

**POLITICAL  
SOCIALIZATION,  
CITIZENSHIP  
EDUCATION,  
AND  
DEMOCRACY**

Edited by  
**ORIT  
ICHILOV**

# **Political Socialization, Citizenship Education, and Democracy**

Edited by  
**ORIT ICHILOV**



Teachers College, Columbia University  
New York and London

Published by Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10027

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Political socialization, citizenship education, and democracy / edited  
by Orit Ichilov.  
p. cm.

Based on papers presented at the International Symposium on  
Political Socialization and Citizenship Education for Democracy,  
held at Tel Aviv University, March 1987.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-8077-2974-4 (alk. paper). — ISBN 0-8077-2973-6 (pbk. :  
alk. paper)

1. Political socialization — Congresses. 2. Civics — Study and  
teaching — Congresses. 3. Democracy — Congresses. I. Ichilov, Orit.  
II. International Symposium on Political Socialization and  
Citizenship Education for Democracy (1987 : Tel Aviv University)  
JA 76.P5929 1989 89-5177  
306.2 — dc20 CIP

ISBN 0-8077-2974-4

ISBN 0-8077-2973-6 (pbk.)

Printed on acid-free paper

Manufactured in the United States of America

96 95 94 93 92 91 90 89 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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## Acknowledgments

This volume has its roots in the International Symposium on Political Socialization and Citizenship Education for Democracy, held at Tel Aviv University in March of 1987; indeed, all of the chapters in this book, with the exception of Chapter 5, have their origin as papers prepared for that conference.

I am most grateful to Tel Aviv University, its School of Education, and the Sociology of Education and the Community Unit for taking the symposium under their academic auspices and providing financial support.

Both the symposium and the publication of the present volume were made possible through the generous support and assistance of Raphael Recanati, Stanley Stern, Meir Ezra & Son (1980) Company, Ltd., the American Jewish Committee, the P.E.F. Israel Endowment Fund, and the Israel Foundation Trustees.

A word of thanks is due to Roberta Sigel, Stanley Renshon, and Richard Merelman for their great help and good advice in the preparation of this volume. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Andre Mazawi, my teaching and research assistant, for his dedicated help throughout all stages of this project.

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been reported to express often a low sense of political efficacy and political trust, and to be apathetic or alienated. There is a need to bring new perspectives into political socialization which will enable us to deal specifically with issues related to socialization for democracy. This is the major concern of this volume.

Political socialization and citizenship education have been dominated by a narrow perception of democracy as singularly political. This view has its roots in liberal philosophy, which advocates the separation of the "political" from the "social," of the "public" from the "private." Accordingly, democratic citizenship takes place in the political and public arenas, while personal fulfillment is to be sought in the social and private spheres (Levine, 1981; Macpherson, 1977; Pateman, 1979). This view is also based upon system theory within political science, which considers citizenship to consist primarily of expressing support for and making demands of a political system (Easton & Dennis, 1973). This narrow conception has directed scholarly attention primarily to the acquisition of behaviors and attitudes that are related to the political system, such as voting, party identification, political trust, and political efficacy. Citizenship involvement in causes, movements, organizations, and groups, such as the Parent-Teacher Association, Girl Scouts, or a church, have been neglected as nonpolitical. Not until the work of Verba and Nie (1972) were some of these activities clearly labeled as political. Furthermore, civic education has focused primarily on the legal and structural aspects of government, exposing youngsters mainly to a narrow role model of democratic citizenship (Ichilov, 1988; Oliner, 1983).

The premise on which we have based this volume is that the narrow view represents only one facet of democracy and democratic citizenship. It overlooks an important philosophical tradition, that of participatory democracy, which advocates the extension of democracy into all social spheres. The latter approach allows for additional arenas for democratic citizenship, such as sex-role egalitarianism, workplace democracy, and environmental concerns.

Both the narrow and broad conceptions of democratic citizenship represent equally legitimate democratic philosophies, which call for diverse patterns of citizenship. Preferring the one over the other remains a value judgment that each individual and society should freely confront. Our argument is that the narrow view of democracy does not capture the full range of ideas and practices concerning the democratic way of life. What this book attempts to do is to illuminate these neglected aspects of democratic citizenship.

Political socialization theories and studies have emphasized the importance of early experiences for the formation of citizenship orientations.

