

## POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

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Research on political socialization commenced in earnest in the 1950s. In an attempt to understand the decision-making process of the American voter, voting behavior scholars in the 1950s found that factors outside an individual's control influenced, indeed dictated, his or her vote choice in a given election. Survey research subsequently revealed that political orientations and opinions were not hastily made or haphazardly decided; rather, they were the result of a long process that seemed to begin early in childhood, a process called *political socialization*.

Among the first groups of voting behavior scholars is the Columbia school. These scholars surprisingly stumbled on socialization in their research on vote choice. In several localized studies (including Erie County, Ohio, and Elmira County, New York), they followed voters through a campaign to examine the influence of the campaign on the vote (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948). They found that the campaign had little influence on the vote; rather, voters made their decisions well in advance based largely on party identification. Their party identification was based on primary group associations, the most important being the family through the process of socialization. The primary finding of the Columbia school was that voting decisions were determined by social forces having little to do with electoral politics.

Another group of voting behavior scholars, known as the Michigan school, based their research not on localized

studies (which always raises questions of external validity) but on a national representative survey sample. Their substantive results did not significantly differ; they, too, found that the most important factor influencing voting behavior was party identification, which was transmitted through a socialization process from parents (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960).

It was in large part the far-reaching influence of these studies that prompted a generation of political scientists to devote their attention to political socialization. The first problem in any research agenda, however, is defining the terms. What is political socialization? How should it be defined? For this, political scientists turned to social psychologists and sociologists for their definitions of socialization. One prominent social psychologist from the 1950s defined socialization as follows:

the whole process by which an individual, born with behavioral potentialities of enormously wide range, is led to develop actual behavior which is confined within a much narrower range the range of what is customary and acceptable for him according to the standards of his group. (Child, 1954, p. 655)

The first key word of this definition is *process*. Socialization is not something that happens overnight; rather, it is a process that takes place over time and space. The second important term is *behavior*. Socialization is a slow, incremental process that is made manifest over time in observable behavioral outputs.

Sociologists were also intrigued by the question of socialization. Also in the 1950s, Herbert Hyman (1959) argued that socialization is “learning of social patterns corresponding to . . . societal positions as mediated through various agencies of society” (p. 25). While the social psychological definition emphasizes the individual’s behavior vis-à-vis a group’s standard of behavior, the sociological definition emphasizes the individual vis-à-vis society, mediated by various agencies (e.g., groups). A combination of these two definitions most comprehensively identifies the components that, in the aggregate, comprise socialization: It is a process whereby an individual learns from various groups or agencies about the society in which he or she lives, thereby behaving in accordance with the norms and patterns of that society.

A number of political scientists seized on the notion of socialization and sought to understand it specifically in political terms. Gabriel Almond states that political socialization is “the process of induction into the political culture. Its end product is a set of attitudes—cognitions, value standards, feelings—toward the political system, its various roles, and role incumbents” (Almond, 1960b, pp. 27–28). Harry Eckstein (1963) states political socialization is “a process through which values, cognitions, and symbols are learned and ‘internalized,’ through which operative social norms regarding politics are implanted, political roles institutionalized and political consensus created, either effectively or ineffectively” (p. 26). Roberta Sigel (1965) says that “political socialization refers to the learning process by which the political norms and behaviors acceptable to an ongoing political system are transmitted from generation to generation” (p. 1).

Although political scientists over the last 30 years have developed additional definitions of political socialization, they all tend to be combinations or minor adaptations of these foundational definitions. The most fundamental concepts to bear in mind with respect to political socialization are that it is a process that takes place over time whereby political attitudes (including cognitions, affects, and behaviors) are transmitted from primary and secondary groups (which together form a society) and result in certain political orientations (or political attitudes).

### Why Is Political Socialization Significant?

As with any research agenda, it is important to ask, “Why should we study this? Why is it important?” There are a number of reasons why the study of political socialization is crucial. First, it expands the scope of political research from the public sphere into the private. It points to the idea that political orientations and attitudes are firmly rooted in identity. Voting behavior scholars have shown time after time that what would otherwise be considered nonpolitical identities actually dictate people’s attitudes toward the political realm. Race, gender, religion, social class, and region, as well as familial and other secondary associations, all

play a significant role in determining how, why, and to what extent an individual participates in and is knowledgeable about politics. The study of politics is intimately personal; the adage “the personal is political” has been shown to be true, and political socialization research also has proven that the political is personal. Thus, the breadth of political research moves into psychology and sociology. Understanding a democratic society requires understanding individual and group relationships and behaviors that give shape to political orientations.

