense standing, agitation, crying, and whimpering. During this early period, children seldom engage in "helping behavior." In succeeding months, crying diminishes and more positive and controlled actions begin to take place—simple actions like touching or patting. By age one, all children respond in this manner at some time. By age two-and-a-half to three, children initiate contacts, embrace the person in distress, seek help from a third party, inspect the distress more actively, and give distressed persons little gifts.

These researchers also noted that children's imitation of adult behavior plays an important role in their development of these early behaviors.

While early behavior seems to follow certain general patterns, the NIMH and Arizona State researchers also detected individual differences in children's empathetic responses. Certain children stood out as being more emotional than others. (These children may have been learning more child state behavior than other ego-state behaviors.) Other children had very little apparent emotional reaction and took a more reasoned approach—e.g., inspecting, exploring, and asking questions about the situation. (These children may have been learning more adult state behavior than other ego-state behaviors.) Some were more aggressive—e.g., hitting the person who caused the other person's distress. (These may have been learning more critical parent behavior than other ego-state behaviors.) Still others reacted adversely to the situation, trying to shut it out by turning or running away. (Avoiding behavior is often displayed by those who are being conditioned by highly critical parents.) These early patterns appeared to persist over a period of five to seven years. The researchers found, however, that behavior involving moral reasoning was less consistent.

Martin L. Hoffman, a developmental psychologist at the University of Michigan, believes that empathy is innate (inherited) and is the basic motivation for prosocial behaviors such as altruism and sharing. According to Hoffman,

children less than one year old realize when others are experiencing distress, but assume that the other's internal state is the same as their own. At about one year, however, they start recognizing themselves as being physically distinct from other people. (In ***Figure 6.8***, note the arrow pointing from "struggle to distinguish self from others" up to the early stage of development of empathetic capabilities.) By age seven or eight, they are much better able to distinguish their own feelings from others' feelings and to choose actions that are appropriate for helping others.

Hoffman believes that, during childhood, people begin experiencing "empathetic guilt"—that is, feeling distress when they have been the cause of someone else's distress. As a result, they begin behaving in ways that avoid causing this "self-imposed distress."

Based on the above observations, Hoffman recommends that parents discipline children for wrong-doing, obtain compliance, and immediately provide an explanation that will induce sympathy for the person affected by the misbehavior. As shown in ***Figure 6.8***, explanations and negative feedback are among the adult inputs that influence children's social attitudes and behavior. Radke-Yarrow and Zahn-Waxler would add another input. They found that children develop greater empathy when parents frequently explain their own behavior.

In general, then, the process of empathetic development involves several basic phases:

1. Early emotional empathetic responses (approximately 10 months to two years): Children make simple, involuntary, emotionally sympathetic, non-interpretive responses to others' distress.
2. Basic cognitive-emotional empathetic responses (approximately years 2 through 5, 6, or 7): Because of a developing repertoire of associations between distressed emotions and accompanying behavior, and also because of their developing cognitive abilities, children begin to respond in a more cognitive as well as emotional manner. They begin to interpret distress, attribute emotions to others (as well as to themselves), and exhibit more experience-based, cognitive-emotional empathetic reactions to others' emotions.
3. Increasingly more complex cognitive-emotional empathetic responses (from about years 6, 7, or 8 through adolescence and on into adulthood): The continuing development of individuals' cognitive abilities and repertoire of experience enables increasingly complex cognitive-emotional empathetic reactions to others' emotions.

It is difficult to feel another person's pain, sorrow, grief, anxiety, happiness, or joy if we ourselves have not experienced these emotions. As we grow older and experience an ever-widening range of situations and emotional responses, we become increasingly sensitive to the emotions being experienced by others. In other words, our increasing range of emotional experience enables us to "walk in other people's emotional shoes" to an increasing degree.

In our view, one's development of the capacity for empathy contributes to two of the interpersonal capacities mentioned in ***Table 6.1***: interpersonal sensitivity and social insight (the ability to interpret, understand, and assess one's own and others' social behavior).

The Imprinting (Learning) of Basic, Socially-Oriented Values and Behavior Patterns

While others speak of "social conditioning" and "value conditioning," Morris Massey, a professor at the University of Utah, refers to the "imprinting of gut-level values" in children. These gut values involve attitudes concerning what is right and wrong, good and bad, and normal and abnormal. They also involve what it means to be kind, benevolent, conscientious, reliable, responsible, sharing, fair, and considerate. According to Massey, these values (and associated behavior patterns) are conditioned from ages one through seven and become well entrenched by about age 10. Once established, he asserts, they will operate throughout life and be among the most powerful influences on behavior. He does acknowledge, however, that changes in this basic value system after age twenty-one can result from "significant emotional events."