By the end of high school, one's "political character" is considered by some to have almost fully and permanently emerged (Easton & Dennis, 1965, 1967; Hess & Torney, 1967; Merelman, 1969, 1971). Our approach is that political socialization should be viewed as a lifelong process. The dynamics of modern living, including marriage and parenthood, the legitimation of a multicareer life, and social and geographical mobility represent some adult-life experiences that may reshape political attitudes and behaviors.

This book is also unique in bringing under one cover the works of an interdisciplinary team representing the areas of political science, psychology, sociology, economics, and communication, and in attempting to draw the educational implications from each of the works.

The five major divisions of this volume represent topics that have had enduring relevance for political socialization. Most of the works, however, address these topics using fresh approaches.

In Part I, "Political Socialization and Democracy," are three works that relate political socialization to the understanding of the functioning of democracy. In Chapter 1, Ichilov sets the agenda for the volume and lays out its central themes. Drawing on democratic theory, she provides a broad definition of democracy, which makes it possible to incorporate new dimensions into democratic citizenship. She identifies the dimensions that are used as building blocks of citizenship in democracy and suggests how these may be clustered to form a great variety of citizenship role patterns. From these may be derived a taxonomy of democratic citizenship orientations, as well as guidelines for a variety of research and educational pursuits.

DiRenzo presents in Chapter 2 a model of socialization that links two intellectual traditions, the "human needs" approach and the "societal requisites" tradition of functional analysis. He argues that, ideally, the kinds of personality structures that develop in the process of socialization should be congruent with the sociopolitical nature of society. At the same time, societies should be responsive to basic human needs. His model takes into account the limitations imposed both by human needs and by social systems and then delineates the psychosocial linkages between the two in modern democratic political systems. He argues that democracies, being responsive to their constituencies, provide the optimal conditions for simultaneously satisfying human needs and societal requisites.

In Chapter 3, Merelman addresses an overlooked aspect of political learning: the psychological mechanisms whereby children conceptualize political conflict in varying political regimes, and how they internalize it. He makes a distinction between contested regimes, described as regimes with no single legitimate political authority; and uncontested regimes, especially democratic ones, in which the majority of the population ac-

cepts a single authority. Merelman concludes that, in both types of regimes, childhood learning reproduces the fundamental mode of conflict peculiar to the regime.

In Part II, "Patterns of Political Socialization in Democracies: Models and Controversies," three different models conceptualizing processes of acquisition of political attitudes and behavior are presented.

Sears addresses in Chapter 4 the issue of persistence of preadult political socialization residues through adulthood. The author provides a critical overview of the literature and concludes that the issue has not been adequately treated from theoretical and research viewpoints. Sears argues that attitudinal stability could reflect either strong resistance to change or simply a lack of pressure to change. Neither change nor the lack of it, therefore, necessarily reflects the strength of the underlying disposition. He suggests that the genesis of political socialization research has been largely in normative concerns driven by the perceived need to socialize youngsters into those political orientations that parents and society applaud. This approach does not take into account development and change through the life-span. A more plausible approach, in his view, would be to ask what the conditions are for training people to be open and responsive to new realities, as opposed to training them to be loyal to the reigning norms of their childhood.

In the next chapter, Torney-Purta provides a new link between political socialization research and psychological theory about cognitive development, by applying the notion of schemata to the study of political socialization. Her work deals with the schemata of the political system, both domestic and international, which young people are continually formulating and reformulating. Torney-Purta also illustrates a method for measuring and presenting these schemata.

Bar-Tal and Saxe's work (Chapter 6) interweaves generic principles of social cognition with a specific focus on problems of political knowledge acquisition and socialization for democracy. The authors develop a general model of the process of political socialization which is intended to complement other sociological and psychological approaches. This is done by incorporating elements of each in an analysis of how individuals come to understand the political world.

In Part III, "Institutional Context of Political Socialization in Democracy," five works are included. The first part of Chaffee and Yang's work (Chapter 7) summarizes some generalizations from two decades of empirical studies on mass-media effects on young people's political behavior. They then go on to offer alternative conceptions to the traditional perception of the media as agents of socialization. These ideas are based on new assumptions about both communication processes and the nature of politi-

cal socialization. Chaffee and Young consider the individual to be active in the task of becoming a political person, and they discuss the role of TV and the written media in this process. Their new approach is applicable not only to initial socialization into a political culture, but also to processes of resocialization, as indicated by their data on Korean immigrants living in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Levin argues in Chapter 8 that the schools in democratic and capitalist societies are expected to contribute to the formation of two types of personalities in the same person. On the one hand, it is necessary to shape the democratic personalities necessary for individuals to participate as expected in the governance of public institutions. On the other hand, the schools are asked to create workers who can operate under hierarchical and authoritarian workplace regimes. The question that Levin addresses is whether a movement toward workplace democracy would more nearly integrate the personalities that we wish to socialize by setting a more nearly uniform set of principles for adult competencies and the school experience. Levin addresses some specific workplace changes that are consistent with the economic imperative, as well as the educational practices needed to bring them about.

