

INTRODUCTORY
TEXT IN
**POLITICAL
SCIENCE**

Rotimi Ajayi
Yinka Fashagba

INTRODUCTORY TEXT IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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DEDICATED

To Dr. David Oyedepo

Chancellor, Landmark University, Omuaran

For his unwavering commitment to the ideals of true
scholarship

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APPENDIX

The first part of the appendix is devoted to the study of the political system in the United States. It is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the study of the political system in the United States. The second chapter is devoted to the study of the political system in the United States.

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Chapter Nine

POLITICAL, SOCIALIZA- TION AND POLITICAL CULTURE

Segun Joshua

9.0 Introduction

All societies, be it primitive or modern, often consciously inculcate in its citizenry, certain cherished norms and values. The inculcation in the citizenry of these norms and values is considered necessary to prepare them to assume specific roles in the society towards realizing the goals of easy societal organization and maintenance of law and order. In other words, if an individual does not internalize the beliefs, norms and values of his society, his behavioural characteristics and tendencies may violate acceptable

standards of behaviour in the society. In the words of Onwuka (1997), “the quality of an individual’s participation in community life is a function of the extent to which he has internalized the norms, beliefs and values of his community” (cited in Abonyi, 2006, p. 328).

The process by which individuals learn and internalize the beliefs, norms and values of their societies, for societal organization and maintenance of law and order, is referred to as socialization. Socialization as a concept has been variously defined. According to Nnoli (1990), socialization is a process through which members of a society gradually internalize and appropriate various physical, cultural, technological, aesthetic values of the society throughout their lives. Socialization thus simply connotes life-long learning. Socialization means all forms of learning regardless of setting or age of the individual. Individual members of every group have to learn the rule, expectations and knowledge of that group. The group can be a family, the army or the state, among several other examples. As a concept, socialization clearly encapsulates the process through which people acquire a social identity and learn the way of life within their society, a process synonymous to learning of culture (Abonyi, 2006). And the essence of socialization is to bring about social conformity of members in any given society.

Five forms of socialization have been identified. These are: reverse socialization; developmental socialization; primary socialization; anticipation socialization; and re-socialization (Abonyi, 2005).

1. Reverse Socialization: Reverse socialization refers to when the younger generations deviate from the desired behaviour or enculturation. For example, forming and joining secret cults and getting involved in other anti-social behaviours and practices in higher institutions are demonstrations of reverse socialization.

2. Developmental Socialization: Developmental socialization refers to when former behavioural patterns are discarded for new ones, as part of transition in one's life. The developmental socialization occurs throughout the human life cycle. An example could be the experience of a young man or woman who leaves home to join the military: this will bring a sharp break from the past and exposition to radically different norms and values in the man or woman.

3. Primary Socialization: Primary socialization refers to the process through which people learn the attitudes, values and actions appropriate for

them to fit into a particular culture.

4. Anticipatory Socialization: Anticipatory socialization is when a person rehearses for future positions, occupations and social relationships. An example is an instance of a high school student who suddenly imbibes the dress code and mannerism of a higher institution (the University, for instance) upon hearing he had been offered admission in a university (Abonyi, 2005).

5. Re-Socialisation: Re-socialisation is a type of socialization that involves confinement, in jails or mental hospitals. Re-socialization could be as a result of the fact that the person has done something wrong and needed to be socialized before he/she can go back and be a productive member of society.

With the background on what socialization means and its forms, it is pertinent to turn to the major concerns of this chapter: political socialization and political culture.

9.1 Political Socialization

According to Almond and Powell (1998), political socialization is a part of socialization that shapes political attitudes. Most children acquire distinctive political attitudes and behavioural patterns at relatively early ages. This is corroborated in Nnoli (1990), contending that

political socialization is a perspective of socialization based on the assumptions and perspectives about information and certain behavioural patterns formed by peoples in societies with respect to the government and its various activities. The assumptions might be official or unofficial, planned or incidental, overt or covert, as Nnoli explained.

To Rush (1992), political socialization is a familiarization process of people with political system, which entails understanding of politics to an acceptable level and their reactions to political phenomenon (cited in Emamjomezadeli et al., 2012). According to Almond and Verba (1963), political socialization is part of the continuous process of social order in which certain political behaviours are taught to the new members of a society with the aim of making them think in accordance with the changing political system they find themselves. Almond and Powell (1988) gave a very simple and lucid definition of the twin concepts of political socializations as "the way one generation passes its political standards and belief to succeeding generations, a process called cultural transformation" (p. 34).

