



POLITICAL SOCIALISATION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION GO HAND IN HAND

Bandana Swain

Lecturer,

Department of Political Science, Cuttack College, Odisha.

ABSTRACT

This article explores the close relationship between political socialisation and political participation within the context of democratic societies. Political socialisation, the process through which individuals acquire political attitudes, beliefs, and values, lays the groundwork for political participation, the active involvement of citizens in the political process. The article discusses the significance of political socialisation in shaping individuals' political perceptions and how these perceptions, in turn, influence their level and type of political engagement. By examining how values and beliefs acquired during political socialisation impact various forms of political participation, the article underscores the interdependence of these two concepts. It also highlights how a well-established connection between political socialisation and participation reinforces the foundations of democracy, fostering an informed and engaged citizenry. Ultimately, the article emphasizes the importance of recognizing and nurturing this interplay to cultivate a more vibrant and effective democratic governance structure.

Keywords: - Political, Socialisation, participation, society.

INTRODUCTION

In the intricate tapestry of democratic societies, the threads of political socialisation and political participation are tightly woven, creating a dynamic relationship that shapes the essence of governance and the functioning of the political system. These two concepts are fundamental pillars upon which the edifice of democracy stands, influencing the attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and choices of citizens within a society. The journey from a passive observer to an active participant in the political arena is guided by the process of political socialisation, which molds individuals' political identity and understanding. This, in turn, propels them towards various forms of political participation, giving life to the democratic ideals of representation, accountability, and citizen engagement.

➤ ***Understanding Political Socialisation***

At the core of an individual's political identity lies the intricate concept of political socialisation. This process is akin to a lifelong journey of learning and adaptation, during which individuals internalize the values, ideologies, and civic virtues that become the building blocks of their political consciousness. Political socialisation is not confined to formal education or structured lessons; rather, it is a dynamic process that commences in childhood and evolves throughout one's life. It takes root within the family unit, where discussions, debates, familial affiliations, and cultural norms lay the foundation for individuals' initial political inclinations. Parents, as the first educators, transmit their own political beliefs and values to their children, significantly shaping their early understanding of politics.

Schools play a pivotal role in extending and refining the process of political socialisation. Within the educational sphere, students are exposed to a diverse range of perspectives, providing them with the tools to critically analyse political issues and ideologies. Civic education becomes a crucial conduit through which young minds gain an understanding of the structures of government, the importance of civic duties, and the broader implications of political decisions. Moreover, peers, community institutions, and the media collectively contribute to the multifaceted tapestry of political socialisation, enriching individuals' perspectives and shaping their political narratives.

➤ ***The Nexus of Political Participation***

Political participation, as the kinetic manifestation of political socialisation, embodies the dynamic spectrum of actions through which citizens express their political voice and contribute to the functioning of their society. While voting is often considered the bedrock of democratic participation, the concept extends far beyond the confines of the ballot box. Engaging in protests, joining advocacy groups, participating in public forums, volunteering for political campaigns, and even standing for elected positions are all integral components of political participation. Each action contributes to the mosaic of democratic engagement, allowing citizens to voice their concerns, aspirations, and demands.

Political participation is not a monolithic concept; rather, it exists along a continuum, with different levels of engagement catering to the diverse preferences and capacities of individuals. Some citizens may find their voice through peaceful protests, utilizing collective action to draw attention to pertinent issues. Others might channel their energy into community-based initiatives, contributing to grassroots efforts that directly impact their neighborhoods. By participating in political activities, citizens actively influence policy decisions, ensure the responsiveness of governments, and contribute to the broader discourse surrounding societal issues.

➤ ***The Intertwined Journey***

The symphony between political socialisation and political participation becomes increasingly apparent when tracing the trajectory of an individual's political life. The values, attitudes, and beliefs instilled during the process of political socialisation act as a compass, directing individuals towards causes and movements that resonate with their deeply ingrained principles. A person raised in an environment that reverberates with the importance

of civil liberties and human rights may naturally gravitate towards social justice movements or initiatives advocating for marginalized communities. Conversely, someone whose political upbringing underscores fiscal responsibility and limited government intervention may find themselves drawn to debates about economic policies and taxation.

This interplay between political socialisation and political participation creates a dynamic feedback loop. As individuals participate in political activities, they gain experiential knowledge and insights that further refine and sometimes reshape their political beliefs. This, in turn, influences the causes they choose to support and the ways in which they engage with the political process. Thus, political socialisation serves as the foundation upon which the intricate architecture of political participation is constructed.