To a great extent, children learn gut-level values from their parents' attitudes, behavioral examples, and positive and negative feedback (rewards and punishments). They also learn them from the inputs provided by teachers, religious leaders, coaches, other adults, and peers. In addition, they learn them from school books, music, and mass media such as TV, radio, and magazines.

As shown in ***Figure 6.8***, several phases are believed to be involved in this imprinting or conditioning process:

1. Basic conditioning or imprinting (from about year 1 through years 5, 6, or 7): During this phase, children are actively influenced by parents and other adults to learn certain values and to follow certain expectations regarding social behavior. **Several of the main ways adults exert influence are by (a) setting an example**, (b) **rewarding "right behavior**," **and (c) correcting and/or punishing "wrong behavior**." As a result, children involuntarily tend to behave as they are made to behave. Their obedience is basically oriented toward avoiding trouble and punishment.

2. Internalization of learned values and behavioral tendencies (during years 6, 7, or 8 through year 10+): In this phase, children begin to "internalize" socially acceptable values and behavioral tendencies, to "make them their own," and to act them out more consciously and voluntarily. Rather than simply avoiding punishment, they more actively seek (a) rewards for "right behavior," and (b) greater self-esteem (by conforming to the stereotype of a "good or OK" person).
3. Increasingly voluntary, prosocial self-control (from about year 10 through adolescence and on into adulthood): Having internalized the fundamentals of a socially acceptable value system, and continuing to develop that value system as they mature, individuals exercise increasing degrees of self-imposed, prosocial self-restraint in social situations.

Psychologist William Damon of Clark University believes that, during adolescence, people begin developing a sense of "distributive justice" (how someone resolves competing claims for goods and resources). This sense of distributive justice is directly related to Seashore's "resources" dimension. Someone high in distributive justice would be collaborative with respect to resources; someone low would be more competitive.

As shown by two downward-pointing arrows in ***Figure 6.8***, it is our view that children's increasing capacity for empathy contributes to this process. We would not expect children to internalize and further develop prosocial values and behavioral tendencies unless they were also doing the following: (a) developing greater sensitivity to others' feelings; (b) behaving in a more sensitive, compassionate manner; and (c) experiencing positive feedback from others (which results from acceptable behavior and tends to reinforce positive, prosocial attitudes toward others).

As shown by a single upward-pointing arrow in ***Figure 6.8***, it is also our view that the ability to make elementary moral judgments also contributes to the internalization process. This process is not always completely thoughtless and "blind." Before individuals fully accept and adopt values as their own, they often make judgments—however simple—concerning their "rightness," appropriateness, and/or functionality.

Two more upward-pointing arrows in ***Figure 6.8*** indicate our view that the development of one's own self-image and identity contributes to this process as well. We would not expect children to internalize prosocial values and behavioral tendencies unless they were partly building their self-images and identities around some degree of conformance to desirable attitudes and behavior. Internalizing values and behavioral tendencies involves "making them one's own." The process of developing one's self-image and identity influences what one calls one's own and adopts as "part of oneself."

Development of an Identity and Self-Image

The development of one's identity and self-image occurs in several phases and involves several phenomena:

1. Struggle to distinguish self from others (to about 2 years): As mentioned earlier, the NIMH and Arizona researchers noted that young children struggle to distinguish "self" from "other persons." As Hoffman pointed out, children of about one year begin to recognize themselves as being physically distinct from other people.
2. Basic self-awareness and the formation of an initial, adult-influenced identity and self-image (approximately years 2 through 5, 6, 7): Children's initial identities and self-images tend to be rather vague and are largely influenced by adult inputs that involve relatively basic, simple parameters. For example, children learn these and other things from their parents and other adults: how old they are; what it means to be a child; whether they are boys or girls; and what it means for them to be boys or girls. In many cases, children's initial identities are also a function of who their parents are and what they do.
3. Initial personal formation of an identity and self-image (from years 6, 7, or 8 through 13 or 14): Several major phenomena occur during this time frame:

   A. (Logical) comparison of self with others: As one interacts with the environment during these years, one develops various inputs for initially forming one's own identity and self-image. The major inputs are: (a) a vocabulary (words for describing oneself and others in terms of various characteristics); (b) a growing repertoire of knowledge and experience concerning people, their characteristics, and their behavior; and (c) the ability for class logic (deductive logic). (**The ability for class logic develops between ages 5 or 6 through 12, 13, or 14**.) Together, these inputs enable one to do the following:

      1. describe oneself and others in terms of numerous human characteristics—e.g., size, physical appearance, strength, intelligence, knowledge, skillfulness, honesty, goodness/badness, benevolence, degree of power or influence, and degree of masculinity or femininity;

2. compare and contrast oneself with others in relative terms;
3. distinguish similarities and differences between oneself and others; and
4. form a personal identity or self-image (which is relative to others and which one begins trying to protect and enhance).