Basically, two points about political socialization need to be emphasized. First, socialization is a continuous process in an individual's life. It is a life-long process, as Nnoli (1990) rightly observed. "Attitudes established during infancy

are always being adapted or reinforced as the individual passes through a variety of social experiences”, in the words of Almond and Powel (1988, p. 34). The second point is that political socialization may take the form of direct or indirect learning (or transmission) of beliefs, norms and values. In this respect, when socialization involves explicit communication of information, values or feelings on politics it is direct. The direct form of political socialization also includes civics courses taught in public high schools, and citizenship education taught in higher institutions can equally be regarded as direct political socialization. According to Almond and Powel (1988), political socialization is a process by which people acquire relatively enduring orientation towards politics in general and also to their political system in particular. Conversely, indirect political socialization may occur with force in the early or formative years of a child. Indirect political socialization may come in form of developing an accommodating or aggressive stance towards parents, teachers and friends, which may likely affect adult attitude towards fellow citizens and political leaders.

9.2 Agents of Political Socialization

There are different agents or institutions through which political socialization can be acquired in any political system. These include family, school, religion, peer group, occupation, mass media, political parties, governments,

events, place, and tertiary institutions (Almond & Powel, 1988); Abonyi, 2006; Blass Rich (undated)).

1. The Family: The family is the basic and often the most powerful and lasting agent of political socialization. Family has direct and indirect influences on individuals which determine their attitudes towards religion, authority, etc. Although learning is a life-time process, the first ten years is the most important period socialization takes place in a person's life. This is the period individual personality is formed – the formative years. Schaefer and Laman (1995) contended:

We experience socialization first as babies and infants living in families; it is here that we develop an initial sense of self. Most parents seek to help their children become competent adolescents and self-sufficient adults, which mean socializing them into the norms and values of both the family and the larger society. In this process, adults themselves experience socialization as they adjust to become spouses, parents and in-laws (cited in Abonyi, 2006, p. 337).

Collective decisions made by the family may appear authoritative and failure to comply may lead to punishment (Almond & Powel, 1988). In addi-

tion, opportunities to participate in family decisions early in life may sharpen the child's sense of political competence and also endow the child with capacity for political interaction and participation in the political system as an adult. The child's behavioural pattern to family decisions may assist in obedience to constituted authority as a political subject.

Indeed, the political beliefs of most individuals are often shaped by the behaviours, beliefs and values they experienced in their family environment. Individuals must have absorbed perceptions about politics from conversations overheard within the family before becoming capable of making political judgments for themselves. Blass (not dated) argued in the same vein that at age seven, most children in the US already identified with one political party or the other. Family upbringing may, to a large extent, determine the manifestation of political behaviour, whether activism or apathy in later adulthood of the children.

2. The School: Schools provide a veritable platform for sustained and controlled contact with students at the age their political beliefs can still be molded. The school system contributes to

political socialization by providing the adolescent with knowledge about the political world and his role in it. Cherished attitudes and values of the society are equally to a large extent being transmitted by the schools. In view of this, the school plays a pivotal role in shaping attitudes of the adolescent in accordance with the written and unwritten rules of the society.

Specifically, through the school system affection for the political system can be reinforced and allegiance to the state instilled through common symbols like the national flag, national anthem and national pledge. At times, yet, the school system does serve as agent of indoctrination of cherished political ideology, like it was in some communist countries (the former U.S.S.R, in particular).

3. Religion: Religion connotes system of beliefs or believing in supernatural beings and in the Creator and Controller of the universe. Religions inculcate good morals in its adherents through calculated 'sermonization'. The moral and values taught by most religions quite frequently have implications on politics and public policies. In fact, more often than not, religious groups transmit definite political preferences to their adherents. Churches through

their teachings instill strong belief systems in the Christians and hence shape the believers' views on socio-political issues and policies like abortion, gay marriage, among others.

In addition, among religions there are varieties of political beliefs. For instance, Roman Catholics are traditionally noted for political liberation while Protestants are conservative – although this conservativeness seems to vary from one denomination to another in the protestant churches. This has implications for ideological leanings.

4. Peer Groups: Although the school system and family are the most important agents of socialization, the role of peer groups, including childhood play groups and friendship cliques, cannot be underrated too. This is because in a situation in which both parents work, children tend to be socialized more by peers than by families. Furthermore, after formal schooling ends, the influence of peer groups on people's political socialization increases. The influence of peer groups on individuals also become prominent at adolescent stage when they begin to break away from the family structure, feeling more like young adults.

