

The Affective Determinants of Socialization in Terms of Structuralism

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Abstract: This article is concerned with the issue of socialization in the context of considering the conceptual and methodological elaborations of structuralist thought representatives. This largely refers to modern social scholars, who have been involved in the studies of effective socialization mechanisms in so-called “advanced societies”. When examining the given issue, it was revealed that the criticism, inherent in postmodern post-structuralism as well as conceptualization of sociological structuralism are related to the common understanding of the productive determinants significance for “conserving” and, consequently, reproducing the established social order. Furthermore, the developers of these contemporary social thought concepts share a common belief in the dependence of the individual’s mental structure on the institutional framework of society. In other words, according to most representatives of the structuralist paradigm, the basic personality orientation patterns are a function of the social system, in which the individual was socialized. The same can be said about the individual’s affective-motivational structure, i.e., it largely depends on the specifics of the corresponding social system. Thus, the direct aim of this paper consists in revealing the general logic and arguments in favor of social determinism in the structuralist theory of personality development as well as considering the relevance of structuralist ideas as such.

Keywords: affective alienation, affective values, affective structure, socialization, structuralism, motivation

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INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the issue of relationship between a person and a social system is, primarily, an issue of socialization in terms of successful assimilation of the conventional normative patterns, which are mostly represented in the systems of social roles. But in the contemporary world, the problem of socialization has practically acquired the existential features, since in its core it is associated with the issue of society reproduction that is equally important both for the modern social theory and the humankind.

According to the modern sociological thought, the main goal of socialization is to integrate individuals into the social system, mostly, into its production system, which is indirectly stipulated by the need of essentially providing a relevant motivational basis. This is, mainly, the sociological approach, which was developed by structuralists, for instance, Talcott Parsons.

Furthermore, from the standpoint of sociology, it is very important to analyze the existing mechanisms of exercising this integration, or in philosophical terms, the technologies of shaping the subjects – the docile souls rather than the docile bodies, which is closely related to the above issue of personality motivational structure, where it is an affective component that can prevail.

Consequently, referring mostly to the psychoanalytic theory of personality, both structuralists and post-structuralists admit the utmost complexity of the issue concerning individual adaptation due to the fact that this process is accompanied by an affective component, or, putting it in philosophical terms, by human passions known to be very difficult for controlling by both the society and the actor.

Thus, the given issue has always been associated with a range of other problems, in particular, with the issues of *adequate motivation* and, conversely, with a possible deviation (‘destructiveness’) as a direct threat to social order, and, consequently, with the problem of social control mechanisms.

All the above stated testifies that the relationship in the ‘personality – society’ coordinate system in modern, i.e., so-called “advanced societies” concerns a whole set of issues, additionally mediated by the problem of variability of these societies, which are known to be capitalist in nature, but with a clear divergence between their “industrial” and “postindustrial” stages.

In our paper, we would like to focus on the most complex issue of the affective background of socialization related to the conditions of

contemporary society, called “postindustrial”, where both some transformation of “personality structure of the individual actor” and some transformation of the social control mechanisms are observed. This, in turn, requires a thorough consideration as well, since “statement of the problem of adequate motivation not only poses in general the problems of the mechanisms of socialization and of social control and their relation to the dynamics of the social system, but it provides the setting for an approach to the analysis of the relevant mechanisms” (Parsons 2005, 20), including the relevant affective attitudes.

THE AFFECTIVE STRUCTURE OF PERSONALITY FROM THE STRUCTURALIST STANPOINT

For a lot of contemporary humanitarian explorers, it is constant reproduction of *Kinship Systems*, in other words, family institutions, that represents a shared fundamental mechanism of socialization, which is generally based on the strong emotional attitudes. For instance, a brilliant representative of structuralist discourse, namely Lévi-Strauss, claimed that even so-called “primitive societies” attached great importance to *affective patterns* in upbringing, especially in relationships between a son and his father or, if it refers to avunculate, between a nephew and his maternal uncle (Lévi-Strauss 1963). According to Lévi-Strauss’s observations, and in contrast to the psychoanalytic point of view, those relationships were always quite clear, both friendly and “gentle”, or, on the contrary, hostile and conflicting.

In fact, an affective narrative in the social theory *par excellence* started with Freud’s doctrine of *Oedipus complex*, which would be rethought by many prominent authors, including representatives of structuralism, poststructuralism and so-called feministic psychoanalysis. The main purport of this complex consists in the *libidinal* attachment of a little child to his parents, which is accompanied with a strong fear of losing the parental love and care (permanent anxiety), that, according to Freud (1922, 33), plays a leading role in shaping the moral personality, in his “habit of giving up desire”. In other words, it is presence of the emotional *cathexis* in family relationships that provides the stability of these relations, and therefore the restraint due to self-suppression of possible aggressive impulses.

