
Definition of political socialization: the acquisition of political values and knowledge

- I. The preadult years: socialization to citizenship
 - A. Preschool (3-5)
 1. Idealization of authority figures
 - a. Policeman: benevolent
 - b. President
 2. Sense of political community through national symbols
 - B. Early childhood (6-9)
 1. Continued idealization of authority figures --> diffuse system support
 2. Partisan identification acquired without content
 - C. Late childhood (10-12)
 1. Movement begins from personalized view to more knowledge --> separation of individual from institutional roles
 2. But low support for democratic values
 - D. Adolescence (13-18)
 1. Major spurt in learning -->
 - a. Abstract conception of community interest
 - b. Coherent policy positions
 2. Increase in political efficacy
 3. Decrease in political trust
 4. But still no great increase in support for democratic norms
 - E. The consequences of preadult socialization to citizenship
- II. The agents of preadult socialization
 - A. The family
 1. Correlates: communication and receptivity
 2. Content
 - a. Political attitudes -- modest relationship Table 5.1, p. 131
 - b. Party id -- Table 5.2, p. 132
 - (1) If parents congruent in party identification, then the child is highly likely to adopt that party identification
 - (2) If parents are incongruent in their party identification, then:
 - (a) Their child is more likely to be independent in party identification
 - (b) Or will adopt the party identification of the parent with whom the child has the closest bond (usually, but not always the mother)
 - (3) Trend: decline in parent/child congruence
 - B. The peer group
 1. Influence increases in adolescence
 2. Little research on influence
 3. Role usually less influential than parents
 - C. The primary and secondary school
 1. Major purpose: inculcate system support
 2. Far less influence in transmitting democratic knowledge and values
 - a. "Hidden" curriculum
 - b. Unqualified teachers
 3. But, education still the best predictor of political knowledge and democratic values
 - III. College: higher education and its impact
 - A. Extent
 1. Rate of college-going by h.s. graduates
 2. Proportion of adult population with some college
 3. Proportion of adult population with college degree
 - B. Impact on ideology Figure 5.1, p. 139
 - C. Explanations Table 5.3, p. 140; & Table 5.4, p. 142; Table 5.5, p. 143
 1. Awareness -- of alternatives to status quo
 2. Enlightenment -- to analytical and critical thinking in place of stereotypes and prejudice
 3. Indoctrination -- by liberal faculty

IV. Personal predispositions and political attitudes

- A. Personality and political attitudes
- B. Genetic factors and political attitudes

V. Socialization during adulthood pp. 146-54

A. Explanations (all four can overlap or occur at the same time) Table 5.6, p. 147

- 1. Compositional effect -- sociodemographic differences – e.g., class, gender, race, religion, region, etc.
- 2. Life-cycle effect -- life-stage differences – e.g., pre-adult v. working v. retirement
- 3. Generational effect -- *largely negative* historical events (war and/or economic depression) that impact everyone – but most profoundly those young-adults in their vulnerable years
 - a. 1930s-40s: Great Depression/WWII
 - b. 1960s-70s: domestic & foreign disorder
 - c. 1980s: heightened Cold War rivalry and worst economic recession since Great Depression
 - d. 2000-?: dot-com bust & U.S. war on global terrorism
- 4. Period effect -- *largely positive* historical events (the combination of peace & prosperity) that impact all age groups more evenly; hence, all birth cohorts move in tandem to the ethos of the times
 - a. Roaring Twenties: WWI over and explosive economic expansion
 - b. Late-1940s and 1950s: WWII over and long period of profound economic expansion
 - c. 1990s: end of Cold War and longest economic boom since WWII

B. The life cycle, generations and party identification [research shows stronger generational than life-cycle effects on partisanship]

- 1. Explanations
 - a. Generational effects on *direction* of party identification Figure 5.2, p. 150 higher Republican identification levels among pre-Depression cohort who reached working age prior to its start (1990 - 82 + 17 = 1925) and post-boomer cohorts who reached young adulthood after Vietnam and the turbulent 60s (1990 - 33 + 17 = 1974)
 - b. Life-cycle effects on *strength* of party identification – party attachments tend to strengthen as individuals age
- 2. Consequences
 - a. Party identification
 - (1) Generational effects on *direction* of party identification – mobilization of young just entering work force/military
 - (a) 1930s realignment
 - (b) 1960s dealignment outside the South and realignment within the South
 - (2) Period effects on *strength* of party identification – conversion of all age groups – e.g., TV age produced declines in partisanship
 - b. Issue positions
 - (1) Generational effects: 1950s moderates; 1960s liberals; 1980s conservatives
 - (2) Life-cycle effects: pull to center
 - (3) Compositional effects: growth of middle class

C. Generations, the life cycle, and policy issues Table 5.4, p. 142

- 1. Each generation becomes more ideologically conservative with age
- 2. However,
 - a. we have previously seen that ideological conservatives are often operationally liberal, and
 - b. generational replacement keeps the aggregate balance of liberals and conservatives more or less constant.

VI. The persistence of political orientations

- A. Basic v. policy content
- B. Impressionable years (17-26)
- C. A note on marriage