➤ *Strengthening Democratic Pillars*

The intricate dance between political socialisation and political participation is not merely an academic abstraction; it is the backbone of a vibrant democracy. Citizens who have undergone a thorough political socialisation process are better equipped to discern fact from fiction, becoming informed participants in the political discourse. This informed engagement, in turn, upholds the democratic principle of representation, ensuring that the government is a reflection of the diverse perspectives and collective will of the people it serves. Moreover, an engaged citizenry bolsters the legitimacy of democratic institutions, fostering trust and promoting accountability within the governance structure.

UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL SOCIALISATION

Political socialisation is a complex and lifelong process through which individuals acquire the attitudes, beliefs, values, and knowledge that shape their political identity and orientation. This process is integral to the development of citizens' understanding of the political world, their role within it, and their engagement with it. From childhood to adulthood, political socialisation plays a significant role in molding individuals into informed and active participants in their society's political processes.

➤ *Origins of Political Socialisation: The Family and Beyond*

The family serves as the primary incubator of political socialisation. Parents and immediate family members are often the first sources from which children learn about political matters. Children observe their parents' interactions with politics, absorb their political opinions, and internalize familial values. These early experiences contribute to the formation of initial political beliefs and attitudes.

As individuals grow, their exposure to political information and ideas expands beyond the family unit. Schools play a vital role in shaping political socialisation by providing structured education on government systems, political ideologies, and historical events. Educators influence students' perspectives and encourage critical thinking about political issues, helping to build a foundation of political knowledge.

Peers and social interactions also influence political socialisation. Conversations with friends, participation in group activities, and exposure to diverse viewpoints all contribute to the development of a well-rounded

understanding of politics. Additionally, the media—whether traditional or digital—plays a crucial role in shaping political perceptions by disseminating information, framing issues, and influencing public discourse.

➤ *Agents of Political Socialisation*

Several key agents contribute to an individual's political socialisation:

1. **Family:** - Parents and family members pass down their political beliefs and values through conversations, discussions, and shared experiences.
2. **Schools:** - Educational institutions provide formal lessons on civics, government structures, and political ideologies, fostering a foundational understanding of the political system.
3. **Peer Groups:** - Interactions with friends and peer groups expose individuals to different perspectives, encouraging critical thinking and the exchange of ideas.
4. **Media:** - Mass media, including television, newspapers, social media, and online platforms, shape political perceptions by presenting information, opinions, and narratives.
5. **Community and Religion:** - Community organizations, religious institutions, and cultural groups may influence political values and civic engagement.
6. **Political Leaders and Figures:** -The actions and rhetoric of political leaders can shape individuals' perceptions of political issues and parties.

THE ROLE OF IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCE IN POLITICAL SOCIALISATION

In the intricate web of political socialisation, two influential factors—identity and experience—interact to shape individuals' political beliefs, values, and engagement with the political landscape. Identity, which encompasses personal attributes such as ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural background, intertwines with the experiences an individual accumulates over time to create a unique lens through which political matters are perceived. Understanding how identity and experience impact political socialisation provides insights into the complexities of citizen engagement and underscores the dynamic nature of political development.

Identity: The Mosaic of Personal Attributes

Identity serves as a foundational cornerstone of political socialisation. Individuals' identity attributes often reflect shared historical, cultural, and social experiences. These attributes influence the way people view themselves in relation to the broader society and impact their interactions with the political world.

Ethnicity and cultural background, for example, play a pivotal role in shaping political socialisation. The experiences of belonging to a specific ethnic or cultural group can instill a sense of solidarity, influencing political attitudes toward issues such as immigration, cultural preservation, and representation. Similarly, gender identity shapes political perceptions, as women and gender minorities may be influenced by gender-specific policy concerns, like reproductive rights and gender equality.

Socioeconomic status adds another layer to identity-driven political socialisation. Individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds might prioritize varying political issues—ranging from economic policies to social welfare programs—based on how they directly impact their lives.

Experience: The Crucible of Personal Encounters

As individuals navigate life, their experiences serve as the crucible in which political attitudes and beliefs are forged. These experiences include personal encounters with government policies, social injustices, international events, and even interactions with political figures.

For instance, an individual who has experienced discrimination based on their ethnicity or gender may develop heightened awareness of systemic inequalities and become an advocate for social justice causes. Similarly, direct exposure to economic hardships might lead to heightened concerns about income inequality and economic policies.

