

## **The Role of Socialization in Reinforcing Traffic Culture from the Perspective of Social Control Theory**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

Traffic accidents have become a major social problem since the invention of vehicles. This issue has become a growing concern for specialists in various fields due to its negative effects on individuals and society, mainly caused by the disregard for traffic safety rules. This research paper aims to explore the social impacts of non-compliance with traffic laws, as well as the importance of traffic culture in reducing traffic accidents. The paper will also examine how the family, as the primary agent of socialization, can instill traffic culture through social control. The paper will begin by defining social control and discussing its importance in society.

**Keywords:** Traffic accidents, traffic culture, traffic awareness, family, social control.

### **Introduction and Problem Statement**

#### ***Introduction:***

Individuals obtain a driver's license from the age of eighteen. In the eyes of the law, this makes them qualified to drive a vehicle and bear the responsibility associated with that driving, while respecting the traffic law to preserve their safety and the safety of others. A vehicle can be a means of transportation and movement from one place to another, and it can be safe if the driver complies with the provisions of the traffic law. However, it can also be a deadly weapon if there is no commitment. It has been observed in recent years that traffic accidents have increased dramatically, leaving dozens of victims every day, not to mention the material losses, in addition to all the psychological, social, and health effects on individuals and society. It should be noted that the causes leading to the increase in traffic accidents are numerous and interrelated, and it is not possible to focus on one cause without the other.

#### ***Problem Statement:***

In light of the above, we wanted to shed light on another aspect related to traffic culture and its extent in promoting traffic awareness among individuals to adhere to the traffic law, which led us to ask the following question:

***How does family upbringing, as part of socialization – being an educational and pedagogical process – contribute to the consolidation of traffic culture among individuals from the perspective of social control?***

It is worth noting that the social control theory is considered one of the important theories explaining social upbringing, and we will try it to explain how the process of social

control takes place within the family to push individuals to adhere to the traffic law. However, before that, we will discuss a set of basic concepts related to the topic of our research paper.

## **Basic Concepts**

### ***1. Socialization:***

Socialization is a social process that seeks to maintain the stability of society. It aims to shape and build the individual's personality. The first environment in which socialization begins is the family, as it is the cell of society and the first place where the individual interacts with others.

There have been different definitions of socialization, but they all agree on one idea: to raise and educate the individual and socialize him/her so that he/she can acquire the behavior that enables him/her to integrate into society.

One of the definitions we have chosen is that socialization is "a continuous process from childhood to the last stages of life, and it is characterized by learning and acquiring the behavioral patterns prevailing in the environment in which the individual lives, starting from the family environment and the school as a whole, with what it represents of beliefs, language, customs, and traditions" (Mustafa Ashwi, 1990, p. 49).

It is clear from this that socialization is of great importance to the individual and society. For the individual, socialization provides the appropriate social environment in which he/she learns and develops his/her natural abilities successfully, and builds an integrated personality, especially in the early stages of life. Socialization greatly affects the individual in terms of his/her behavior, decisions, and even the activities he/she performs.

As for society, socialization transmits culture and heritage to individuals. It is a process of instilling in the individual the culture of the society in which he/she lives. The individual's behavior is also determined by the group to which he/she belongs, as it is the group that imposes laws on the individual and transmits them to him/her through socialization, thus helping to maintain and respect the prevailing order.

Hence, we can say that the basic goal of socialization is "to achieve the integration of the individual's social personality and to provide him/her with values, customs, traditions, and behavioral models that make him/her capable of adapting to his/her society on the one hand, and capable of participating in bringing about the desired societal changes or confronting them or adapting to them without harmful reactions to him/her or his/her society on the other hand" (Salah Al-Fawal, 1996, p. 110). All this is within the framework of respecting the laws laid down by society.

### ***2. Family Upbringing:***

We will now talk about family upbringing, which is part of social upbringing. The family is considered an institution of social upbringing, along with the school, peer group, place of worship, and media of all kinds, in addition to several other institutions that exist in society.

Family upbringing is important in the individual's life and is the cornerstone in preparing individuals to face the outside world. This is because the family is the first

environment in which the individual grows up. Family upbringing is defined as "the process by which an individual learns the ways of society or a group to be able to deal with it. It includes learning and absorbing the behavioral patterns, values, and feelings appropriate to that society or group" (Daabas Yousri, 2008, p. 159).

One of the features of family upbringing is that it works to instill internal control factors in the individual to become an essential part of his/her personality. If these factors are positive, the individual will be good and healthy, and if they are negative, the opposite will be true.