Second, political socialization may impact political stability because of its cross-generational nature. It may also impact political change when exogenous or other factors lead to party or political realignment. The influence of primary and secondary agencies in shaping political attitudes and orientations over time makes the study of political socialization important since it helps explain the stability of democratic political systems (Almond & Coleman, 1960; Dennis, 1968; Easton, 1965). In short, “Political socialization is a stabilizing influence, but not a stagnating one” (Rose, 1964, p. 80). On the other hand, the study of political socialization may help in understanding systemic or nonsystemic political change (Bender, 1967) and why that change occurs.

A third reason to study political socialization is that it is a window into why and how a nation operates. In gaining clarity on the sources of the public’s perceptions about government and their resulting political behavior, we also gain clarity on the operations of government itself (Froman, 1961; Marsh, 1971). Furthermore, the study of political socialization of the elites, and particularly government leaders and elected officials, also assists in understanding political behavior and policy making at the elite level.

### What Factors Impact the Political Socialization Process?

Now that a definitional understanding of political socialization has been established, as well as why it matters in the study of political science, the next logical question relates to the inputs into the socialization process. In other words, what factors impact or catalyze the process to move it forward? There are three inputs (outside of primary and secondary groups that exert direct influence, which are discussed in the next section) that play critical roles in the political socialization process, either directly, indirectly, or both: culture, environment, and personality.

The first input is culture. Culture is embedded within the socialization process; it is the foundation on which, or framework around which, an individual is socialized. Kardinger’s Basic Personality Type is one way of understanding culture’s central role in socialization (Kardinger, 1945). Kardinger argues that a parent’s socializing influence is determined by cultural traditions; parents of different cultures socialize their children differently based in their

cultural traditions. He then argues that these early learning experiences have lasting personality effects. The conclusion, therefore, is that similar cultural traditions promote similar learning experiences, which then promote similarities in personality characteristics among those of a specific culture. Applied to the political realm, political culture dictates the ways in which parents politically socialize their children, producing lasting and stable political systems. An individual's culture, therefore, is one important input into how they are socialized. Subcultures within one society are also important socializing agents. Comparing subcultures within the United States (such as those along the lines of race, ethnicity, class, religion, and gender) is one way of understanding how different groups are socialized (Jaros, Hirsch, & Fleron, 1968). For example, the evangelical political culture might be different from that of Jewish political culture, and identifying sub-cultural differences might help explain politically relevant behavioral and attitudinal differences between these groups.

The environment also impacts the political socialization process. On the one hand, the environment may be construed as a catchall that includes any social agent such as media, education, peer groups, or family (Froman, 1961). On the other hand, the environment may mean the political environment within which a person lived, and the political personalities and events that took place during that political era (Searing, Wright, & Rabinowitz, 1976). Thus, environment is an input variable impacting the socialization process that, when disaggregated, encapsulates many individually distinct variables including, but not limited to, any and all primary and secondary associations, the media, contemporary events, and political personalities.

The third variable that has a significant impact on the political socialization process is personality. Although there are a number of definitions of personality in social science literatures, among the most easily operationalizable definitions is that personality is a composite of traits (Guilford, 1959). Of course, personality is not entirely independent of culture and environment and may be impacted, at least in part, by both. Nonetheless, gauging certain individual personality traits is another way to understand the political socialization process, specifically individual political orientations and from where they are derived.

Although it is relatively simple to break down the factors within the socialization process, pinning down the components of each of those factors, as well as the relationships among those factors, is a complex and difficult task. Theoretical development of political socialization has been relatively stagnant over the last 10 years exactly for this reason. When there are innumerable variables that are constitutive, reversely causal, endogenous, and nested, it is particularly challenging to peel them back individually to develop a parsimonious theory that can be empirically tested with easily operationalized variables. This is, perhaps, the fundamental problem in political socialization

research. A discussion of specific agents of socialization, as well as differences among those socialized, might provide a slightly more comprehensible framework for understanding political socialization.