International experiences can also be influential. Exposure to global events, interactions with individuals from other countries, or participation in international travel can broaden perspectives and foster a more globally oriented political outlook.

The Dynamic Interaction

Identity and experience are not separate entities but rather intertwined forces that interact in shaping political socialisation. Identity lenses color individuals' interpretations of their experiences, while experiences can in turn shape and reshape identity attributes.

For example, consider a person from an economically disadvantaged background who gains access to higher education through government assistance. This experience might reshape their political identity from one of limited economic mobility to a stronger belief in the importance of social programs and educational opportunities for all.

Similarly, a person's identity might influence the types of experiences they seek out. A member of an environmental advocacy group might actively participate in demonstrations for climate action, fueled by their identity-based connection to environmental preservation.

Implications for Democracy

Understanding the intricate interplay between identity and experience in political socialisation holds significant implications for democratic societies. Acknowledging that each individual's political beliefs are shaped by unique experiences stemming from their identity helps create a more inclusive and empathetic political discourse. It encourages policymakers and leaders to address issues that resonate with diverse segments of the population.

Moreover, recognizing that experiences can shape and reshape identity-related political beliefs highlights the potential for personal growth and change. This underscores the importance of open dialogue and a willingness to learn from one another in fostering a healthier democratic environment.

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In the intricate tapestry of democracy, political participation emerges as a vital thread that weaves through the fabric of political socialisation. Political participation, encompassing a spectrum of activities through which

citizens engage with their government and society, plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' understanding of politics, values, and their role as active participants in the democratic process. As a dynamic force, political participation not only reflects the values learned through political socialisation but also reciprocally influences the development of these values.

Participation as a Catalyst for Understanding

Political participation serves as a catalyst for individuals to understand the mechanics of governance and the broader societal landscape. Engaging in activities such as voting, attending town hall meetings, or participating in grassroots campaigns exposes citizens to the intricacies of policy-making and the real-world impact of political decisions. These experiences provide a tangible context in which the principles learned during political socialisation become tangible.

For instance, a citizen who votes in an election witnesses firsthand the culmination of a democratic process—one they have learned about through civic education and discussions with peers and family. This experience bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, deepening the individual's understanding of the importance of their political involvement.

Participation as a Reflection of Values

Political participation becomes an outward expression of the values, beliefs, and attitudes that individuals have internalized during the process of political socialisation. The causes one chooses to support, the candidates they vote for, and the issues they rally behind all serve as manifestations of their political identity.

Consider an individual who, due to their upbringing and education, places a high value on environmental sustainability. This person might engage in political actions such as attending climate change protests, supporting eco-friendly policies, or even running for office on a platform centered around environmental protection. Their participation aligns with their deeply held beliefs, creating a tangible link between the theoretical foundations of political socialisation and active involvement.

Participation as an Engine of Change

Active political participation not only reinforces existing values but also has the power to shape and evolve those values over time. When individuals participate in political activities, they expose themselves to a diversity of perspectives and experiences. Engaging in debates, listening to differing viewpoints, and collaborating with others can lead to the reconsideration and refinement of one's political stance.

Furthermore, the act of participating in democratic processes can foster a sense of empowerment and agency. When individuals see the impact of their collective efforts—such as influencing policy decisions or effecting social change—it reinforces the belief that their engagement matters. This, in turn, can instill a sense of civic duty and encourage further participation, creating a positive feedback loop that continually shapes an individual's political identity.

Political participation is not merely a byproduct of political socialisation; it is a dynamic force that both mirrors and shapes the values and beliefs acquired during this process. By engaging in various forms of participation,

individuals translate theoretical knowledge into practical action, bridging the gap between understanding and application. Additionally, political participation has the potential to refine, expand, and even transform one's political identity through exposure to diverse perspectives and the tangible impact of collective efforts. As a result, the interplay between political socialisation and participation forms a reciprocal relationship that strengthens the foundations of democratic societies and empowers citizens to become informed, engaged, and active participants in shaping their nation's future.

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN POLITICAL SOCIALISATION AND PARTICIPATION

In the dynamic landscape of democratic societies, the interplay between political socialisation and political participation forms a symbiotic relationship that shapes the way individuals engage with their governance and contribute to the democratic process. Political socialisation, the process of acquiring political attitudes and values, lays the foundation upon which political participation is built. This intricate relationship highlights how individuals' beliefs are both informed by and influence their active involvement in the political arena.