Westholm, Lindquist, and Niemi address in Chapter 9 the issue of the apparent paradox concerning school effects upon the political growth of children and adolescents. More precisely, among adults a clear relationship was demonstrated between level of education and a variety of citizenship orientations. In contrast, however, a host of school-related factors has shown weak or nonexistent effects upon youngsters. The authors go some distance toward resolving the paradox implied by these conflicting results, as well adding new evidence to the empirical foundation on which the controversy rests. Their study of the ability of a representative Swedish sample of 16- to 18-year-olds to identify major international organizations and events suggests genuine curricular effects.

In Chapter 10, Yogev and Shapira discuss the socializing effects of youth organizations in different types of societies and political regimes. Drawing on data from Costa Rica, Israel, Malawi, and the Ivory Coast, they demonstrate that youth organizations are instrumental for inculcating three sets of orientations in the younger generation: diffuse regime support, support of partisan ideologies, and support of modernity and higher career aspirations. The authors discuss the social conditions that account for the effectiveness of such groups as agents of citizenship socialization.

Kahane and Rapoport's point of departure in the next chapter is that people who participate in voluntary associations that are relatively free of compulsion and external constraints are likely to become more committed

to democracy than those who have not been exposed to similar experiences. Kahane and Rapoport identify four organizational codes—formal, informal, professional, and primary—which can be found to various degrees in different types of bodies. They argue that the predominance of the informal code accounts for the effectiveness of voluntary organizations in developing commitment to democracy. These arguments are demonstrated through the analysis of the structural codes of youth movements in Israel.

Part IV, “Social Movements and Political Socialization in Democracy,” focuses on the role new movements play as socializers. Sigel’s Chapter 12 and Sapiro’s Chapter 13 deal with the women’s movement, while Milbrath’s Chapter 14 addresses the environmentalist movement.

Sigel suggests that the study of adult women’s experiences may have important implications for the political socialization of the younger generation. She asserts that, notwithstanding women’s growing consciousness of their disadvantaged status, their gender-role orientations reflect a good deal of ambivalence. Women tend to incorporate into their gender perspective their construction of the male perspective. To the extent that the latter conflicts with their own ideal, women experience confusion and tension in their gender perspectives. She suggests public school education could do much to dispel this ambivalence. Both males and females should be socialized from an early age to accept women’s active political role as an intrinsic part of their democratic citizenship, as both genders do in the case of men.

Sapiro regards the contemporary women’s movement as an agent of democratic socialization, with effects on both participants and the wider culture. She focuses primarily on one outcome: the development of gender consciousness as a politicized form of social identity. Sapiro argues that expanding the range of public and private roles women play and encouraging women to exert greater influence over their own destinies will advance the cause of democracy.

In the final chapter of Part IV, Milbrath argues that environmentalism is a product of democracy, at the same time that it promotes the democratic way of life. He believes that knowledge of ecosystems and technological influences is a requisite for understanding social systems, and that environmental and technical considerations will be the predominant influences on the politics of the twenty-first century. Environmental education should thus become part of political socialization in democracies.

Part V, “Socialization for Democracy: A Lifelong Process,” includes two works that extend the concerns of this volume beyond childhood political socialization. In Chapter 15, Conway examines the implications of

public-choice theory for political participation. She examines the role of groups in the political process and the rationality of a group-based approach to political participation. She concludes that education for democratic citizenship would promote higher levels of effective participation if ways of promoting involvement through group activity received more emphasis.

Renshon discusses in Chapter 16 the numerous political, pedagogical, ethical, and practical issues that the idea of specialized education and preparation for political leaders may raise in a democracy. Among these are whether such education is not elitist and inherently antidemocratic; whether successful political experience is not a sufficient form of education; and what forms the education of leaders might take. Renshon addresses these and other issues in the context of a discussion of adult political socialization theory, especially as it focuses on the nature of political work and of personal and professional development in adulthood.

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## **PART I**

# **Political Socialization and Democracy**



