

Political socialization



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

So what is Political Socialization? Our text book explains it as the way people acquire their political beliefs and values: often including their party identification, through relationships with their families, friends, and co-workers. To put it more simply, it's our experiences with our parents, friends, school and society. It's what we were taught in school about patriotism, and being civic minded. It's also how our morality judges those experiences and is shaped by those experiences.

Political Socialization is how we express ourselves in daily politic or if we express ourselves at all. It's who and what we align ourselves with in order to feel we have a voice for our concerns in the larger public. The who, is usually a political party that we feel best represents our political believes and standpoints. There are several key elements in determining the level of political socialization which are important to outline. Political knowledge: just how much do you know about whom represents you and the current issues?

People with high political socialization will generally know whom their representatives are in government and have at least a modest understanding of the major issues. They also know how to find out more about individual issues. How much do you discuss current issues with people: family members, friends, acquaintances? People with a high political socialization tend to discuss political issues that are important to them more than people with very little political socialization. Political Efficacy: what is your sense about your ability to impact government?

Do you believe that if you get involved you can achieve your goal? Or do you believe that your voice will have no effect on current affairs. People with

higher political socialization tend to feel that sense of efficacy. That if they get involved they can achieve their desired outcome. They don't feel that they are just floating along with an inability to change their world. Political socialization tends to give people a tolerance for diversity. This means that people are not offended by opinions that don't match their own.

This reminded me of a conversation I had with a fellow student in my Geology lab last semester. We were ending a field trip and talking about various political topics (sitting in a pizza place in Berkeley of all places). My friend was telling me his opinion on a political subject, on which I did not agree. Instead of getting angry with him I simply said, 'convince me' and smiled. I wanted to see what the foundation of his argument was. I still wasn't convinced. But, at least I understood better where he was coming from.

This is an example of high political socialization leading to tolerance for diversity. Instead of being insecure about my own viewpoints, I was curious about his. This comes from a deeper understanding of what I believe. Political socialization brings a higher respect for other cultures and other systems. One may realize that other political systems while probably different are not inherently good or bad. You realize that the American political system is just one way of doing things. Each country has its own political identify which is the culmination of its' history.

People with higher political socialization tend to follow the action of the police and courts more. They tend to get less publicly enraged trusting that the justice system will work in the case of police misconduct or a court ruling

that does not make sense. Last, people with higher political socialization tend to get involved in campaigns and elections believing and wanting to make a difference in their world. Who is the U. S. electorate? That's us. It's everyone in America. Whether you vote or not, whether you have the right to vote or not. You have the ability to speak and be heard by government.

The voice of the electorate is what drives government. If we the citizens of the United States and of which ever state you live in say nothing to our elected officials, eventually they run out of things to do. Before we can know how to add or detract from the Madisonian Model, we must know what it is. The Madisonian Model is the model of government developed by James Madison which defines the balance of power in our government. Our government is divided into three main branches; the executive branch, the legislative branch and the judicial branch.

Each branch is independent of one another and can override each other by constitutional procedure. The idea was to create a system of government where no part of the government could become too powerful. Does political socialization add to the functioning of the Madisonsian Model? Generally yes. But when Madison framed this model he was worried about just how much of the electorate had little to no political socialization. Madison and the Federalists saw the common man as an uneducated hoard that act out of emotion rather than logic.

The Federalists did not want direct Democracy. They did not want everyone regardless of education level (especially in politics) in a direct position to make policy. They, Madison and the Federalists, wanted Representative

democracy so that someone who had a high degree of political socialization could come and speak for a larger group. So political socialization adds to the Madisonian Model; the higher your political socialization the more active you generally are in politics and the more you take advantage of our Republic to voice your opinion.