### **3. Traffic Law:**

The traffic law emerged to regulate traffic movement on roads to preserve the safety of individuals, whether inside vehicles or outside (pedestrians). The traffic law is characterized by the fact that it is constantly changing, and the authorities concerned with the traffic law amend it from time to time according to the changes and developments that exist in each society.

The traffic law is defined as "the set of laws related to the use of the road by individuals who own vehicles and pedestrians. It is considered in some countries a legislative law in the same position as the criminal law, and it expresses, in particular, the laws related to urbanization and knowing how to live" (WWW.qscience.com). Failure to respect the traffic law exposes its owner to different degrees of penalties, from fines to imprisonment, depending on the severity of the violation.

In another definition, we find that "the traffic law is a set of laws, regulations, and signs that regulate the traffic of vehicles, drivers, pedestrians, and all road users, and impose penalties on all violators" (droit1.blogpost.com2013).

The causes of traffic accidents vary depending on the type of accident, including excessive speed, not respecting the safe distance between vehicles, negligence in periodic inspection and monitoring of vehicles, driving without a license, ignorance of the traffic law, and failure to comply with it regarding signals and priorities of movement.

The importance of traffic law lies in preventing traffic accidents, not disrupting public order and obstructing traffic movement by organizing traffic on public roads, and achieving security and safety for pedestrians and drivers and providing them with assistance in cases of accidents. In addition to punishing all people who do not respect the law and do not ensure its application.

### **4. Traffic Culture:**

"In its broad concept, traffic culture is an organized intellectual system that aims to enhance the individual's sensory, cognitive, skill, and moral aspects to improve his/her ability to drive positively and deal with traffic elements in general. If this culture merges with the general cultural system within society and enters its social fabric effectively, it becomes a continuous behavioral pattern that the individual, group, and society apply and protect." (Abdul Fattah Naji, alqabas.com)

The process of spreading traffic culture must involve a group of social institutions to be successful and achieve the desired goals, starting from the family and reaching the larger society. The goal of awareness campaigns and spreading traffic culture is to reach a safe

environment free of traffic accidents. It is therefore the responsibility of everyone, individuals, social institutions, and official and unofficial social organizations.

### **5. Traffic Accidents:**

About traffic accidents, the problem of traffic accidents appeared in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, coinciding with the invention of the car and other means of transportation. The first accident recorded in the world occurred in Britain in 1896, leaving two dead. The main cause was the failure to wear a seat belt (Mourad Sali, p. 35).

The definitions of traffic accidents have been multiple and varied, and we will try to address some of them below:

Some people see a traffic accident as "an unplanned event that occurs by pedestrians, animals, or objects on a public or private road. A traffic accident usually results in damage to property and vehicles ranging from minor to serious, leading to death or permanent disability" (Yasser Abdullah Al-Masry and others, 2009, p. 4).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines a traffic accident as "any accident that occurs on an open road that involves at least one vehicle in motion, causing material or bodily damage" (Dekkar et Bezoucha 1983.p12) or both.

In general, it can be said that « traffic accidents » arise from the use of vehicles by individuals, whether cars, buses, or trucks, and lead to damage that affects individuals and vehicles and varies in its degree of severity. It is noticeable that traffic accidents have become one of the most prominent problems facing the world today after wars and epidemics, due to their increase and the rise of their negative results on the individual and society from the social, economic, and health aspects.

We find that the occurrence of traffic accidents is linked to several causes that vary according to the type of traffic accident and its degree of severity. These include excessive speed and not respecting the safe distance between vehicles, negligence in reviewing and monitoring the vehicle, using the mobile phone while driving to communicate or watch movies, ignorance and disrespect for the traffic law and what it stipulates of signals and priorities of movement, in addition to drinking alcohol and intoxicants, driving without a license, and other causes, without neglecting those related to the condition of the road and other vehicles. In general, it can be said that the main cause of traffic accidents is the human being. One of the main features of traffic law is that it is constantly changing and is amended from time to time according to the changes and developments that occur in society.

If we consider the issue of traffic accidents, we find that they often occur as a result of non-compliance with the traffic law. This indicates a lack of traffic culture or a lack of sufficient awareness of traffic laws among members of society, and the resulting damage from disrespecting them. So what is traffic culture and what is traffic awareness?