### Who Are the Agents of Political Socialization?

As previously discussed, the agents of political socialization were originally bifurcated by the early voting behavior scholars into two categories: primary groups and secondary groups (Berelson et al., 1954; Campbell et al., 1960; Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954; Lazarsfeld et al., 1948). Primary groups are usually defined as those composed of the nuclear or extended family. Secondary groups are everything else, those groups with which an individual has regular and continuing contact that, over time, exert influence on feelings, thoughts, and behavior. Examples of secondary groups include schools, peer groups, occupation, or the media (Bender, 1967).

Within primary groups, parents and families are thought to most significantly influence the political socialization process for a number of reasons. One key reason is that children first establish a sense of identity and belonging from their parents and family. Given the family's central role in providing basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter, as well as emotional needs such as love, acceptance, and confidence, meeting these needs in abundance leads to a socially trusting and politically engaged individual, whereas deprivation of these needs leads to lack of social trust (stemming from a lack of familial trust) and resulting political and social apathy (Davies, 1965).

A second reason families are important is that parents pass on certain personality characteristics. Social trust can be established not only through provision of basic necessities but also through a parent's personality predisposition. Parents' levels of interpersonal trust were found to be the best predictor of children's levels of the same, and parents' levels of personal control were the best predictor of personal control in their children (Renshon, 1975). Thus, through provision of basic needs and through learned or inherited personality characteristics, families play a central role in creating social trust, which is a strong mediating variable in the political socialization process.

The political socialization process passed through the parents is mediated not only by social trust, however. Family structure also plays a role. For example, whether a father is present or absent and whether the father is an authority figure impact the socialization process (Davies, 1965). In addition, the intergenerational trends of grandparents to parents to child also impact the process (Beck & Jennings, 1975). Factors such as the total number of grandparents with a certain party identification, whether the parent is the mother or father, and the strength of partisanship all affect the socialization of children. Another structural component with socialization implications is family

composition, including family size, gender of siblings, and birth order. One study showed that, as family size increased, boys' political efficacy decreased; youngest children have the highest level of political efficacy, and oldest children the lowest; and siblings of the same sex politically disagree more than those of the opposite sex. Thus, there are many other mediating factors beyond social trust that come only from family and which are largely out of a child's control (Broh, 1979).

Given the many mediating factors inherent in the parent-to-child socialization process, the question is whether the parents pass down specific opinions on public policy matters or whether the transmission process is more general, relating to overall beliefs. Most studies argue for the latter, but for different reasons. For example, one study concludes that children do not inherit specific political beliefs from parents, but they do inherit certain notions of what is politically acceptable as a result of the generational correspondence between parent and child (Connell, 1972). Another study agrees, arguing that parents transmit basic beliefs rather than specific opinions and attitudes; however, they argue this is the result of personality traits that are either learned or inherited from the parents, or the "psychic organizations" to which a child is exposed (Renshon, 1975). In short, families play a significant role in the political socialization process because of their central role in providing basic needs, passing on certain personality characteristics, and establishing family structures and organizations. Rather than passing down opinions and attitudes on specific political issues, they pass down general and basic beliefs about what is acceptable.

However, parents and families are not the only players in the political socialization process. Secondary groups cannot be forgotten. Indeed, socializing agencies are significantly more complex than the family alone (Jennings & Niemi, 1968a). Three secondary groups that have gained considerable attention are schools, the media, and contemporary events.

There are many factors within the school environment that can have an impact on political socialization, either strengthening or weakening political efficacy and socialization into the political realm. Some of these factors include size of school, quality of education, curriculum, location of school, and school social composition (Litt, 1963). While one study showed that the high school civics curriculum does not have a significant impact on political socialization (Langton & Jennings, 1968), a different study suggested that school composition does matter (Langton, 1967). The socioeconomic homogeneity or heterogeneity of a classroom can have an impact on the politicization of youth. Working-class students in a heterogeneous class environment are more politicized and are more economically conservative, but they are also more ambivalent toward the political system. Schools are also important in that they are a means to participate in extracurricular activities and within peer groups. One study showed that participation in extracurricular activities gave students positive feelings

toward group integration, which led to feelings of social trust and ultimately positive feelings toward politics (Zibblatt, 1965). Social trust is again found to be a strong mediating factor in the political socialization process, and it can be established through the family, peer group activities, or both.

