CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION
INTRODUCTION: -

The term “political socialization” has captivated the attention of those political scientists who in recent years have been more or less concerned with maintaining the stability of the political system. Though the term has been widely applied in contemporary political analysis for the systematic analysis of political behaviour an emphasis on citizen training for civic participation is not new to the literature of classical theory. Plato, Aristotle, Bodin have emphasized the need for proper citizens fit for the state and to safeguard its ideals. It is needless to point out that later writers have reiterated in various ways of similar concern for the process whereby the political culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. Its present manifestation dates back mainly from American studies of civic education in the 1920s and 1930s (Merriam 1931, Wilson 1938) [1]. By 1969 the study of political socialization has become a large-scale enterprise. But research in this area really began with all seriousness after the Path breaking Publication of Hyman’s inventory on Political Socialization [2]. It has become the organizing principle for scientific meeting and lengthy conferences. While studying a


political culture one would naturally like to enquire as to how this Political Culture comes to be what it is, that is how do people develop their political beliefs and attitudes and how further this set of beliefs and orientations is continued from one generation to another. Indeed one of the Salient features of culture is its inter-generational continuity. From the perspective of the present, the image of the scientific landscape of the past is bound to be distorted. With this luxuriant scene before our eyes it is hard to bring back to mind the barren vista of the previous decade [3]. The culture of a social group does not die with the extinction of the existing members of the group. It continues on the strength of a willingness on the part of the new members of the group to embrace the ideas and beliefs comprising this culture. This willingness, however, is not a matter of rational choice on the part of the individuals but is rather a matter of learned behaviour. This learning process involving an internationalization of the existing cultural pattern is called Socialization and whenever this process has clearly a Political context it is known as political socialization.

MEANING

Most attempts to define socialization have generally agreed that it is a process in which individuals incorporate in to their own attitudinal structure and behaviour patterns the ways of their respective social groups and society. John Whiting and Irvin Child describe in more

"In all societies the helpless infant, getting his food by nursing at his mother’s breast and having digested it, freely evacuating the waste products, exploring his genitals, biting and kicking at will, must be changed into a responsible adult obeying the rules of his society.”

Political Socialization in broadest sense refers to the way society transmits its political culture from generation to generation. Almond defines Political Socialization as “the process of induction into the Political culture. Its end products are a set of attitudes cognition, value standards and feelings towards the political system, its various rules and role incumbents. It also includes knowledge of values affecting and feelings towards the inputs of demands and claims into the systems and its authoritative output.”[4] This process may serve to preserve traditional political norms and institutions on the other hand when secondary socialization agencies inculcate political values different from those of the past or when children are raised with Political and Social expectations different from those of their forebears, the socialization process can be a vehicle of Political and social change.

Political Socialization is the process by which a person receives his knowledge, values and beliefs about politics. In most cases this process involves the transmission of political knowledge, values and

beliefs from one generation to another in an adult to child relationship. But in some cases it involves the socialization of adults in to a newly adopted country (for example nineteenth century American immigrants) with the transmission-taking place in adult-to-adult or even child to adult relationship. In any event Political Socialization is process, which begins in early childhood and continues throughout a lifetime. According to Pye and Verba "The Political Socialization process involves not only the deeply instilled attitudes and sentiments of early childhood and family life but also the later experiences of explicit instruction in politics at school through exposure to the mass media and in contacts with other politically socializing agents."[5]

Although the term "Political Socialization" is relatively recent in the literature of Politics, the concept is as old as the study of politics itself. Both Plato and Aristotle discussed the importance of transmitting values and beliefs to the new members of the Political Community. In recent years there has been an attempt at systematic study of this process by cultural, anthropologists, sociologists, educational psychologists and political scientists.

The acquisition of Political attitudes and beliefs is an incremental and cumulative process. As a person broadens his experience and refines his knowledge about political life, he passes through several stages or levels of maturations, of course, not everyone

achieves the same level of political maturity. At the most basic level a person learns to develop attitudes and knowledge about political institutions and practices. At a higher level, he acquires attitudes towards those who occupy the positions of leadership in the political system – the candidates and office holders. At the highest level a person develops attitudes and knowledge about the policy outputs of the system - laws, decisions and issues. Richard Dawson and Kenneth Prewitt suggest that these ever narrowing levels of knowledge and belief are related to chronological age. [6]

In the development of the "Political Self" they maintain a child moves from basic to less basic orientations. The first values and beliefs acquired tend to be those related to citizen identification and national loyalty. As the child grows older both mentally and chronologically he accumulates knowledge about and develops attitudes towards specific political institutions. Before reaching adult status a child acquires knowledge and beliefs about political leaders, political parties and policy issues. This latter development is one, which continues throughout a person's lifetime. In looking at the concept of political socialization we might choose to focus on one of several aspects. One is the content or substance of the knowledge and beliefs, which are being transmitted. Another is the process used for making the transmission. It may be direct or indirect; for example, political

socialization may take place through direct interpersonal relationships with the transferal of knowledge and beliefs, which are obviously political or political socialization may take an indirect course when a person acquires certain beliefs which are not in themselves political but which may shape the way he views the political world. Hence family attitudes towards authority may shape a child's attitude towards authority in political institutions. In addition to the content and mode of transmission, we might focus on these responsible for socializing - what Herbert Hyman calls the "agencies of socialization into politics."