### ***Traffic Culture vs. Traffic Awareness***

When we talk about traffic culture, we are at the same time talking about traffic awareness or the level of traffic consciousness. This is because traffic culture represents the level of traffic awareness among drivers and non-drivers that makes them engage

in certain behaviors related to traffic laws. It also represents the degree to which they apply, respect, and adhere to traffic laws.

Traffic culture, in its broad concept, is an organized intellectual system that aims to enhance the sensory, cognitive, skill, and moral aspects of the individual to improve his/her ability to drive positively and deal with traffic elements in general. If this culture merges with the general cultural system within society and enters its social fabric effectively, it becomes a continuous behavioral pattern that the individual, group, and society apply and protect." (Belharth Malika, Ben Douma Alia, 2017-2018, pp. 69-70)

Recently, negative habits and behaviors related to driving vehicles and dealing with traffic elements, roads, and vehicles have spread. Traffic accidents have become a worrying concern for both individuals and officials. They are one of the problems that drain human and material resources from society, in addition to the negative psychological effects on individuals. Therefore, there is an urgent need today for an integrated educational program under the title of traffic culture. Traffic culture is one of the important pillars of the traffic safety principles adopted by any country in the world. (Abdul Fattah Naji, alqabas.com)

The process of spreading traffic culture must involve a group of social institutions to help it succeed and be effective, starting from the family and school to the media and communication and reaching the larger society. The goal of awareness campaigns and spreading traffic culture is to reach society and its individuals in a safe environment free of traffic accidents. This is everyone's responsibility and can only be achieved by tightening penalties for those who disregard traffic laws and enhancing traffic awareness among individuals.

### ***What is Traffic Awareness?***

Traffic awareness, in its comprehensive concept, is the sensory and moral alertness and knowledge of everything related to traffic, including vehicles, roads, systems, laws, and others. This is reflected positively on the person and his/her consideration of the different traffic systems. This type of awareness does not happen all at once, but is rather a set of accumulated knowledge and experiences, some of which come through experience, practice, and friction, and some of which come through learning and education." (Belharth and Ben Douma, 2017-2018, p. 72)

Thus, traffic awareness is "the spread of traffic awareness among all citizens by correcting misconceptions through persuasion by providing correct information that helps to form a sound opinion and create a willingness to prepare for and voluntarily comply with traffic rules and regulations to achieve security and safety in the use of the road." (Belharth and Ben Douma, 2017-2018, p. 73)

Therefore, traffic awareness is a strategy used by relevant organizations to send messages that include ideas and programs that inform individuals about everything related to traffic laws and traffic life through the use of various media and communication channels. It is a traffic discourse with awareness-raising goals, messages, and programs directed at all segments of society. Traffic awareness is linked to social reality because it is a product of society and it is what will later affect the same society in which it was founded.

However, it is worth noting that "the problem of traffic education is not a problem of lack of traffic information, but rather how to transmit this information to the inhabitants of society and convince them to accept and adopt it so that it becomes an integral part of their

personal and daily lives. Therefore, the preventive level of any society is measured by the degree of traffic awareness enjoyed by its members. Accordingly, traffic education creates preventive awareness and develops the individual's intelligence to distinguish between right and wrong behavior." (Fatima Massani, 2012, p. 132)

### ***The Social Impacts of Traffic Accidents:***

Traffic accidents have transcended simple accidents to become a silent weapon, wielding the same destructive power as wars and plagues. Across the globe, these incidents claim hundreds, nay thousands, of lives, as chilling statistics from every nation attest.

The problem of traffic accidents stands as a major hurdle to societal progress, casting a long shadow over various facets of life. The toll they exact is not just measured in lives lost, but in the crippling injuries and disabilities they leave behind. These tragedies resemble wars in their devastating consequences, robbing communities of vital human potential. The loss of life manifests not only in increased mortality but also in the growing number of individuals rendered incapable of fulfilling their daily routines. Furthermore, the state bears the economic burden of caring for the injured, a cost encompassing everything from medical treatment to long-term rehabilitation.

Beyond the physical and emotional scars borne directly by accident victims, their families too suffer immensely. The psychological trauma and social stigma inflicted upon them can shatter the fabric of families and communities.

The ripple effects of traffic accidents extend far beyond the immediate human cost, wreaking havoc on the economic landscape. The financial strain of treating the injured, both in the immediate aftermath and over the long term, is considerable. Additionally, damaged vehicles and infrastructure necessitate costly repairs, while the loss of productivity due to death or disability compounds the economic losses.