Not only Freud, but many other researchers of this issue engaged in *conceptualizing the motivational structure of personality*, emphasized on a specific significance of *value of attachment*, which, in their view, is the common pattern for so-called “normal” societies. However, those researchers generally only dealt with analyzing certain communities. According to them, it is this attachment, i.e. a kind of strong emotional dependence that is a non-alternative inner mechanism of assimilating the established normative imperatives, which promote continuous reproduction of matrimonial institutes. It is this attachment that testifies personal interest (“cathexis”) of individuals in each other, which, in turn, motivates them to accept adequate conformist behavior and avoid possible destructive conflicts.

Let us take as an example the doctrine by Talcott Parsons, a prominent developer of the structuralist strategy in social science. Parsons is known to be a proponent of the psychoanalytic theory of personality; he views human attachment as a kind of social reward – “relational reward” in terms of positive social sanction, which is as effective as a traditional “monetary reward”, especially in industrial societies.

Parsons attends to the family a lot and generally supports its traditional model, since firm conviction is that the structures of kinship or family union have no alternative in terms of fulfilling the goals of internalization, i.e. socialization. Despite the modern transformations of both a traditional patriarchal family and a nuclear family, Parsons is confident in the continuation of its existence, as, in his opinion, there is always a need for interpersonal attachment.

It is the family that has been performing the essential function of *socialization*, which was impossible without the notorious coercion, i.e. without some pressure. In this regard, Parsons insists on a particularly crucial part of a father’s traditional role in upbringing his child and preserving the masculine identity:

... the important point is that for the girl as well as the boy the father constitutes an important focus of the pressure to grow up, to renounce infantilism, and hence to learn the value orientations of the adult world of the society. (Parsons 2005, 153)

With all the variability of sex role from society to society, it can be said to be universally true that the adult masculine role is less implicated with detailed child care than the feminine, and is more implicated with prestige and responsibility in the wider society beyond the narrow kinship circle (Ibid., 152).

However, it is obvious that diffuse affective attachments cannot be the only basis for the formation of a person's social motivation. Human feelings, that is, a strong emotional interdependence can evoke strong motivation for both social conformity and social alienation, including destructive impulses. In other words, there is always a complex of such feelings, especially those, which are relevant for the needs-values of prestige and status esteem, namely the feelings of dignity, superiority, recognition, etc. All of them are also largely associated with adequate social motivation, or *vice versa*, with attitudes to aggressiveness as a natural reaction to possible devaluation of the individual, up to direct aggression in relationships, including so-called family "dramas". Therefore, the emotional relationships are largely mediated by "occasional fluctuation", i.e. by the threat of some dissatisfaction with relations, which can naturally result in the disturbance of "the social equilibrium".

Parsons frequently emphasizes that "a need disposition for diffuse affective attachments is presumably a component of the basic personality structure of all normal people in our society", which causes "much to be learned in order to adapt, to for example, to the role of marriage in our type of society". To put it differently, he has to admit that "the status of marriage, the responsibility for children, the standards with respect to an acceptable home, the mores with respect to the style of life of a married couple, and all the rest are not directly derivable from the basic personality structure" (Parsons 2005, 182), i.e. all those have nothing to do with love attachments.

Thus, it appears that the system of normative patterns, related to the family status, may result from other determinants irrespective of diffuse affective attachments. However, in the same paper, Parsons argues that the basic need-disposition structure, on which the motivation for the family roles of adults is built up, is developed in the context of childhood attachments. The same is relevant to the relationships between a man and a woman:

It seems, then, that the personality of the human infant has always developed in the context of certain crucially important early attachments, that to the mother looming by far the largest. Whatever the importance of these facts for the general possibilities of personality development, it seems that they are crucial for the perpetuation of kinship as a central focus of social structure... A stable attachment of a man to a woman with inclusion of sexual relations taken for granted, almost automatically results in a family. If this happens, the forces tending to integrate the child into the same unit are very powerful indeed (Parsons 2005, 108).

Presumably, such hesitations may be interpreted in terms of both the obvious significance of attachments in family relationships in modern society and extreme complexity of the family issue in general. Furthermore, it is well-known that the value of attachments is very relative, especially if pre-industrial societies are considered, where “the basic need-disposition structure”, on which disposition to the familial roles of adults was built up, had absolutely different contexts. Obviously, preservation of family relationships is based on other feelings rather than diffusive affective attachments, for instance, the sense of duty.