The process by which political culture is shaped at the individual level and at the community level is passed on from generation to generation is called political socialization. Political socialization shapes and transmits a nation's political culture or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that it maintains, transforms and sometimes creates the political culture of the people. It maintains a political culture by successfully transmitting it from an old generation to a new one. The task of this maintenance naturally receives much importance under stable conditions. But stable conditions are rather an infrequent phenomenon in the modern world where many nations are often found to be struggling for transforming the old order and erecting new political structures with new social arrangements. And this is where we come across the transforming role of political socialization. Sometimes a nation and this applies specially to the newly independent nations of
Asia and Africa may try to find a completely new political order for which a new political culture has to be created. The creating task of political socialization looms large in such a case which of these three roles of political socialization - maintaining, transforming and creating political culture would receive greater would however depend on a number of factors like a country's historical development, the type of social and international environment, the character of the existing traditional outlook towards the political life and also the goals and means of leaders and citizens.

It is defined as the way in which political orientation, knowledge, attitudes or norms and values are transmitted from one generation to another as the process by which political culture is shaped at the individual level and at the community level and is passed from generation to generation. Political socialization has also been interpreted as the establishment and development of attitudes and beliefs about the political system. Narrowly conceived, political socialization is the deliberate inculcation of political information values and practices by institutional agents who have been formally charged with this responsibility.

A broader conception would encompass all political learning, formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned at every stage of the life cycle, including not only explicitly political learning but also normally non-political learning that affects political behaviour such as the learning
of politically relevant attitudes and personality characteristic. It can be defined as a process of transmission of political attitudes, norms, knowledge, pattern of behaviour, information and values from one generation to another, to prepare citizens for their future political roles and to build the foundation of a committed political participation. The process of political socialization should not always be taken as an instrument for maintaining the status quo only. In fact the political system is the pivot around which the socialization process revolves. It is difficult to think of the existence of a universal process and motive for political socialization in any political system. Even in totalitarian Governmental structures in spite of the iron rule of political regimentation an underground arrangement exists for socializing the dissidents that means the political opponents who cannot propagate their political views openly. Hence for facilitating an objective analysis political socialization is to be considered as consisting of multidimensional and multi-motive process.

The transmission of political culture is a never-ending process following ceaselessly through different agencies and time. Though political socialization takes place though learning normally the two are not identical in all cases. Learning is individual. It may not be socially or politically relevant. Socialization and political socialization are fully concerned with those activities, which have a social and political connotation and are socially and politically relevant or determine the
patterns of socio-political behaviour. Therefore all sorts of learning are not contributory to political socialization. Even those non-political activities which are socially relevant and which directly and indirectly affect political behaviour and culture may be taken to be a part of the process of political socialization.

Political socialization is an interactive process that continues from early childhood until the individual loses touch with political life through death. Senility, social or informational isolation or other similarly complete forms of withdrawal from society. As long as one continues in some way to relate to politics, even if that relationship involves a rejection of overt political participation, the process of political socialization remains incomplete. There exists no universally identifiable endpoint no state of being completely socialized. Truly, political socialization represents for the individual a continuing apprenticeship in political life.

That is not to suggest that an individual's early experience is not highly significant in structuring the relationship between person and politics. To the contrary, most evidence indicates that most people acquire the bulk of their political orientations and learning at a relatively early stage of life, and certainly before reaching adulthood. But it should help us to perceive these early experiences in their proper context, which is in its simplest terms that of preparing the individual to understand and to deal with later experience, which he may encounter. In general, by
giving him a relatively broad base of political orientations, early experience prepares the individuals more or less adequately for the assumption of adult political roles. His later experience in those roles then further influences his attitudes and expectations as they apply to subsequent political events. Thus political learning is cumulative and the lessons learned are subject to both pre-existing expectation and subsequent modification.

Here our emphasis is on the social context in which learning occurs. Students of the process have suggested at least four different models or theories that describe the ways in which political and other learning comes about. These include the "accumulations" theory, the "interpersonal transfer" theory, the "identification" theory and the "cognitive developmental" theory. As we look briefly at each of these models, the most important point to keep in mind is that, while each represents a distinctly different characterization of the learning process, none is intended to explain all instances of learning. Rather each seeks to identify and to explain a different aspect of the acquisition of information. Thus socialization in one attitude area at one point in time may best be understood in terms of one particular theory and socialization in another attitude area or at another point in time may best be understood in terms of another. The overall corpus of political learning will result from an admixture of all four.