❖ *Foundation for Engagement: Political Socialisation*

Political socialisation serves as the bedrock upon which citizens' understanding of the political landscape is constructed. During this process, individuals absorb the ideals, beliefs, and values of their society—learnings that guide their political attitudes and behaviors throughout their lives. Family, education, peers, media, and community all contribute to this multifaceted process, exposing individuals to a mosaic of viewpoints and ideologies.

Family, as the primary agent of socialisation, introduces individuals to the initial framework of political understanding. Parents' political affiliations, discussions around the dinner table, and exposure to family traditions provide the first seeds of political orientation. As individuals progress through their educational journey, schools introduce them to civic education, encouraging critical thinking about government structures, political ideologies, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Friends, community organizations, and media sources further contribute to this process, offering diverse perspectives and challenging one's existing beliefs.

❖ *From Beliefs to Action: Political Participation*

Political participation is the natural progression of political socialisation, embodying the active engagement of citizens in the democratic process. Whether through voting, volunteering, protesting, or even running for public office, political participation is the tangible manifestation of the values and beliefs acquired during socialisation. It is the means through which individuals influence government decisions, contribute to policy formation, and shape the trajectory of their society.

Individuals who have been exposed to a particular set of values during political socialisation are more likely to seek out opportunities for political participation that align with those values. For example, someone raised in a household that emphasizes community service and social justice is more inclined to volunteer for nonprofit organizations or engage in activism related to human rights. The political attitudes ingrained during socialisation serve as motivational forces propelling individuals towards forms of participation that resonate with their beliefs.

❖ *A Reciprocal Relationship*

The relationship between political socialisation and political participation is reciprocal, with each influencing and reinforcing the other. As individuals engage in political activities, they gain firsthand experience that can either affirm or challenge their existing beliefs. For instance, participating in a protest and witnessing the response of the authorities may lead to a deeper understanding of government responsiveness—or lack thereof—which in turn can impact one's political attitudes.

Conversely, the values and beliefs acquired during political socialisation serve as motivations for individuals to participate in the first place. Someone who has been raised in an environment that stresses the importance of civic duty and participation is more likely to actively vote in elections or engage in community initiatives.

➤ *A Holistic Democratic Engagement*

The intricate interplay between political socialisation and political participation underscores the holistic nature of democratic engagement. As individuals absorb values and beliefs through socialisation, they are primed to participate in ways that align with their political identity. This active involvement, in turn, deepens their understanding of political processes and challenges them to critically evaluate their beliefs.

For societies aspiring to foster vibrant democracies, it is essential to recognize and nourish this interdependent relationship. Educating citizens about political processes, encouraging open discourse, and creating avenues for diverse forms of participation all contribute to a more informed and engaged citizenry. By understanding the intricate interplay between political socialisation and participation, societies can cultivate a stronger democratic foundation that empowers individuals to actively shape the course of their collective future.

CONCLUSION

Political socialisation and political involvement are inextricably linked in democratic countries, demonstrating the dynamic character of citizen engagement. The reciprocal link between these two notions shapes people's views on politics, morality, and democracy. The interaction between political socialisation and political engagement exposes the route to a more dynamic and educated democratic society as passive spectators become active participants. Citizens' political identity grows through political indoctrination. Individuals learn values and views about government, society, and citizenship via family, school, peers, media, and community. This foundation shapes their political views and guides them through the political maze.

These ideals inevitably lead to political involvement. Voting, volunteering, demonstrating, and other engagements contribute to democratic debate. In a lovely synergy, political socialisation ideas motivate people to do things that reflect their views. Participation increases political system comprehension by embedding academic principles in real-world situations. This mutual interaction profoundly influences people. Participation offers direct observations that might confirm or challenge views. On the other hand, political socialisation ideals shape involvement. A complex mix of events, relationships, and ideals shapes political identity as people travel this path.

Recognizing and cultivating this complex interaction is essential for successful democracies. Nations can build knowledgeable and empowered citizens via civic education, open discourse, and varied engagement. This legitimises democratic institutions and improves the democratic process by including many voices.

Political socialisation and involvement are essential to democracy. This interconnected dynamic changes individual viewpoints and behaviors and strengthens democracy. Citizens participate to the continuing story of their society through interacting between these two pillars, making democratic ideals living experiences that enable them to create their common destiny.

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