A crucial point to note is the disproportionate vulnerability of the youth to these accidents. This not only impacts the demographic growth of nations but also disrupts the economic activity driven by these young generations. These devastating consequences extend far beyond mere statistics.

### **The Family as a Tool for Socialization and Its Role in Adhering to Traffic Laws:**

The family is the basic unit of society. A healthy and balanced family produces balanced and righteous individuals, which in turn leads to a reformed society. When it comes to traffic accidents, it is important to note that "families are affected by traffic accidents in terms of human losses and injuries, and most families are economically affected by traffic accidents" ([www.qscience.com](http://www.qscience.com)). All of this is reflected in society as a whole, resulting in great losses, both economically and humanly.

Since the family is an important tool in the process of socialization, its role is not limited to ensuring a decent life for its members in terms of housing, clothing, and food. It also has an important obligation to preserve the lives of its members and provide them with the necessary living conditions. This is especially true in societies where the family still has a strong influence on its members and guides their behavior.

The role of the family is to foster a sense of commitment to all the laws that exist in society, starting with the laws that exist within the family itself. In addition to "instilling values and principles and fostering a sense of fulfilling all the obligations that are required for the safety of children, the family is therefore responsible for instilling these obligations in the souls of its children, monitoring their performance and behaviors, in a way that ensures commitment."

Given the obvious importance of using cars and the reliance of most members of society on them as a basic means of transportation, cars have become not a luxury or a source of boasting, but rather a necessity that affects the family in its absence or unavailability. The need to use cars has led some families to neglect their obligations towards their children, by allowing those who are under the legal age to drive vehicles, or by yielding to the demands of children to acquire a car despite their lack of driving skills, which exposes them to danger. This also exposes others to the same or even greater danger, with dire consequences.

The family, as an institution of socialization, can play a role in traffic education as an integral part of its tasks. This can be done by teaching children the rules of the road and taking all necessary precautions when crossing the road, looking to the right and left before crossing the road. On the other hand, we find that when a family member applies for a driving test, the person who holds a driving license teaches the applicant some basic principles of driving and explains some traffic signs to him. (Fatima Massani, 2012, p. 125).

On the other hand, we find that despite the existence of deterrent laws, there are some individuals, drivers, and pedestrians, who do not respect them or care about them and cannot think about the seriousness of this behavior. Therefore, it was necessary to enhance traffic awareness among them through socialization and its various means, especially the family, because it contributes to raising and educating individuals from a young age, by practicing social control on them to adhere to traffic laws.

#### How to Achieve Commitment to Traffic Laws:

In general, for family members to be committed to traffic laws, the family must fulfill its functions to the fullest extent possible to create balanced individuals. It must also work on the following:

- Teaching individuals that respecting traffic laws is civilized and sound behavior.
- Raising children on the principles of good morals and respect for laws within and outside the family.
- Setting a good example by respecting traffic laws themselves.
- Instilling in children the awareness of the importance of preserving their safety and the lives of others in society.
- Educating individuals about the importance of respecting the laws in society in general and traffic laws in particular, and bearing responsibility for the consequences of not respecting the laws, such as penalties and other consequences.

These are some of the features of commitment to traffic laws within the family, as it is a social institution that practices social control over individuals in partnership with other social institutions.

#### How to Commit to Traffic Laws from the Perspective of Social Control Theory:

### Social Control Theory:

We know that "society is a group of individuals who collectively form the behavior of that society. When the majority of these individuals behave in a certain way, that behavior becomes a characteristic of society. It has been proven concerning traffic safety that civilizing the behavior of individuals through education and awareness programs has produced a social behavior that strives for traffic safety" (Yasser Abdullah, 2009, p. 86).

One of the most important characteristics that distinguishes humans from animals is the process of social control that characterizes human beings. The social upbringing that an individual receives from childhood is nothing but internal controls in humans, which guide them, direct them, and bind them to the need to submit to society. Through social upbringing, the individual learns the controls of behavior, good and bad, and behaves in a way that ensures positive interaction with others. Therefore, the process of social control is the basis that ensures the individual's compatibility with his society, and thus his existence and adaptation to others. It is important to emphasize that each society has specific controls that it relies on to practice the process of social control on individuals.

Social control theory is one of the most important theories that have explained socialization. Our interest in this theory comes from the fact that social control, in its general sense, is compliance with and non-transgression of a set of controls, laws, and values that aim to guide the behavior of individuals within society. This social control is the foundation that ensures the individual's adaptation to the society in which he lives, as we mentioned previously.

