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bear different interpretations. In the 1972 primary election mentioned above, for example, Muskie was widely reported as having 'lost' despite the fact that he obtained 46.4 per cent of the vote compared wth 37.2 per cent for his closest rival (Kessel 1984:8). In this way television can define not just 'what' an election is about but also 'who' it is about.

One final clear effect of television in elections is a change in the kind of politician who is successful. Modern party leaders simply must be good on television. Old campaigning skills, such as 'glad-handing' or the ability to electrify a large audience with passionate speeches like William Jennings Bryan did, are largely irrelevant. More important is a friendly, conversational manner such as that displayed by Ronald Reagan. It is difficult to imagine the crusty and diffident Clement Attlee, who was a highly effective post-war Labour prime minister, ever being a successful party leader in the age of television.

OPINION POLLS

Public opinion polls are a familiar feature of modern election campaigns. In Britain the number of nationwide polls published during the formal campaign period more than doubled, from twenty-five to fifty-four, between the elections of 1970 and 1987 (Denver 1989:105). A similar growth in political polling has occurred in other democracies (Kavanagh 1981). Public polls usually concentrate on reporting the current voting intentions of the electorate, although they also often detail voters' opinions on campaign issues, assessments of party leaders or candidates, and so on.

Even more remarkable, however, has been the growth of private polling. In parliamentary systems, major parties now usually hire polling firms to provide them with regular information, while in the United States, all serious aspirants to the presidency since the 1960s have included a massive polling operation as a routine element in their campaigns. Numerous candidates for Congress and state and local offices also frequently employ pollsters to provide a polling package. This normally includes a 'bench-mark' poll, undertaken well before the election, to gather basic information about the relevant electorate, a series of 'trend' polls in the run up to the election and a series of daily 'tracking' polls during the final stages of the campaign (see Salmore and Salmore 1985:119–24).

The purpose of such private polls—which are much more detailed than public polls—is to provide reliable information to candidates and parties so that they can campaign more effectively. Slogans, symbols and themes are tested before being adopted; the popularity of various policy positions is gauged, and some consequently emphasized at the expense of others; the impact of campaign broadcasts and advertisements is assessed. Polls tell campaign managers which voters where are most or least receptive to their messages, and enable them to

target their campaign effort more precisely. Private polls do not, of course, *entirely* determine campaign strategy. Politicians do have other sources of information, programmatic parties are disinclined to alter policies no matter what the polls say, and poll results are frequently open to differing interpretations. Moreover, the bare facts provided by polls do not speak for themselves. How a party should respond to them is a political rather than technical decision. It is clear, however, that politicians rely increasingly on polls and that poll results influence campaign strategies.

Concern about the potential impact of public polls upon voters, and in particular about the possibility of poll results being manipulated to serve partisan ends, has led some European countries such as France, Spain and Germany to impose restrictions on the publication of polls during campaigns. Calls are regularly made for similar restrictions to be imposed elsewhere. Those who favour banning campaign polls argue that they tend to trivialize elections, reducing them to 'horse-races' and deflecting the attention of voters from the serious issues at stake (Whiteley 1986). Opponents suggest that it is better to have polls produced by reputable companies with no political axe to grind rather than have selective leaking of private polls, rumours and deliberate disinformation campaigns which would flourish if the publication of polls were prohibited. In addition, it is argued, there is no justification in a democracy for denying to voters reliable information about the level of support for the parties, which they may wish to take into account before deciding how to vote.

The results of opinion research now affect heavily the ways in which campaigns are conducted. They influence the contents of election manifestos, which issues leading politicians talk about and which ones they avoid, the content and style of campaign advertisements and party broadcasts, the schedule of meetings and visits arranged for party leaders and candidates, and which politicians the parties seek to keep before the public and which ones they try to keep off television.

Scientific polling is a specialized business and the increased use of polls is another factor which has led to the professionalization of campaign organization. Politicians have learned to listen to polling experts and are less inclined to trust their hunches, regard constituents' letters as reliable indicators of public opinion or talk to their local station master (as Stanley Baldwin, three times Prime Minister of Britain between 1923 and 1937, claimed to do). But polling does not come cheaply and it has also been an important element in driving up the cost of campaigns.

While polls clearly play an important part in campaigns, the extent to which they influence voters is debatable. Commentators have described public opinion polls as having a 'bandwagon' effect (voters switch to the party which the polls suggest is in the lead) or a 'boomerang' effect (voters switch to the apparent

underdog). But there is no evidence that either of these effects occurs consistently on a significant scale. In addition, polls themselves reveal that few voters admit to being influenced by seeing campaign polls (Crewe 1986). On the other hand, a 'good' poll showing (usually defined as such and highlighted by the media) can catapult a relatively obscure presidential candidate into serious contention. In this and other similar cases, however, it is difficult to assess whether polls are merely faithfully reflecting a genuine trend among voters or give added impetus to minor movements in opinion.