Another secondary group that may strongly influence political socialization is the media. Different media outlets (print or broadcast) and exposure to various content have differential impacts on political socialization (Hyman, 1963). For example, broadcast news is more strongly related to knowledge about current events than print news, and this generally serves a "compensatory function," providing students that otherwise lack knowledge about current events with the information (Garramone & Atkin, 1986). Other studies suggest that the media is the primary source for political knowledge for most children and actually has an indirect effect on children's political attitudes and behaviors, providing a "vicarious experience" through which to identify with certain political orientations (Conway, Wyckoff, Feldbaum, & Ahern, 1981).

Finally, external events also impact the political socialization process. Although political events cannot be considered a secondary group in the way that school, peer groups, and media can, they are part of that general category in that an individual cannot be analyzed in isolation from the time and space in which he or she lives. Therefore, political events that take place during a person's life span are likely to play some role in his or her socialization process, and the political personalities and events therefore impact political orientations and opinions (Searing et al., 1976). Sears and Valentino (1997) argue, "Longstanding predispositions tend to be socialized episodically rather than incrementally" (p. 45), meaning that periodic political events spur socialization in youth, which develops political predispositions that continue later into life. In a later study, Valentino and Sears (1998) found that when there is significant communication about the political events, the political socialization process is most impacted.

### Who Are the Recipients of Political Socialization?

Now that it has been established that primary and secondary groups and events are all agents in the political socialization process, the next logical question is, "Whom are these groups socializing?" The easiest answer is everybody, but scholars have examined a number of different groups based on age, political status, sex, education, race, socioeconomic status, and generations. The vast majority of studies in political socialization have centered around the socialization experiences of children, which is implicit in the literature reviewed previously on the agents of the socialization process, most of which focus on parents, families, and schools. However, the socialization of children

matters only insofar as the attitudes and behaviors learned early in life persist into adulthood, when individuals can exercise their political voice in more official and institutionalized ways. Much of the research assumes this, without actually proving it. Marsh (1971), for example, calls into question the assumptions that adult opinions are the result of political socialization in youth and that adult behavior is determined by attitudes learned during childhood socialization. He argues that these two assumptions, on which the political socialization literature rests, need to be empirically tested before moving forward with a research agenda that is youth-centric.

In addition to the socialization experiences of youth, scholars have looked specifically at political elites to determine if those individuals that run for (and win) elected office are subject to different political socialization experiences than the masses. Marsh (1971) argues that more research should focus on the elite political socialization process because, he believes, it is the elites that disproportionately impact the political system. The results of elite studies have been mixed. Research examining political socialization processes of state legislators concluded that political socialization in childhood is very important for state legislators; however, the same study recognized that a number of other factors, including personal disposition and public events, can also impact the socialization process for these elites (Eulau, Buchanan, Ferguson, & Wahlke, 1959). A later study suggested that political socialization in childhood is not important for political leaders, primarily because it has little bearing on how they respond to their official duties while in office (Prewitt, Eulau, & Zisk, 1966).

A third group that has been examined for differential political socialization processes is based in gender. Although a number of studies suggest that boys are more political than girls (e.g., Greenstein, 1961), the important question for the purpose of understanding political socialization is why this is the case. Hyman (1959) found that girls and boys have different patterns of political learning, which manifests in different political behavior for boys and girls. A more recent study found that individual-level differences in socialization patterns between men and women can help explain the aggregate gender gap in partisanship among the electorate (Trevor, 1999). On the other hand, a different study found “no evidence that the roots of the gender differences in adult political involvement lie in the childhood home” (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 2001, p. 141), and although there may be a slight socialization advantage for boys in the realm of political socialization through education, girls are more active in clubs and organizations, which helps to compensate.

Another difference in socialization that has been examined is that between the educated and uneducated, which is related to socioeconomic status and race. For example, one study assessing the differential impact of the high school civics curriculum on black and white students found that the curriculum helped increase political participative measures

for black children from less-educated families, depressed performance and participative measures for black students from better educated families, and overall had a greater effect on black students than white students. The researchers argue this is because “information redundancy” is lower for the black students than the white students, so the underlying factor is the education level of the parents and not race (Langton & Jennings, 1968). A different socialization study looking at the impact of socialization on political stability and regime support showed that both black and white students are compliant toward authority but for different reasons. Black children are compliant because they view authority as being powerful, whereas white children are compliant because they view authority as benevolent (Engstrom, 1970). Finally, a study of Appalachian children found that they are considerably less trusting of government than their counterparts in other regions of the country. The theoretical reason is that an authority figure (father) who cannot provide well for the family does not command respect, and this is then projected onto other authority figures, including government (Jaros et al., 1968). Therefore, education, race, and socioeconomic status significantly impact the political socialization process and therefore perceptions of and trust toward authority, which, in turn, impact political behavior.