The first of these explanations, the so-called accumulation
theory begins from the premise that political learning is an incremental process that proceeds by the addition of discrete units of knowledge, information and belief. Thus an individual's attitudes are seen as the sum at a given point in time of the inputs she has received up to that time. In this view, there is not necessarily any logical sequence by which learning takes place, rather, information is acquired when and as it becomes available. In other words, there is implicit in the accumulation theory no consistent pattern to the learning of politics, and there need be no systematic connection among the various elements of new information that an individual acquires. As a consequence, the accumulation theory is useful primarily for explaining the acquisition of bits of factual knowledge, which contribute principally to the cognitive components of political attitudes.

The second theory of political learning that of interpersonal transfer is rather more useful for explaining affective judgements and relationships with political figures. Here the individual is presumed to possess a storehouse of experience in interpersonal relations that can be transferred over to expressly political situations. This amounts to a sort of guilt by association. For example, when a child comes to identify the president as an authority figure, she is likely to the association between her father's role of authority in the family, with which she has considerable direct experience and the president's role of authority in the nation with which she has none. Thus she develops an image of the
president as quite literally the father of her country. Her understanding of the concept of "president" is less a product of newly acquired information, which relates directly to the object in question that it is simply an extension of earlier, possibly non-political forms of understanding.

The identification model is similar in that it too derives from inter-personal relations, but here the learning process is rather more direct. Identification operates when an individual identifies herself with some other person whom she holds in high esteem and proceeds to imitate the attitudes or behaviours of that person. In this view, then learning proceeds without teaching and the transmission of values from source to recipient may be inadvertent. The individual herself chooses the lessons she will learn and the conditions under which she will learn them. Furthermore, just as the accumulation model allows for the learning of unconnected facts, the identification models permit the adoption of preferences or behaviours without understanding. It is the ritual of imitation, and not the force of reason that results in learning this type. It is the personal structure of the individual's role model and not necessarily the substantive sources of the role model's attitudes and behaviours that motivates learning by identification. The student who adopts the political outlooks of a professor she admires might well provide an example of such learning.

Our final conceptualization of political learning, termed
cognitive, developmental, derives from the cognitive conceptualization of personality and is rather more demanding in its structuring of the learning situation. According to this theory, an individual is limited in her ability to understand political phenomena by the amount of relevant information she already possesses and by the level of conceptual ability she has achieved. The more developed her general mental capabilities in dealing with abstractions, for example, the better able she is to grasp the subtleties of fairly abstract political ideas such as ideologies. Similarly, the more information she possesses about candidates and political competition, the better able she is to perceive and respond to the complexities of an electoral situation. The cognition developmental model, in other words, argues that learning is heavily dependent upon the inherent capacity of the individual to think and suggest that learning of increasingly complex political information can take place only as the individual acquires increasing critical skills. Accordingly the level of sophistication of the information one is able to learn and therefore, the limits on the potential sophistication of one's understanding of politics, is at least in part a function of age.

**Study of Political Socialization: -**

The process of Political Socialization is a continuous process. It does not stop with the extinction of any group or generation. Attitudes, values beliefs and knowledge are transmitted from generation to generation. Political Socialization is a continuous process operative at all
stages of the individual's life cycle. It is intergenerational and
intragenerational. It is not limited to a particular part of man's life rather
it envelops his entire life. Political Socialization that begins in the
childhood may encounter many challenges. The attitudes formed during
the childhood days may seem to be inconsistent when an individual
reaches adulthood.

Hence, there is need for adult socialization. There is
substantial difference between childhood socialization and adult
socialization because of the difference between the individual and
socializing agent. Adult socialization is minimally charged with emotion
and it maintains affective neutrality. When a child is socialized by his
parents he is likely to make a far more open and continual use of power
so that the child can hardly avoid realizing that it is the weaker party in
the situation. Political values, attitudes, and beliefs implanted in
childhood can change radically through experience. Thus political
socialization is never complete in childhood. Political socialization is not
a process confined to the impressionable years of childhood, but one that
continues through adult life.

Political socialization is basically a continuous social and
psychological process composed of four elements. It involves (a) an
interaction acquisition process (b) between the individual being socialized
(c) the agency which acts as the vehicle of socialization and (d) the
political behaviour patterns, perceptions and attitudes which he learns.
The problems facing the students of socialization center on these four elements.

Many different non-political conceptual frameworks have been advanced to explain the interaction-acquisition process by which socialization occurs. Some are based on the study of the maladjusted. Other have their roots in the study of primitive people, others in highly controlled laboratory experiments on animals and children and still others on the study and observation of "normal" children and adults in primarily Western societies. Considering the varied perspectives and sources of information, differences in interpretation are not surprising, so far no one approach has received general acceptance. In this section we shall discuss briefly three of the major approaches to socialization: learning, personality and role.