The influence of polls on election outcomes is usually indirect. Their results can affect the morale of party workers. It is well established, for example, that on Thursday 4 June 1987 (which came to be known as 'Wobbly Thursday'), the British Conservative Party's campaign organization was afflicted by a severe crisis of confidence when a couple of polls appeared to indicate some slippage in Conservative support (Butler and Kavanagh 1988:107–11). More generally, candidates or parties which make sophisticated use of private polls are likely to mount more effective campaigns and in certain situations this may give them an electoral edge.

COMPUTERIZATION

Political parties have sometimes been slow to recognize the implications of technological change for campaigning. British parties, for example, have not made much use of the simple fact that most homes now have telephones. In the United States, in contrast, 'telephone banks' are commonly used to allow campaign workers and candidates to talk directly to voters. Some parties have also been slow to react to the realities of the television age or to exploit the opportunities presented by scientific opinion polling. The use of computer technology by British parties is relatively recent. It was not until 1981 that the Social Democratic Party (SDP) became the first British party to maintain a computerized list of party members (and to allow the payment of subscriptions by credit card). But computer use has become more common in British elections. In the 1987 general election, many local party organizations made use of micro-computers and both major parties had direct computer links between headquarters and their local organizations (Butler and Kavanagh 1988:214). In part, the increased use of computers at local level in Britain has been prompted by the fact that computerized electoral registers are now common.

In the United States, however, campaign organizers were quick to recognize the importance of the way in which television evangelists made use of computers in their campaigns and they are now extensively used in every facet of political campaigning. Modern American election campaigns are complex and massive operations. They generate masses of information about voters, the media,

opposing parties and candidates, issues, and so on. Campaign staff have to co-ordinate complicated travel schedules, press conferences, television appearances, party rallies and visits for leading campaign figures and to ensure effective linkages between campaign headquarters and the localities. To store and process all the data accumulated in a campaign and to assist planning and co-ordination, powerful computing facilities are essential.

In fund raising, for example, computers are used to store detailed records of potential and past contributors, mailing lists and so on, which can be accessed in seconds. More importantly, computerized addressing and mailing of letters enables thousands of appeals for support to be sent in a fraction of the time it would take volunteers to do by hand. Computer mailing also extends to personalized letters in which particular appeals can be targeted to different groups of voters. During the campaign itself, whereas television enables candidates to broadcast their appeals to the electorate, the computer, with its direct mailing facility, enables them to 'narrowcast' specialized messages to targeted groups (see Chartrand 1976). Computer-voter contact is more common than face-to-face candidate-voter contact. In addition, computer analysis of polls, census returns, voting histories and alternative strategic scenarios are used to help determine campaign themes, activities, strategy and tactics. The records held by the computer are the modern equivalent of the detailed knowledge of the voters in a local district which local politicians and party workers previously carried around in their heads.

The use of computer technology, no doubt, has made for more efficient campaigning. It is also a further source of the professionalization of campaign management—computers require experts to run them—and of increased campaign expenditure. But their use probably has little effect on election results. In the past, the more rapid 'modernization' of campaign techniques by the Republican Party and right-wing political action committees in the United States may have played a part in defeating Democratic candidates (see Sabato 1981), but when all campaigns use modern technology there is no comparative advantage to any one party or candidate. New campaigning techniques quickly become routine and commonplace, and when adopted by all candidates any effect is cancelled out. The main effect of computers has been to make campaigning itself more specialized, detailed and complex.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

All three of the factors affecting campaigning discussed so far have contributed to a rapid escalation in the costs of campaigning. Modern elections are very expensive, especially in the United States where television advertising has to be paid for. In the 1984 American presidential election, candidates spent about $200

million compared with $91 million in 1968, and in 1988 $37 million had been paid in matching funds (see below) to presidential candidates by 8 February–before the first primary election that year. Total spending in House and Senate campaigns rose from $66.4 million in 1972 to $450 million in 1988 (Nelson 1989:122, 124). In Britain in 1987, the three major parties spent £15 million centrally (compared with £7.6 million in 1983) and a further £7.5 million in local constituencies (Butler and Kavanagh 1988:235). In many other democracies the pattern of rapidly increasing costs is the same (see Paltiel 1981:141–2). The ability to raise large sums of money has become a necessity for serious campaigning almost everywhere.

Most states have laws which regulate campaign finance. Among modern democracies, only Switzerland relies on custom and public opinion to control campaign finance. Britain, however, is also unusual in having no limitations upon, and no statutory reporting of, central campaign expenditure by the parties while maintaining tight control over the spending of individual candidates in the constituencies. The intention of such laws is not simply to limit overall expenditures, however. They are intended also to limit any possible electoral advantage that may accrue to wealthy candidates and parties and to prevent wealthy campaign contributors having undue influence over elected politicians. The main methods used to control campaign finance are statutory reporting of income and expenditure, limitations upon contributions and expenditures, and public financing of campaigns (see Paltiel 1981).