We can argue that Parsons does not pay enough attention to the fact that in many modern societies, the common role-family, in which the personality is often involved, hinges upon rather utilitarian reasons. In other words, in the so-called advanced society, arranged marriages are not less widespread than marriages based on love, and family relationships can be very different from the normative model, i.e. from the above cited “responsibility for children, standards regarding an acceptable home, mores”, etc.

Similar to many other researchers in the field of modern social theory, Parsons has to admit a socializing role of the other, not less significant agencies of influence on the personality, especially those, which were described in French post-structuralism in detail: “...our own society, with its very strong instrumental emphases and very long-range planning, puts a strong accent on affective neutrality and requires exceptionally high levels of discipline in certain respects” (Parsons 2005, 182).

That is the reason why the next institutional mechanisms *aimed at shaping the social-adaptive motivation in the sense of “collectivity orientation”* deal with the entire system of production relations – “instrumental achievement structures”, where it is discipline that evokes a particular interest. This is a process of socialization on a new, more progressive level, as it provides for developing (“pattering”) *the general value-orientation of achievement*, whose very important part consists in “the acquisition of the more complex adult culture of sophisticated, technical skills, and canons of expressive orientation, tastes and standards of taste” (Parsons 2005, 161).

In contrast to the postmodern critique of post-structuralists, Parsons is convinced that in the so-called advanced societies with their highly developed system of production relations, the repressive nature of the

discipline mechanisms is leveled by highly developed systems of funds and rewards distribution.

Along with diffuse affective attachments, all these greatly improve socially adequate motivation in the basic structure of personality, i.e. his collectivity-oriented motivation. In other words, along with the family institutions, our modern nation-states associated with the rise of industrial capitalism imply more effective “technologies” of socialization, which represent a significant cathectic source of personal motivation to achieve social adaptation-integration.

Achievement orientation, which is primarily caused by the modern Western type of occupational role structure, is impossible without successful integration of personality into the established system of production relations, “system of instrumental division of labor” (according to Parsons), which involves complete release of personality from the above-mentioned “miserable whimpering about not being loved and understood” (Deleuze & Guattari 1983, 268).

Such argumentation seems to be an attempt to additionally substantiate social determinism, whose proponents are constantly emphasizing on the social basis of the motivational structure of personality.

It seems to be reasonably well established that there are minimum conditions of socialization with respect for instance to the relation between *affectional support* and *security*, without which a functioning personality cannot be built up... these minimum needs of individual actors constitute a set of conditions to which the social system must be adapted. If the variation of the latter goes too far in a given direction this will tend to set up repercussions which will in turn tend to produce deviant behavior in the actors in question, behavior which is either positively disruptive or involves withdrawal from functionally important activities (Parsons 2005, 17).

Either way, as Parsons rightly states, the social system should have “a sufficient proportion of its component actors adequately motivated to act in accordance with the requirements of its role system, positively in the fulfillment of expectations and negatively in abstention from too much disruptive, i.e., deviant behavior” (Ibid.). In addition, achievement values cannot mean anything at all, if there is no discrimination between doing things “well” and doing them “badly” (Ibid., 110). But, what is the extent of involving complete affective “alienation” in the *achievement motivation standard*? Or, on the contrary, does it involve an affective component, which contributes to

a deeper integration in the production relations than that Parsons could have assumed?

POST-STRUCTURALIST VIEWS OF AFFECTIVE VALUES

In the context of the above stated, it is worth paying a particular attention to the chapter of Parson's *The Social System*, entitled "The Learning of Social Role-Expectations and the Mechanisms of Socialization of Motivation", where the scholar claims that in modern society it is initialization of money and power that perform the major role in integration, which inevitably enhances the importance of disciplinary means.

Thus, along with the value of attachment, the next significant constellation of value-orientation patterns, which are related to the motivational structure of personality, is represented by material values ("profit motive"). Material values are related to the occupational system and determine collectivity orientation and achievement orientation in society with "the general value-orientation pattern of achievement-universalism". It is money, income, or wealth, etc. that inevitably become the symbol of social prestige, "a reward as well as being a facility for the attainment of other rewards" (Parsons 2005, 166).

It is obvious that the dominance of economic institutions essentially transforms the motivational base of a personality, since the individual should be henceforth ready to achieve the instrumental goals, which are directly connected to the occupational system of labor division and reward expectations.