Learning, as used by psychologists, is a broad term applying to all behaviour, which derives from training procedures. Many learning theorists view behaviour in terms of measurable stimuli and responses and attempt to determine the principles by which they are linked. This linkage is usually explained by the concepts of conditioning and reinforcement. If the socializing agent wishes, for example, to control or direct a child's behaviour, he must make clear the distinction between old and new behaviour patterns.

An important concept in explaining socialization is imitation, a response pattern that occurs under given conditions as a result of the
learning process. A young child usually learns early that life is more rewarding if he follows in the footsteps of the older and more powerful people with whom he interacts. In order to gratify his needs, he may form the habit of imitating the people upon whom he is dependent. Behaviour, which is rewarded, is reinforced, that which is not dropped.

Imitation is closely related to the process of identification in which the child, or older individual for that matter, tries to be another person. There are different views concerning the basis for identification: some psychologists believe that the youngster identifies first with the person who gratifies his needs, others believe that he identifies with the person whose status he envies and who withholding from him the things he wants. In any case, the child consciously or unconsciously begins to identity with the important "other" individual and to internalize his attitudes as well as to imitate his behaviour. Identification usually begins within the family where parents are taken as models. As the child matures he takes other referents for his behaviour: peers, teachers and work group members, next he might take persons outside his immediate environment-imaginary as well as real - such as historical figures.

Identification may represent a more advanced stage in the formation of political party identification. In this process the individual is not only imitating behaviour but internalizing attitudes often associated with party preference for example, attitudes towards Government ownership. How much the individual identifies and internalizes related
attitudes may determine the stability over time of his partisan identification.

Since research in learning has been developed largely under laboratory conditions, it is ordinarily more controlled and methodologically precise than personality or social–role research. While it has provided many insights to students of socialization, it has been less than successful in explaining social situations, which involve complex motivations and ambivalent feelings.

Turning to personality and role approaches, there has been considerable discussion as to the relative influence of personality versus the situation or role, in orienting behavior. Clearly some situations are highly structured and social norms are so unambiguous that personality differences have a limited effect on behavior. On the other hand, less structured situations may afford greater scope for the psychological dispositions to affect behavior. It would rarely seem to be an "either-or" position with its simple but implicit view of the bivariate or single-dimensional nature of casualty.

Lewis Froman has argued that including attitudinal dispositions as intervening variables in the study of socialization is conceptually important for several reasons. [7] First, this intervening factor is immediately necessary in situations where the environmental stimuli appear to be the same but behavior is different or conversely,

environments are different but behaviour is the same. Second, this may lead to more parsimonious theories to the extent that explanations of behaviour can be funneled through a smaller number of psychological dispositions rather than be dependent on a more complex environment. Finally, to the degree that inclusion of attitudinal disposition illuminates the linkage between environmental agencies and behaviour the predicative value of the socialization theories will be enhanced. Equally important, their explanatory power will be increased. It has been argued that the inability to explain discovered relationship has been one of the major weaknesses of those conceptual approaches which attempt to show direct linkage between environment and behaviour.

While Froman's argument for including personality dispositions in socialization research is persuasive the political relevance of personality is less than universal. In some studies the correlation between such dispositions and behaviour has been found to be very weak and in other cases negative.

**Desocialization and Resocialization**

There is no doubt that the process of socialization can be studied in the developmental context. In that developmental context there would arise the case for desocialization and resocialization under certain circumstances. Desocialization calls for exceptional political or social situation when a change in political regimes is such that without attitudinal change the new regime cannot hope to sustain itself and
cannot fulfill its objectives. Hence continuous propaganda is launched, against the old values, education is re-oriented, the nature of political recruitment is changed and political participation is either enlarged or limited. The Cultural Revolution in China in the sixties was an example of desocialization. Its purpose was to destroy bourgeois values in all spheres of life and to revolutionalise outlook necessary for a socialist social order. Desocialization without resocialization is unthinkable. Resocialization is a way, a process of indoctrination. When regimes change from totalitarian to liberal democratic and vice-versa the process of desocialization and resocialization come to life. In the so-called pluralist democracies also the existence of comparative and antagonistic groups and interests helps the cultivation desocialization and resocialization. If political socialization is accepted as a developmental process, desocialization and resocialization are to be accepted as its integral parts.

**Forms:**

Political socialization may assume either of these two forms: direct or manifest and indirect or latent. Socialization is manifest when it involves the explicit communication of information, values or feelings towards political objects. In other words, in case of the process of manifest socialization the values, feelings or information transmitted are clearly political in content or have a distinct political orientation. When individuals through the family, courses in educational institutions peer
groups directly become aware of the Governmental process, role of the political parties on about the conflicts in the political system, manifesto political socialization takes place.