B. Modelling (about years 8 through 13): According to Massey, it is during this time frame that children try to pattern their own identities and self-images after various role models and heroes. (Modelling, therefore, largely influences the development of parent, adult, and child "tapes.")

C. Identification (from childhood into adulthood): Identifying and/or associating with those who are apparently more liked, respected, or admired than oneself helps to build up one's self-image or identity. (Individuals often model themselves after those with whom they wish to identify.)

D. Adjustment of self-image/identity based on environmental feedback (from childhood into adulthood): Positive feedback from parents, other adults, and peers tends to strengthen children's developing identities and self-esteem. On the other hand, negative feedback from others tends to diminish their identities and self-esteem. Children generally receive both positive and negative feedback from various sources. As a result, their self-images undergo many changes or adjustments. *For example*: At one moment a parent might tell a child that he or she is "OK," "good," and "worth loving," but in the next moment that same parent, the other parent, another adult, or a peer might tell the child that he or she is "not OK," "bad," or "not worth loving." While positive feedback causes the child to adjust self-image upward (to a more positive or less negative level), negative feedback causes the child to adjust self-image downward (to a less positive or more negative level). The same principle applies to adults, who also adjust their self-images in response to both positive and negative feedback from others.

4. Continuing changes in and adjustments to self-image and identity (through adolescence and on into adulthood): Phenomena A through D above continue to occur, bringing about changes in people's self-perceptions and identities throughout life.

As indicated by one downward-pointing arrow in ***Figure 6.8***, it is our view that the internalization of values contributes to the development of one's self-image and identity. The values being internalized constitute standards by which one judges oneself as being good or bad.

As indicated by one upward-pointing arrow in ***Figure 6.8***, it is also our view that the development of the ability to make moral judgments contributes to this process, too. In order to compare and contrast oneself with others in terms such as "goodness," "OK-ness," and "worthfulness," one must make at least elementary judgments about one's own and others' (relative) goodness.

Development of the Ability to Make Moral Judgments

Jean Piaget, the first modern-day psychologist to attempt an explanation of children's moral development, focused on the development of reasoning abilities in children. He postulated that younger children are self-centered and do not yet have the cognitive skills to understand the purpose of society's rules or to apply them in a reasoned manner. But by about age ten, he said, cognitive skills have developed to the point where children can interpret society's rules and become aware of the consequences of violating them. Soon thereafter, he thought, they start using their emerging intellectual abilities to reach higher levels of moral judgment, which involve the assessment of people's motives and intent.

Like Piaget, psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard University has also focused on the more cognitive aspects of the development of moral judgment. He has postulated that there are three developmental levels and six developmental stages.

> The preconventional level involves behavior that is based on personal needs and wants and on the (negative) consequences of bad behavior—rather than on social standards or conventions. This first level contains the first two stages. During the first stage, children defer to adult authority and orient their behavior around obedience and the avoidance of trouble or punishment. During the second stage, they develop a more positive approach. They behave in a more socially acceptable manner in order to satisfy their own and (sometimes) others' needs. By about age ten, they have progressed through the first two stages.
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> The conventional level involves making moral judgments and behaving in ways that conform to societal laws, conventions, and expectations. It contains the third and fourth stages. During the third stage, children seek approval by pleasing and helping others. During the fourth stage, they "do their duty," respect authority, and maintain the social order for its own sake. Accord-

ing to Kohlberg, most adults function at this second level of social maturity.

The postconventional level involves making moral judgments and behaving in ways that are "comprehensive" (cover all contingencies), "consistent" (are never violated), and "universal" (do not change with variations in situations or circumstances). It contains the fifth and sixth stages. During the fifth stage, individuals recognize and adhere to legalistic standards, duties, and rights. They avoid violating others' rights and welfare. During the sixth stage, they exercise their conscience as they make choices involving not just social rules, but also social principles. According to Kohlberg, few individuals reach this highest level of moral maturity.