One of the ways through which a peer group socializes its members is by putting pressure on them to conform to attitudinal disposition accepted by the group. Thus, interests and behaviours of individuals are often subjected to modification to reflect that of the group in order to be accepted by its members.

5. Occupation: Occupational and professional associations shape political attitudes of their members by promoting and intensifying occupational and class-related political values. Unions, professional associations, among others, are information and communication channels for the cultivation and expression of beliefs of members. The group an individual identifies with is often used as a political reference point, as individual political actions are evaluated in line with what the group stands for. Involvement in demonstration, strike and picketing in work places, championed by organized labour unions may also influence an individual's behaviour when participating in political activities.

Mass media: It has been the age of revolution in information technology. Hardly can any society

function properly without effective network of communication. In fact, it is no gainsay that the mass media – television, radio, newspaper and magazines and the internet – play a key role in providing information about political events and the major values on which a society agrees. For most people, the mass media are their major sources of information, and by the media their political views and beliefs are formed.

6. Political Parties: Political parties play a deliberate, key role in political socialization. Parties are often noted for arousing apathetic disposition of people. Parties as well in their efforts at canvassing and mobilizing support for electoral candidates mold their members' or people's issue preferences. Majority of people would not want to be active participants in political activities, but a steady flow of party campaigns and programmes, combined with the election every few years, inevitably keep citizens involved in political activities.

Here, it is essential to note that activities of political parties can also be divisive. This is necessarily so when parties' strategies to gain support for their candidates often times come to involve appeals to language, religion, ethnicity and other

divisive forces that certainly emphasize differences among people. Conversely, in communist or single-party system parties can be used by governments to inculcate common attitudes of unity, support for government and shared ideologies of the ruling party.

7. The State: The state, represented by government, is also an agent of socialization. Many of its activities are intended to paint government in good image to the public so as to build support and loyalty for the government in power. Almond and Powel (1988) averred that “no matter how positive the view of the political system that has been taught in school, a citizen who is harassed by the police, ignored by welfare agencies, or unfairly taxed is unlikely to feel much warmth toward the authorities” (p. 39).

8. Events: Major personal and social events may have notable impact on the political thinking of some people. Those events according to Blass (undated), can be classified into three. These are discussed below.

9. The Life-Cycle Effect: Personal experience can change belief, behaviour and orientation of an individual. For example, James Bradley, Presi-

dent Reagan's Press Secretary, was shot and he became paralyzed in the assassination attempt against Reagan. Her wife Sarah Bradley suddenly became a committed activist on legislation on gun control as a result of the experience.

10. Period-Effect: A major historical event can affect an entire society and create generational impact on public opinion. For example, it has been noted that "millions of Americans who lived through the Great Depression became life-long Democrats and have continued to view government as a positive force in society" (Blass, undated).

11. Cohort Effect: One historic event may have great impact on a specific group of people. Vietnam War, the hippie culture, and the Nixon presidency appeared to have had notable effects on many Americans approaching adulthood in the late 1960s.

Blass's classification, simply, establishes how events can be a medium for political socialization.

12. Total Institutions: The last agent of socialization we are going to discuss briefly is what Abonyi (2006) described as the total institutions. Examples of total institutions are prisons, the military, mental hospitals and convents. The afore-

mentioned institutions are capable of re-socializing people, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Schaefer and Lamm (1992) highlighted the peculiar characteristics of the total institutions:

- i. All aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority;
- ii. Each phase of a member's daily activity is carried out in the immediate company of others. All members are treated alike and all members do the same thing together;
- iii. Daily activities are tightly scheduled. All activity is super-imposed upon the individual by a system of explicit formal rules; and
- iv. A single rational plan exists to fulfill the goals of the institution (cited in Abonyi, 2006).

9.3 Political Socialization and Political Culture

Having examined political socialization and its various agents, it is pertinent to note that there exist a strong relationship between political socialization and the concept of political culture. So, what is political culture? Generally speaking, political culture simply implies "a particular distribution of political activities, values, features, information and skills" (Almond & Powel, 1988,

p. 40). It also refers to beliefs, values, attitudes, habits and behavioural patterns peculiar to a political system. Thus, political culture touches the minds of people, using psychoanalytic tools to search for the reasons of their political behaviours and orientations (Haywood, 1997, cited in Emamjomezadeh et al., 2012). It simply means: an individual's political orientation and behaviour perhaps have a cause and effect relationship with political cultures, values and symbols, as Haywood (1997) explained (cited in Emamjomezadeh et. al., 2012).