Furthermore, the *achievement orientation*, where the dominant values are connected with monetary awards and other facilities, unavoidably leads to, first, affective neutrality or even to some extent "affective alienation", and second, the ability to reproduce the relevant normative standards, which, as a rule, are reflected in the relevant system of collective imperatives:

Where the affectivity pole has primacy, the dominant values must be those of expressive symbolism. Where, on the other hand, neutrality has dominance they will be either instrumental or moral... In general the normative patterns defining the larger framework of the social relationships system tend to be affectively neutral, particularly where certain kinds of value system such as our own universalistic achievement pattern predominate (Parsons 2005, 179 - 180).

Postmodern post-structuralists as well as structuralists refer to the affective-motivational structure of the individual actor, where the narrative of existence of certain affective interest in the established system of social relationships comes to the fore.

Considering the views of brilliant representatives of postmodernism, namely Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, we can ascertain that this issue is considered here in the context of affective urges or “instincts” rather than affective cultural standards (patterns) (Deleuze & Guattari 1983). In other words, at first sight, this discourse is grounded on the psychoanalytic theory of repressive culture and psychoanalytic anthropology. To be more precise, the correlation between the mental structure of personality and social system is classified here, on the one hand, in terms of *libido*, i.e. energy of desire aimed at gratification.

On the other hand, postmodern thinkers substantiate the interdependence between the social structure and the structure of personality in terms of economic and political analysis, when the key concepts of the given approach are related to the categories of “production” and “power”, more precisely, “desiring production” and “discourses of power”.

Such synthesis testifies the extremal influence of Parsons’s ideas on poststructuralism, especially with regard to his conviction of a widespread displacement of kinship institutions by the economic aspect of social life, which, in its turn, resulted in the replacement of the value of interpersonal relationships by material awards.

Nevertheless, in contrast to Parsons in particular and structuralism in general, post-structuralists focus on the impotence of normative culture per se, referring to the questionableness of its value standards’ effectiveness in socializing the individual in the sense that *the reproduction of the systems of production, power and other social institutions is performed based on a human desire rather than on the internalization of normative standards of morality.*

As for the significance of the *standard attachment* in interpersonal relationships, especially in familial ones, poststructuralists also insist on its complete relativity, moreover, its conditionality by established institutions aimed at enhancing the integration of the individual into the system of production relations.

The idea of relativity of the value of attachment, in particular of the romantic pattern, is rather widespread in modern philosophy. Suffice it to mention that Parsons, who despite his persistence with regard to the non-alternative value of attachment in familial relationships, had to

recognize relativity of human feelings and value attitudes related to them:

...it is quite clear that the “sentiments” which support such common values are not ordinarily in their specific structure the manifestation of constitutionally given propensities of the organism. They are in general learned or acquired. Furthermore, the part they play in the orientation of action is not predominantly that of cultural objects which are cognized and “adapted to” but the culture patterns have come to be internalized; they constitute part of the structure of the personality system of the actor itself. Such sentiments or “value-attitudes” as they may be called are therefore genuine need-dispositions of the personality... The term “sentiments” is here used to denote *culturally organized* cathectic and/or evaluative *modes* or patterns of orientation toward particular objects or classes of objects. A sentiment thus involves the internalization of cultural patterns (Parsons 2005, 26).

Parsons’ views were the same as those of the entire structuralist “community” throughout the 20th century, i.e. influenced by the spirit of sociogenesis theory, which was developed by Norbert Elias, a prominent representative of structuralism.

In contrast to Parsons, Elias was more concerned with culturally organized patterns of self-constraint and self-suppression. These patterns, as a rule, are correlated with “the pressure of social institutions in general, and certain executive organs of society in particular” (Elias 1978, 188) modeling the internal mechanisms of personality self-control. It is in these repressive institutional conditions where most human feelings, which are social in their core, are “constructed”, starting with shame and repugnance and ending with the so-called “love affair”.

We believe that the main idea of the theory of sociogenesis developed by Elias consists in the statement of the relativity of social pressure growth, and hence social control over the basic human affects, especially those, which are related to the desire for gratification (the structure of pleasure). In other words, we can assume that in the later periods of the civilizing process, human sexuality as well as aggressiveness are becoming more and more controlled. However, we cannot be sure that human feelings will continue to develop further.

Moreover, from the point of view of post-structuralist thinkers, libidinal or affective impulses of contemporary humans or humans of the so-called postmodern era have less to do with personal attachments. Diffuse affective attachments in personal relationships are

considered as the comfortable “myths” of the past as well as the oldest ones, since post-structuralists are convinced that human “passions” are directly involved in the system of production relations rather than in interpersonal interactions.