Although Kohlberg's model refers to behavioral stages involving moral judgments, it does not explicitly describe the process through which the abilities involved in making moral judgments develop. As others have pointed out, neither does it take into account the development of empathetic capacities. In our opinion, however, it does do something very useful. While basically describing the imprinting and internalization processes in slightly different terms than we used earlier, it interrelates certain aspects of these three phenomena: the imprinting and internalization of social values; the development of cognitive abilities as they relate to the development of a self-image; and the making of moral judgments. For this reason, you will find Kohlberg's terms woven into ***Figure 6.8*** and the following discussion.

In our view, these are the three major phases through which individuals pass as they develop the underlying abilities involved in making moral judgments:

1. Early, simple, non-judgmental, concrete, absolute ("black and white") responses (years 2 to 6, 7, or 8): During this period, abilities for class logic (deductive logic) are just beginning to develop. (Again, this ability involves mentally defining, describing, comparing, and contrasting things, people, ideas, and activities in terms of various attributes.) As a result, relatively little reasoning underlies the morality of young children's behavior. For the most part, they simply obey adults in order to avoid trouble and punishment.

   As shown by two downward-pointing arrows in ***Figure 6.8***, children in this phase essentially act on (a) early empathetic emotions, and (b) the basic values (attitudes about right/wrong and good/bad) that are being imprinted by (learned from or conditioned by) adults.

2. Elementary moral/ethical judgments (years 6, 7, or 8 to 12, 13, or 14): Having more fully developed the ability for class/deductive logic, and having begun to develop the ability for propositional/inductive logic, children make rather elementary moral judgments. [Propositional logic, which develops from ages 7 or 8 through adolescence, involves asking oneself, "Given this situation, what will happen if I do . . . (this versus that)?" Using this form of logic draws on one's experiences in past situations.] It is during this period that (older) children begin taking a more positive approach. Instead of simply avoiding trouble and negative feedback, they think about right and wrong and actively seek positive feedback by voluntarily adhering to socially acceptable roles and norms.

   As indicated by three downward-pointing arrows in ***Figure 6.8***, the moral judgments children make during this phase are influenced by the following: (a) an increasing capacity for empathy and a growing repertoire of cognitive-emotional experience; (b) the values being imprinted and internalized; and (c) an increasing level of self-awareness and a more developed self-image.

3. Increasingly complex, contextual or subjective judgments (years 12, 13, or 14, through adolescence, and on into adulthood): Having more fully developed the abilities for both class logic and propositional logic, adolescents (and adults) are able to think in more conceptual, contextual, and subjective terms. As a result, they become increasingly able to do the following (based not only on their reasoning abilities, but also on their empathetic capacities, their learned values, and their increasing repertoire of knowledge and experience):

   a. interpret social rules and norms in terms of social ideals and principles;
   b. develop a greater sense of the social order, the social will, and justice;
   c. judge the appropriateness of their own and others' (imprinted/learned) values;
   d. make contextual and subjective judgments;
   e. apply morals and ethics within the contexts of various situations;
   f. consider the consequences of behaving in unacceptable ways;
   g. judge their own and others' behavior based on underlying motives and intentions;
   h. assess degrees of right and wrong;
   i. more realistically perceive things as being gray rather than simply black or white; and
   j. make judgments and choices regarding conflicts between different people's needs and rights.

In some way and to some degree, all the above processes and phenomena influence the following in individuals: (a) ego states and associated life positions; (c) levels of various needs or drives; (d) use of ego-defense and ego-enhancement measures; (e) attitudes regarding people and interpersonal relationships; (f) values; and (g) personality traits.

In general, we can say the following:

a. the greater the degree of one's social conditioning or social indoctrination,
b. the higher or more lofty the values (ideals) that one has learned,
c. the higher one's (cognitive-emotional) capacity for empathy,
d. the more healthy the self-image that one has developed,
e. the greater the interpersonal knowledge and experience that one has accumulated, and
f. the more well-developed one's abilities for class and propositional logic,

then . . .

a. the higher the levels of one's social and benevolence values,
b. the greater the tendency to see oneself and others as being "OK,"
c. the greater the tendency to use positive/constructive (rather than dysfunctional) ego-enhancement measures,
d. the less the tendency to use those ego defense measures that hurt other people, and
e. the higher the levels of one's self-control and social maturity (social conscientiousness, adaptability, and tolerance).

As we conclude this section, we should mention one more point. The development of what the noted psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, called the "super-ego" corresponds to the process through which the empathetic capacity, prosocial values, and the ability to make moral judgments all develop in conjunction with the development of one's self-image (ego). One's superego—or "conscience," as many call it—is the "level above ego" that restrains self-centered pursuit of pleasure at other people's expense.