It appears that for a society to succeed in maintaining its political culture it must sustain the process of political socialization accessing cultural transfer channels of the society, through which such set of values that contribute to political stability and solidity are obtained and improved upon. Through political socialization people acquire political culture, and their orientations toward political objectives are thereby formed, to put it succinctly. For instance, individuals' views on subordination and cooperation and protesting and defiance are all influenced by the family. Arguments or violent quarrels among members of a family about policies and political culture can inform a child's particular attitude toward the political system (Agarwal & Bhushan, 1991).

Nevertheless, political socialization in Africa seem to differ from that of the West. This is premised on the

fact that the process of political socialization in the continent of Africa is often attended with turbulent and dramatic changes, brought about by the nature of the society and the structure of its politics. In fact, for each succeeding generation in African socialization forces appear radically different. This problem is exacerbated by several sharply different agents and ways of political learning in the continent – namely the family, school, places of worship, streets, and so on, transmitting highly diverse and divergent political lessons and information. It has also been noted for instance that in African families, there is no sense of partisan alignment or party identification to be either transmitted or ideological orientation originating in the family. The structure of the family is not comparable to the Western nuclear family as many African children live with relatives either as a result of financial difficulties, extended family ties, or to further their studies in urban areas if their parents live in rural areas. The implication is that children are exposed to political knowledge beyond the confines of their biological parents (Almond & Powell, 1988).

9.4 How Political Culture is Formed

Formation of political culture comes in four stages: politicization; cognition and recognition; the example stage; and the internalization phase (Giddens, 1990).

1. Politicization: The first stage is politicization, a stage when the child makes effort to know the political arena. This could be by listening to thoughts and ideas of parents, teachers and others about government. The child thus sees himself as a political being and becomes conscious of the existence of government.

2. Cognition and Recognition: The second stage is cognition and recognition, when a child is at friction with the political system, and understands some forms of political domination or domination in the general sense. Friction with the political system may also be in form of a child trying to make a choice between conflicting political ideas. For instance, parents and religious instructors may teach a child that government is bad, while teachers at school emphasize that government is benevolent and that it is the responsibility of citizens to be loyal to it.

3. The Example Stage: The third stage is the example stage, when the child turns to judge values and certain manners, and through them negates or demands judgment on the existing forms of domination and politics (as a whole).

4. Internalization: The fourth stage is the inter-

nalization phase in which the individual transcends understanding some established political forms and starts value-judging the entire constituents of the political system. It is in this stage that a particular kind of political culture is formed by each individual.

9.5 Types of Political Culture

Four (4) types of political culture have been identified. They are: parochial culture, subject culture, participatory culture, and sub-culture (Almond & Powel, 1988).

1. Parochial Culture: Here with the parochial culture citizens have vague or no awareness, expectations, participation and orientation towards any political object or political system. They neither expect anything positive from government nor do they expect to participate in the political process. Politics is seen as the exclusive domain of the elite and government is viewed as enforcer of the rules it made.

2. Subject Culture: Unlike the parochial culture in which citizens have no cognitive orientation towards some aspects of or the entire political system, with the subject culture, citizens see themselves more or less as subjects of governments.

Although they expect positive actions from government, they do not see themselves as active participants in the political process.

3. Participatory Culture: with the participatory culture, citizens have cognitive orientation of different parts of the political system as well as the entire political system. In societies with participatory political culture, the citizens tend to expect more from government, believe they can contribute to the workings of the system and that they affect the system as much as the system affects them. This type of culture is an essential principle of any democratic society.

4. Sub-Culture: Almond and Verba (1963) defined political sub-culture as "the type of political culture persisting in formally merged traditional units" (p. 27). Generally speaking, political sub-culture simply means culture of a social group that can be distinguished from the dominant one in a given political system. It is a set of political attitudes and orientations of a small group within a political system different from the over arching one in the larger polity. Although members of a sub-culture share in the political culture of the larger society, they have their own peculiar sub-cultural characteristics that are very strong.

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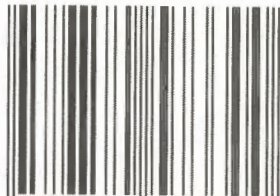
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