When children identify themselves with the political views of their parents and are informed from time to time as to what is happening in the political world, socialization becomes manifest. In the case of latent socialization the orientation is not directly political. Among the many latent political influences perhaps the most distinctive is the shaping of attitude towards authority. Here the content of the orientation is non-political but it ultimately culminates in political objects, obedience to authority is first learnt in the family. The opportunity for participation in the process of family decisions increases the competence and self-confidence of a child and this helps him to participate political decision-making when he becomes an adult. Participation in schools and colleges union elections contest for its leadership and participation in its decision-making prepare the ground for future political role. It is thus clear that latent political socialization begins with non-political objects and orientations but they ultimately lead to political objects and orientations. Political socialization in manifest and latent forms is present more or less in all the agencies of political socialization.

Both manifest and latent political socialization may be intended or unintended. In the case of intended manifest socialization the transmission of political objects and orientations is absolutely direct.
and clear, when a Government warns the people to shun violence and submit to its orders and laws. When a Government makes a law for compulsory participation in election intended manifest political socialization occurs. When a person finds that a political leader has been imprisoned for his opposition to the Government he becomes conscious of the role he has to play or the attitude he has to maintain towards the Government. When a pupil is taught to obey the authority and maintain a code of conduct within the campus, or not to oppose the views of the teachers there occurs an intended latent political socialization. But when a pupil on his way to the school or to a cultural function learns the value of discipline by standing in a queue, it becomes a case for unintended latent socialization. Intended or unintended what ever may be their form, they are so much involved with the process of socialization that no one is so much concerned about their functional difference.

**Process:**

In the last decade, interest in political socialization, the process by which the child learns about the political culture in which he lives has increased dramatically. Indeed, it “has emerged as a new specialization” within political science. However, the study of political socialization is at the same time venerable. It would be unwarranted to claim that today’s behavioural political scientists have discovered a new problem. It is more accurate to credit them with refocusing attention on a classic concern of politics.
Philosophers have been interested in and have speculated about the training of citizens and the means used by elites to inculcate loyalty, and elites have a continuously employed various practices to this end. Only recently however, has empirical research begun to transform early philosophical speculation and the assumptions of political practice into more concrete knowledge of the factors involved in political learning. In addition, there has been an occasional piece of relevant empirical investigation. Research on civic training was conducted in the 1930s, and interesting, though not specifically political, child development studies appeared in the psychological literature. However it was only following the publication in 1959 of Hyman’s political socialization that “political scientists have evidenced any great concern over or conducted appreciable research on political socialization.”[8]

Hence the field, though vigorous, is young and relatively undeveloped. Stock needs to be taken of recent efforts since 1959 and in the light of these efforts, new explanatory tracks need to be developed and new research needs to be proposed. According to Greenstein: “While there is no generally accepted approach to the study of political socialization, much of what is known and of what ought to be known can be summed up in the following paraphrase of Lass well’s formulations of the general process of communication: (a) who (b) learns what (c) from

whom (d) under what circumstances (e) with what effects.” [9]

Who learns?

According to Froman, “the primary question in political socialization is not ‘who learns?’ but how do children learn politically relevant attitudes and behaviours?” [10]

Most studies have attempted to answer this question by concentrating for the most part on young children. The rational for researching this population is based on two propositions, first that basic orientations towards politics are learned in early childhood and adolescence and second that this early socialization has important consequences for adult political behaviour. There is indeed evidence to substantiate the first proposition. According to Greenstein, age is one of the most important factors influencing the political socialization of the child. Easton and Hess have in fact claimed that “the truly formative years of the maturing member of a political system would seem to be the years between the ages of three and thirteen.” [11] Indeed, a prominent finding of many studies is that the young child acquires certain political orientations at an early age.


For example, at a very young age the child has an awareness of the president. The child’s image of the president is positive and highly idealized, but suffers diminution as the child gets older. Other findings related to age are (1) that by the time the child is in the fourth grades, six out of ten were able to state whether their party preference was Republican or Democratic... (2) a cynical attitude towards politics increases as age increases and (3) as child gets older, he is less likely to state that he would ask his parents for voting advice. It is evident, therefore, that at an early age the child has become aware of and loyal to, political figures, has begun to express support for the system, has acquired a preference for a political party and holds certain political attitudes. These factors appear early in the life cycle, but are subject to change as the child matures.

Thus indeed children learn but there is differential learning influenced by certain characteristics of the child, the investigation of which gives a more detailed answer to the question of ‘who?’ The two primary characteristics are sex and social class.

Regarding sex, findings are similar to but not as conclusive as, those concerning the political behaviour of adults that is, boys know more about politics than girls and boys are more like to ready about politics in the newspaper. Gender does not have any relationship to the child’s future expectation of whether or not he will vote when he is twenty-one.
In regard to class, one find that in general, children of the upper socio-economic strata are more likely to express an interest in politics and to be more active politically than children of lower status. The relationship between socio-economic status and political socialization, however, is not always clear. For example, Greenstein found that "there is no difference between the classes in ability to identify political figures and that children in both status groups indicate that they prefer one political party over another."[12] According to Greenstein, these differences in political socialization, which are related to sex and social class factors, have already begun to be established by nine years of age.... Hence it appears that many frequently observed differences in adult political attitudes by sex and social class have their precursors in youth.