Finally, generations are socialized differently. Marvin Rintala (1963) defines a political generation as a group of human beings who have undergone the same basic historical experiences during their formative years, meaning from about 17 to 25 years of age. The expectation is that these historical events and the collective understanding of them shape generations differently. For example, Crittenden (1962) hypothesized that the Great Depression and New Deal had a significant impact on the partisan affiliation of that generation, and Almond (1960a) demonstrated changes in public opinion on foreign policy issues as the United States moved into the cold war.

To summarize, family, school, peer groups, the media, and external events can all influence the political socialization process in many different ways and through a number of mediating factors. And they influence the political socialization of different groups and types of people, with potential socializing differences along age, political status, gender, education, socioeconomic, race, and generational lines.

## When Does Socialization Occur?

As previously stated, the majority of studies on political socialization focus on the formative, youthful years. Most of the early scholars based the study of children’s socialization on the assumption known as the primacy principle, that what is learned early in life endures throughout life and into adulthood. Because of the strong influence of family and parents, as well as other socializing agents such as schools and social groups, the experiences of childhood

were regarded as significant in understanding the way adults view the political landscape (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969; Easton & Dennis, 1969; Greenstein, 1965; Hess & Torney, 1967; Hyman, 1959).

However, a study in 1973 tested the primacy principle, as well as the structuring principle, which states that “basic orientations acquired during childhood structure the later learning of specific issue beliefs” (Searing, Schwartz, & Lind, 1973). They found little evidence for either the primacy or the structuring principle and therefore argue that adult socialization experiences are really what need to be examined. They postulate that adult socialization either mediates or replaces childhood socialization in the acquisition of issue beliefs.

Clearly, there are elements of both childhood and adult socialization that help an understanding of people’s political beliefs, feelings, and behaviors. That is why others have stressed the fact that socialization can occur at any time throughout the life cycle. “Socialization, like learning, goes on throughout life. The case of the development of the child is only the most dramatic because he has so far to go” (Parsons, 1951, pp. 207–208). Often times, whether a researcher decides to focus on the formative or mature years depends on the agency. For example, if a researcher is interested in studying the primary agencies (parents and family), then he or she will most likely focus on the formative years; however, if interested in socialization through secondary agencies (e.g., media or professional associations), he or she will look to the mature years (Bender, 1967). Given that socialization can occur at any point during one’s life, the most comprehensive research would consider different age groups moving through different social and political contexts (Cook, 1985).

### How Does the Political Socialization Process Work?

There are yet many unanswered questions as to how the process works. Is the process susceptible to abrupt changes based on changes in family structure, changes in life events, or changes in political events and personalities? Are there different socialization processes for learning cognitive versus affective components of political attitudes? Is knowledge and cognition socialized more from secondary agencies, and is affect socialized more from primary agencies? Finally, does the process move forward in a set sequence (e.g., first affect, then behavior, then cognition), or is it random?

Although these are some questions that remain regarding the internal mechanisms of the political socialization process, there have been inquiries into whether the process is latent (unconscious) or manifest (conscious). Bender (1967) argues that latent socialization processes are often those learned via primary agencies in childhood. Youths may not be conscious of the political messages and cues

they receive from family members. Manifest socialization processes are associated with more conscious learning in adulthood from secondary agencies such as work, the media, or other social or professional associations. A study by Almond and Verba (1963) suggests that whether learning is latent or manifest depends on the type of learning taking place. For example, feelings about political authority, in general, are latent rather than manifest, whereas opinions on a given public policy issue are manifest.

### What Problems Persist in the Study of Political Socialization?

As with many social science endeavors, there are a number of issues with the study of political socialization that make it a difficult phenomenon to accurately pin down. Five critical issues that complicate the study of political socialization include the following: reverse causality, omitted variable bias, operationalization, standard definitions, and empirical limitations. First is the problem of reverse causality. This means that the political socialization process impacts the political system, but the political system also impacts political socialization. Individuals are not socialized in isolation of the political system; rather, the political system itself is integral in developing political dispositions. The study of political socialization is intended to provide a deeper understanding of system maintenance and stability, but given that political socialization is both an input and an output of the political system, the full extent of socialization cannot be accurately assessed (Dennis, 1968). Therefore, the causal arrow that points from political socialization to system stability points right back at political socialization, making it extremely difficult to disentangle directionality and real effects.