As for the concept of social control, we find that there are many different definitions of it, as is the case with other concepts in sociology, psychology, education, and other sciences. This is due to the different perspectives and approaches of each scholar, as well as the different areas of social control itself. We will try to mention some of these definitions to explore this concept:

- ❖ Social control is "interlocking processes of both the individual and society, practiced by many agencies through which society can impose control and surveillance over its members and regulate their behavior by compliance or imitation in word and deed, through a set of material and symbolic means, or both, in a way that leads to the consistency and compatibility of the relationships and behaviors of its individuals and groups with the expectations and ideals of the society it adopts, to maintain the continuity of the social system and develop its performance by achieving procedural, therapeutic, preventive, and developmental goals, depending on specific institutions and their work teams according to the ideology of society and its social lifestyle" (Mohamed Abu Al-Hamad Sayed Ahmed, [www.alukah.net](http://www.alukah.net)).
- ❖ Social control is also "those intentional and unintentional processes or procedures that a society, or part of that society, takes to monitor the behavior of individuals in it and to ensure that they are acting following the norms, values, or systems that have been drawn up for them."
- ❖ In modern society, social control is entrusted to public opinion and the government through the law, while in traditional societies, social patterns such as social customs and norms play a major role in social control (Ahmed Badawi, n.d., p. 383). This shows us that the mechanisms of social control, which represent a set of means that help to achieve its success, are represented by law, religion, and social customs and traditions.



- ❖ Charles Cooley defined social control as "the control of society by itself, which is done through the process of organization and creation, and not by an individual or isolated individuals" (Abdul Salam Ibrahim Mohamed, 2010, p. 25).

Gurvitch sees social control as "a comprehensive set of cultural patterns, social symbols, meanings, collective cues, and a set of values, ideas, and ideals... through which a temporary balance is achieved in any society" (Abdul Salam Ibrahim Mohamed, 2010, p. 26). Because every time there is tension within society, social control institutions intervene to restore balance.

In general, we find that despite the multiplicity of definitions of social control, they agree on one point, which is that every society sets controls to determine acceptable and unacceptable behavior according to the prevailing norms, values, and culture. One of the main goals of social control is to socialize the individual to ensure the social good. Social control also works to protect society from collapse, disintegration, and fragmentation by keeping individuals away from chaos and deviance and promoting positive values among them to ensure the stability and cohesion of society. It also helps to develop social systems, including the family and other systems, to achieve that stability and work to ensure that individuals comply with the norms and laws set by the group. Social control is exercised by all institutions in society, whether they are social institutions or official state institutions.

Despite the different views of the pioneers of social control theory, such as Ross, Sumner, Cooley, and Landis, they all agree that social control is important for social life and its stability.

### ***The Role of the Family in Consolidating Traffic Culture through Social Control:***

The family is the first unit in which the individual lives and develops physically, mentally, and intellectually. It is the most important institution in society for teaching the individual all the principles of society. It also represents "the optimal field for basic social upbringing and personality formation" (Mourad Zaimi, 2002, p. 67).

"Traffic education aims primarily to help individuals feel confident and secure in dealing with means of transportation through awareness, personal conviction, and sound understanding. This requires preparation and training based on basic knowledge related to the traffic problem and the dangers that can result from human behavior..." (Fatima Massani, 2012, p. 132).

On this basis, it is clear to us that the family is one of the most important institutions of social upbringing and the most important means of social control because it has a strong influence on the preparation and upbringing of individuals on the prevailing norms in society. Family control is a pillar of the foundations of social control in the whole society. If family ties are weak, this will affect the behavior of individuals within society. Here we see that social control is related to various social problems. When it comes to individuals' commitment to traffic laws, it will lead to social problems if individuals do not adhere to them. Therefore, the family, as an institution of social upbringing and as an institution of social control, must contribute to reducing the aggressive behavior of its members that leads them to disrespect laws. It can do this by practicing its deterrent role against any violation of laws within the family and traffic laws outside it, by teaching them the values and standards that society imposes on its members, which make them fear harming themselves and others in the event of violating or disrespecting those laws.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that commitment to traffic laws is everyone's responsibility. The responsibility of social control lies with all social institutions because they complement each other. Through this research paper, we have addressed a small part of the complex issue of how to adhere to traffic laws to reduce the problem of accidents that claim the lives of dozens of victims. A healthy family leads to a healthy society. This society also needs social controls that individuals must comply with, especially concerning traffic laws, so that society can **confront this problem**.

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