The young child consequently does indeed acquire certain political orientations at an early age. However the question of the extent to which these early years are the "truly formative years" in the development of political attitude has not been and cannot be answered from the data gathered by any of the studies thus far concluded. Only a design incorporating a sample composed of a wide dispersion of ages either a cross sectional or a longitudinal study, could adequately answer this question.

In deed, there is evidence that counsel's caution in accepting

the more extravagant claims about the efficacy of childhood political learning. In a view of the psychological and sociological literature on socialization, William Sewell demonstrates that "while early learning is important, social-role learning persists throughout a person's life cycle. Clearly at least some kind of political socialization occur after childhood." [13] For example studies of the socialization of American state Legislators point out the fact that while a large percentage of them remember being socialized in childhood, a considerable percentage was socialized later in life.

Thus while early socialization experiences may be important, concentration of attention on children of a particular age group, as has characterized political science research, threatens to trap the investigator in a static conception of socialization. By so restricting their attention, scholars have been unable to deal directly with a basic assumption upon which a research into childhood socialization is based. They have been unable to answer what is perhaps the key theoretical question. How does early socialization relate to later political behaviour? In seeking to answer this question, it behooves the student of child's political orientations to consider that the relationship is neither direct nor complete, that events subsequent to childhood may importantly condition the impact of acquisitions during the early years.

What is learned?

By far the greatest concern of scholars of political socialization has been with the context of early political learning. Greenstein makes a distinction between politically relevant aspects of personality development and ‘specially political learning.’ The former has been virtually ignored by political scientists, who have preferred to devote most attention to the substantive questions of the latter. Greenstein divides specifically political learning into three sections:

1) Learning connected with the citizen role (partisan, attachment, ideology and motivation to participate).

2) Learning connected with subject role (national loyalty, orientations towards authority, conception of the legitimacy of institutions).

3) Learning connected with recruitment to and performance of specialized roles, such as bureaucrat, party functionary and legislator.

In regard to citizen-role learning, studies have shown that most children express a preference for one political party over another, that most agree with their parents' party preference and that this identification is not based on in depth knowledge of politics. Party loyalty, however is not the whole of politics. Also important in forming the citizen's role are motivation to participate and ideology. Unfortunately, neither of these has received much research attention. Most of the children interviewed state that they will vote when they are old enough. This does not fully tap the question of motivation. Intention
to vote is apparently associated with feelings of duty. Though interesting, this begs the question of why children think it is their duty to vote.

In regard to what Greenstein labels ideology, "one finds that children 'were hot' sufficiently well informed to understand the sorts of statements, which make up liberalism, conservatism, scales" and that most of them could not distinguish between the two major political parties. Greenstein suggests "this is due to the fact that the young child has not yet reached the stage of ideology readiness that is necessary before he can become in the genetic sense of the terms, either a little liberal or else a little conservative."[14]

Due however, to the lack of theoretical frameworks these findings seem to be merely isolated bits of knowledge floating in a sea of relative ignorance. The student of political socialization has probably only scratched the surface of the relevant citizen's orientations of children. Neither participation as such nor the direction of participation has been thoroughly researched.

Considerable attention has been devoted to children learning of the subject role. Children generally have a greater awareness and knowledge about the national government than of the State. This awareness usually carries with it a benevolent and favourable view of the government. As Easton and Dennis report, children at all grade levels of

their sample (2.8) "roundly approve of government"[15] One group of studies point out that children trust the government and do not display as cynical an attitude towards politics and politicians as do their parents. However the content of this critical area of political affect, though generally favourable, appears to vary with many factors. Ziblatt notes "students who participate in extra-curricular activities are more likely to trust the government than those who do not participate."[16] Though suggestive of an interesting kind of transfer, this relationship may be a function of the correlation of such participation to high socio-economic status. There are more over, cultural factors to be considered. Students from Appalachia are more cynical than their counterparts elsewhere. Pinnar has demonstrated, "Belgian and French students exhibit more political distrust than do the Dutch high school and University students."[17] Clearly more research on the child's attitude towards political authority is called for.

While the relationships are complicated, it has been fairly well established, as noted above that the child has a positive image of executive figures (the president in the USA is the first political figure


about which the child has information). Various explanations have been posited to account for this relationship. Most interesting for the present paper is the fact that no data have been gathered which empirically test a learning theory formulation of the acquiring of attitudes towards political authority.

Finally, “learning connected with recruitment to performance of specialized roles, such as bureaucrat, party functionary, and legislator is also very much under investigated.” Though more attention is desirable, the primary focus of the present work will include only the first two content areas.