The second problem is omitted variable bias. The political socialization process has a myriad of mediating and moderating variables playing greater or lesser roles at different points in time. The process can depend on whether the socializing agent was a primary or secondary agent, what type of agent, the influence of the agent over the individual, the individual’s personality, cultural factors, and a number of demographic and identity factors, including race, gender, and religion. Given that everything from different types of media exposure to the number of grandparents with the same party identification impact the socialization process, it is likely that there are a good number of variables that are being omitted, thereby biasing the results in favor of the variables that are included. Although omitted variables will always be a problem in social science research because it is impossible to control for everything, it is particularly acute for political socialization research because both nature and nurture play a role, and both nature and nurture constitute innumerable factors and variables.

Third, operationalizing abstract variables is also problematic. Although this is not unique to political

socialization research, the question of how to measure different variables remains an issue. In a model of political socialization, there are inputs (who or what socialized the individual and when), and there are outputs (what was socialized). Two researchers could focus on the socializing effect of parents on children, looking specifically at party identification. Because there are many interpretations of the phrase *the socializing effect of parents on children*, the researchers can measure it however they want. One might choose to interpret it based on how often the family spent quality time together and therefore measure it based on how often the members ate family meals. The other research might choose to interpret it based on the family structure and thereby measure it based on whether the mother worked. These are two very different operationalizations of the socializing effect of parents on children.

This leads to the fourth problem of definitions. Within the political socialization literature, a consensus has yet to be established on clearly defined terms. All definitions of political socialization agree that it is a process, but beyond that there is little agreement on exactly how to define political socialization and all its component parts. Establishing clearly defined terms on which scholars in the field can agree would go a long way in building the framework around which a strong research agenda can be built.

Finally, there are empirical limitations to the study of political socialization. Because political socialization is a process that takes place throughout one's life cycle and is impacted by primary and secondary agents, as well as political events and personalities, a comprehensive study would use longitudinal data, following a group of individuals from youth through adulthood and periodically surveying them to perceive stability or change based on specific influencing factors throughout their lives. The only longitudinal study is the Political Socialization Project, which began in 1965. This project, though still a work in progress, surveyed parents three times, the children (who were youths in 1965) four times (into middle age), and the grandchildren once (Jennings, 2000). This sole longitudinal study is critical to research on political socialization because the vast majority of research has been cross-sectional, which demands significantly fewer resources in terms of time, administration, and money.

### Future Directions

The research agenda in political socialization that began in the 1950s and boomed through the 1970s came to a screeching halt in the 1980s and, with few exceptions, has remained relatively stagnant since then. Yet there is still territory to excavate and jewels to be mined. Cook (1985) argued that the dearth of research in political socialization is due to the weak theoretical foundation. He avers that theory should be inclusive of environmental factors, rather than merely individual factors, and that all ages and levels

of development should be considered, as well as all sources of learning, including how individuals receive, understand, and process messages. Thus, future work on political socialization should focus on theory building, and because significant empirical groundwork has been established, theory building can incorporate what is already known. Furthermore, theory building should consider cognitive-biological approaches to political socialization (Peterson, 1983). Given that political socialization is a process of political learning, a focus on cognitive developmental and biological forces most likely play an important part.

In addition to theory building, future research in political socialization should incorporate different empirical approaches, as well. The Political Socialization Project is an important step in this direction. Cross-sectional studies are limited in what they can infer about the political socialization process over time and space. Longitudinal studies are therefore critical. In addition, experimental design has not been used as a methodology to better understand political socialization. There is a lot of promise in experimental methodology as applied to various aspects of the political socialization process. Rosenberg (1985) suggests the use of clinical experiments, moral-judgment interviewers, and free-association interviews to forge new methodological frontiers in the study of political socialization.

In short, the future of political socialization research is wide open for new scholars to develop strong, testable theories and to use diverse methods of testing these theories, many of which have yet to be attempted. It is fertile soil waiting to be tilled.

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