Striving for abolishment of the structuralist belief in attachments and focusing on its complete relativity, some of postmodern authors claim that this is only “Oedipus filth that sticks to our skin” (Deleuze & Guattari 1983), but nothing more than that. Even attachment of a little child to his parents is imposed by the established system of production relations only with the aim to create a stable unity of production and consumption mediated by a similar stable illusion of “lack” solely with regard to economy.

Thus, as far as the value of attachment, and especially the romantic pattern, is concerned, as Denis de Rougemont (1983) persuasively proved in *Love in the Western World*, we have to admit its complete relativity as well as the fact that it can hardly lay a solid ground for stability of a familial alliance. It is rather *vice versa*, the “passions” in relationships often lead to destructive effects.

The so-called *libidinal* resource, particularly under conditions of postindustrial production, is depersonalized in the sense that the core area of its application is related to economy and politics, especially at times “when the libido becomes abstract quantity” (Deleuze & Guattari 1983), rather than to the area of interpersonal relationship.

This is the reason why currently integration of a great majority of individuals into the social field, especially into the system of occupational roles, is exercised by virtue of economy rather than ethics in terms of conformity with the conventional patterns. Parsons, for instance, admitted the exceptionally integrational function of money with regard to industrial (advanced) society, but he still believed in disciplined organization and efficiency of collective solidarity in terms of the general need to comply with the normative pattern.

We cannot but mention the current process of social norms “blurring” in general, and corporate ethics in particular, as well as the notion of “mobbing”, which appeared quite recently and was intentionally introduced to the laws of many western countries. All the above proves that we have every right to doubt the efficiency of collective solidarity.

It is obvious that it is the postmodern vision of socialization that is closer to the understanding of the contemporary transformation of

relationships between society and personality, in particular, the contemporary occupational or production relations:

It is at the level of flows, the monetary flows included, and not at the level of ideology, that the integration of desire achieved (Deleuze & Guattari 1983, 238);

And

The fact remains that there exists a disinterested love of the social machine, of the form of power, and of the degree of development in and for themselves. Even in the person who has an interest – and loves them besides with a form of love other than that of his interest. This is also the case for the person who has no interest, and who substitutes the force of a strange love for this counterinvestment. Flows that run on the porous full body of a socius – these are the object of desire, higher than all the aims. It will never flow too much; it will never break or code enough – and in that very way! Oh, how beautiful the machine is! ... desire is always constitutive of a social field. In any case desire belongs to the infrastructure, not to ideology, desire is in production as social production, just as production is in desire as desiring-production” (Ibid., 346; 348).

In other words, the strongest socialization seems to be possible only when an individual desires this social space from the inside, considering its fundamental institutions, namely the institutions of property and power, to be the main purport of existence. In most postindustrial societies, socialization, to a greater extent, is exercised on the basis of a desire rather than on the basis of “compliance with the pattern” or prohibition, even under conditions of the so-called “social anomie”.

CONCLUSION

Summarizing all the stated above, we can conclude that in structuralism, especially in post-structuralism, the major focus on the issue of socialization is associated, firstly, with the awareness of permanent interdependence between the social system and motivational structure of personality. Secondly, the analysis of this issue is aimed at possible prevention of social deviation in terms of ensuring the efficiency of various conventional devices or mechanisms, including so-called affective needs.

When discussing the most complicated issue of personality motivational structure, namely, the issue of patterning the attitudes to social adaptation, both structuralists and post-structuralists tend to level another mechanism, namely fear as a more powerful affective impulse, including the fear of deprivation in its various senses. This is

due to the fact that even if an individual is willing to escape from the established system of social relations, he is not able to satisfy this desire without risking his own life. Thus, “relational rewards” and “affectional support” as well as “approval and esteem” do not matter here.

In fact, the affective mechanisms in terms of personal interest in social relationships are based on human feelings, namely, the need for love, support, esteem, approval, etc. However, a high level of social “alienation” generated by the essential transformation in the contemporary production system can cause substitution of these feelings with more ancient instincts, in particular, with a sense of fear, i.e. instinct of self-preservation, known to be a more powerful biological impulse, which has nothing to do with noble motives.

Consequently, the motivational structure of personality can be subjected to an essential transformation due to the fact that the mental layer of personality comprised of constructive social feelings and needs, which are called affective values in structuralism, is leveled by alienation in the form of utilitarian attitudes, or with the help of aggressive impulses, which results in enhancing frustration. On the other hand, this can lead to the need of strengthening the institutional devices, especially the repressive ones.

Within the framework of the structuralism paradigm, our inevitable conclusion is that deviation, for instance, as a constant urge to escape from conventional standards and values, including a desire of violence, can be viewed as the pathology of a human soul, but this pathology is apparently generated by the pathology of society.

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