**The Agents:**

The question of “From whom?” The child learns about politics reminds one of mark Twain’s oft-quoted statement about the weather. To paraphrase, one could say that everyone talks about the agents of socialization but no one does anything about them. Most scholars agree with little or no data to back them up that all of the following act as agents of political socialization: family, School, Church, Peer groups and youth organizations, Social Class, ethnic origin, geographic region and mass media. All of these formulations are hypothetical. By far the most comprehensive inquiry into the agents of political socialization is that of Hess and Torney. They divide “Socialization Contexts” into three general types.

The first type includes institutions of well-defined structure
and organization: the family, school and church. The second type of socializing influence occurs in larger social settings. The most important of these social contexts are: Social class, ethnic origin and geographical region. A third type of influence in the socializing process derives from the Child's personal characteristics.

According to these writers, the first type influences the child by "direct teaching of political attitudes and values and by inducting him into the behaviour and roles appropriate to family, school, or church membership. These values are then generalized to attitudes towards political life of the community and nation.

Most scholars agree that the family is one of the most potent sources of political socialization. According to Hess and Torney, "the family acts as an agent in three ways. First, it transmits attitudes to the child, second, the parent serves as a model to the child, third, role definitions and expectations within the family structure are generalized to political objects.”[18]

Probably the strongest finding to date, involving the family, as an agent is the child's tendency to assimilate the party preference of his parents. The parent also is the most referred source of voting advice for the child. But, again there appear to be important conditioning factors. Hess and Torney demonstrate that age acts as an important variable. As the child grows older, he looks less to the parent for political information.

Hence, the parent is more salient as an agent to the youngest child. Hess and Tomey, find that other factors had little influence on the parent as an agent. The two factors they investigated were the absence or presence of the father in the home and the status of inter-familiar relationship. They find that father absence makes no difference in attitudes towards authority and that “children who see their fathers as being powerful tend to be more informed and interested in political matters.” Family is the first social group to which the individual belongs; it is here that he experiences his political training. The family is a key reference group, which transmits, indoctrinates and sustains the political loyalties of its members. Family as the most important agent transmitting political attitudes, values and beliefs. But the role of the family in the socialization process should not be unduly exaggerated. The family influence does not remain uniformly strong throughout the life span of an individual. It may decrease with the mental and physical growth of the children, their interaction with the outside world, interpersonal communication of values, acquisition of new experience. It may remain constant and can be conservative in outlook.

The second well defined structure that acts as an agent of political socialization is the school. Hess and Torney disagree with Greenstein. While the latter regards the family as the primary agent, the former feel that “the public school is the most important and effective instrument of political socialization in the United States. The school
operates as both a manifest and a latent form of transmission. It is manifest when it socializes directly through classroom instruction, class rituals and ceremonies, such as pledging allegiance to the flag, singing patriotic songs and celebrating patriotic holidays. It is latent when it socializes role behaviour within the school structure, which may be transferred to other behaviour outside the school. Contextually, the school socializes respect and awe for the government and stresses, "the structure rather than the dynamics of government. It tells the child little concerning the role of political parties and tends to "stress certain consensus values, such as the importance of voting and the criteria one should use to determine his voting choice". Even in the area of political orientations, there is a lack of evidence that the civic curriculum has a significant effect on the political orientations of the great majority of American high school students. Almond and Verba have summed up following points from their five-nation study.

1. The more educated is more aware of the impact of government on the individual than is the person of less education.

2. The more educated individual is more likely to report that he follows politics and pays attention to election campaigns than in the individual of less education.

3. The more educated individual has more political information.

4. The more educated individual has opinions on a wider range of political subjects; the focus of his attention to politics is wider.
5. The more educated individual is more likely to engage in political discussion.

6. The more educated individual feels free to discuss politics with a wider range of people.

7. The more educated individual is more likely to be a member and an active member of some organization.

8. The more educated individual is more likely to consider himself capable of influencing the government.

9. The more educated individual is more likely to express confidence in his social environment to belief that other people are trustworthy and helpful.

The formalized institution is transmitted to the young through specially designated institutions created for the purpose of teaching the skills that the child needs in order to function in the adult world. Moreover, the education system may be a vehicle for the shaping of political attitudes and orientations.

Peer groups play differing roles as agents of socialization at different stages of life. At the outset, when as a young child the individual first crosses the social threshold, peer relationships supplement familiar relationships by broadening the scope of his awareness and by helping him to identify his family as part of an emerging social matrix. It is through the development of peer group interactions that the individual first begins to lose his "Pre-Copernican"
nations about the central dependence of all life upon his family and to sense the full breadth of his social environment.

During the years of formal education, peer groups become increasingly important in a different way by furnishing alternative value structures and alternative emotional foci which in concert with the school experience, begin to provide the individual with the motives and skills requisite for developing his own sense of social independence. In fact, by the time a child reaches high school age - a period when he is beginning to sense his own maturity - peer group relations in combination with other socializing factors may largely supplant the family as a reference point for personal norms, at least to the extent that the individual in question is conscious of making choices. Thus young people tend to prefer the company of their contemporaries to that of their "old fashioned" parents and in the extreme case, adolescent rebellion assumes the character of a group as opposed to an individual phenomenon.

By the time an individual reaches adulthood, peer groups may have become the dominant socializing force in his life, once again, as was the case with the family, due largely to proximity. Once an individual is out of school and on his own, he is most open to influence by those persons he most values: his spouse, his friends, and his fellow workers. At this point in life, peer groups provide the most salient social reference; they constitute the principal locus of social support for this
attitudes and behaviour. We shall in fact see that even the potential influence of the mass media on the individual seems to be affected by the nature of his peer-group relationships.

There remains one additional and temporally pervasive set off socializing agents, the mass media of communication, to which we must devote our attention. Mass media provides various forms of politically relevant information to the individual at virtually every stage of the life cycle, and there can be little question that encounters with mass communication have significant impact upon the perceptions of political reality held by the citizens of technologically advanced societies. Because they facilitate vital forms of social, political exchange in such societies, but most especially because individuals in such societies rely upon them as sources of information, social contact, entertainment, release and fulfillment, mass media provide an effective and significant agent of political and other learning. Indeed, in the development and dissemination a widely shared set of cultural values, it is unlikely that any other socializing agent exceeds the scope of the mass media.

The second type of socializing influence is that which occurs in the larger social setting. Three types have been identified: Social class, ethnic origin, and geographic region. There is little research on children regarding these factors. There is however, one other agent that operates in the larger social setting. In regard to the mass media as an agent of socialization, one is able to find little data other than those dealing with
how much television the child watches. Important work on media effects has been done by scholars in disciplines other than political science but discussion of these studies is deferred until the substantive section dealing with this topic.

The third type of socializing influence is the personal characteristics of the child. According to Hess and Torney, "these individual characteristics influence socializing efforts of the family, school and other agents and limit the extent of learning". [19] These authors state that the main factor that limits the child's ability to assimilate what is taught is intelligence. But overall personal characteristics have received even less attention as childhood socialization agents than the media. Rosenberg demonstrates that "self-esteem is related to interest in and discussion of public affairs".

Jaros has shown that "the anxiety displayed by the child is related to authoritarianism, which in turn is related to attributed presidential strength and power". [20]

**Under What Circumstances?**

Inquiring about the circumstances under which socialization occurs is very similar to asking who learns. By "circumstances" Greenstein refers to culture. There has been an ever-increasing number of studies that investigate socialization in different cultures. Most of them

---

[20]. Jaros Dean: "Socialization to Politics", op cit, Pg. 83.
naturally reflect the main trust of political socialization research in the United States that is; they focus primarily on the content of what is socialized and virtually exclude any discussion of the agents involved.

Converse and Depeux in a comparative study of France and the United States, found that in France there is less political communication between parent and child. While 80% of American adults are able to remember what their parents’ party preferences were for French adults the figure is only 30%.

Hess compared attitudes toward the main political authority figure in five different countries: United States, Chile, Puerto Rico, Japan and Australia. He found similarities and differences.

All displayed “(a) less idealization of prominent authority figures and (b) increased awareness of role and competence qualities” as the child grew older.

Differences suggested “(a) differential effects of social class upon Political Socialization in different countries and (b) different levels of influence of home and school as socializing agents.

In general, these studies lend support to the warning that the major findings of political socialization research are “culture bound” and that has been suggested the laws of socialization are non-universal. More sub and cross-cultural data are clearly called for.

**With What Effects?**

As stated earlier, there is really no way, using the data
gathered up to this point, to test the effects of socialization. Greenstein speculates that, “early learning important because it takes place during a formative period and because early learning affects later learning”. [21] In regard to the effects of socialization on the political system, there are no data to speak of Greenstein as well as Easton and Dennis give us the near-truism that “socialization may be either a stabilizing influence or a potential source of change”. [22]

Easton and Dennis have examined the authoritarian syndrome. That is, by asking children how they feel about authority one may be tapping the dimension of authoritarianism rather than that of support for the political system. This is indeed important and undoubtedly has implications for the system, but caution should be exercised in making the leap.

Critique:

Many shortcomings of extent research are outlined. Such considerations as the need for longitudinal data, the lack of studies dealing with the socialization of adults, and the lack of data on the effect of early socialization on later behaviour occupied our attention. According to Sigel, “socialization is a misnomer for what we study because we study what children have learned (the output) not how

they learned it”. We have in other words not been looking at the process of political socialization, we have been looking at the content”. [23]

According to Froman,

(1) It draws attention away from possible agents of learning other than parents. Such as peer groups, mass media and school sources...

(2) It has not been adequately tested.

(3) More importantly, it tends to blend together the component parts of what have been referred to as “images” at the cost of theorizing about the learning process. [24]

Up to now the student of Political Socialization has not based his inquiry upon a theoretical framework that could operate to bring some order to his data. Additional approaches are necessary and the present work will attempt to formulate a theoretical framework that should provide some insight into the process of political socialization.