The United States is the clearest and most comprehensively documented example of a state in which campaign finance laws have recently been reformed with important consequences for the conduct of campaigns. In 1974 the US Congress passed a Federal Election Campaign Act which, according to Malbin, 'probably represented the most sweeping set of campaign finance law changes ever adopted in the United States, if not in the world' (Malbin 1984:7). Despite subsequent amendment, owing to decisions of the Supreme Court as well as legislative and administrative action, the Act remains the basis of current campaign finance regulation. The rules are detailed and complex, but four main provisions are worth noting. First, the amount which any individual (other than a candidate) may contribute to a campaign is severely limited ($1,000 in 1988): candidates can no longer turn to 'fat cats' for large donations but must seek many small donations. Second, the amount that interest groups can contribute through their political action committees (PACs) *directly* to a campaign is also limited ($5,000 in 1988), but there is no limit on their 'uncoordinated' spending, that is spending incurred in campaigning independently on behalf of or against a candidate. Third, federal funding (matching the amount raised by candidates themselves) is available to presidential candidates (in primary elections as well as the 'run-off' election). Those who accept matching funds (and all have to date)

also have to accept a limit on their total expenditure. Finally, political parties are limited in the amount that they can directly contribute to the campaigns of individual candidates.

These provisions have had a major impact on campaign politics. Raising large sums of money from small contributors is a major operation and any serious campaign now has to include a professional fund raising and accountancy organization. More campaign time has to be devoted to simply raising money, and candidates have to begin their campaign effort earlier in order to build up a 'war chest'. This has tended to advantage incumbent Senators and Representatives since they are in a better position to raise money than challengers are (Salmore and Salmore 1985:68–70).

Another consequence of the changed finance laws has been a proliferation of PACs. In 1972 there were 113 registered PACs, but by 1986 there were 4,157. In the same period, contributions made by PACs to congressional candidates rose from $8.5 million to $130.3 million (Sabato 1987:157). Since PACs obviously expect some return for their money there has been considerable disquiet over their role in campaign funding.

The reformed campaign laws have also hastened the decline in the importance of American political parties. Not only are they limited in the amount of financial support that they can offer candidates, but it is the *candidates* and not parties which qualify for federal funding. More and more the organization of campaigns is candidate-centred, with candidates having personal machines, and the old style of voter mobilization by party activists has become less common.

It is difficult to isolate any consistent effect of campaign spending upon election outcomes. In some places, in some circumstances, massive spending may bring dividends but there are numerous examples of big spenders being defeated by poorer opponents. While it is probably the case, especially in the United States, that substantial campaign spending is now a necessary condition of electoral success, it is far from a sufficient condition.

CONCLUSION

A number of themes have emerged in this review of election campaigns. First, campaigning techniques and styles have changed rapidly in response to developments such as the growth of political television, the explosion of information technology, and changes in campaign laws. Second, campaign organization has become much more professionalized and institutionalized than ever before. Agranoff gives 'a selected list of the various specialists that are now employed in campaigns' (Agranoff 1976:25). The list contains thirty-four specialists including advance person, fund raiser, management scientist, market

researcher, TV-time buyer, speech coach and (gratifyingly) political scientist. Campaigning is now an industry with specialist firms and 'campaign consultant' is a recognized profession. Third, campaigns have increasingly focused on candidates and personalities rather than on parties and issues. Campaign organization, at least in the United States, is less party-dominated and more candidate-centred. Fourth, in almost all democracies developments of this kind have led to huge increases in the costs of campaigning. Fund raising has become a vital campaign task and worries about campaign finance have led to reforms, or calls for reform, of campaign finance laws in many cases.

Despite all of this, it is not obvious that campaigns make a great deal of difference to election results. In the past, political scientists viewed campaigns as having very little effect on voters' decisions, since these were usually the products of long-term social processes. Voters generally had a 'standing decision' about which party to support, and the function of campaigns was mainly to reinforce this and to mobilize supporters. In a number of democracies, however, long-term attachments to parties have weakened and voters have become more responsive to short-term forces (Crewe and Denver 1985). In these circumstances campaigns are potentially more likely to have an effect. Examples of apparently decisive campaigns can be found. Harrop and Miller 1987:228) cite the cases of the West German election of 1972 and the Canadian election of 1974. Particular apparent campaign effects–such as surges or declines in minor party support– may be discerned in specific elections.

In general, however, election outcomes are determined by a complex set of interactions between long-term and short-term factors, and the 'hot' campaign–which is in any case becoming more difficult to define, as in many countries campaigning is now almost continuous–is only one of these. When all election contestants campaign with roughly equal effectiveness–and this is ensured by professionalization–the effect of the campaign on election outcomes is likely to be slight. It remains important to be effective, of course, as any candidate or party which did not campaign seriously and well would soon discover.

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27

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR

W.L.MILLER

There is no such thing as a free choice in politics. People's preferences are influenced and conditioned by the social and political context in which they live. Moreover, their political *actions* are distinct from their *preferences*. Political behaviour depends upon the interaction between personal preferences and the political context, since institutional incentives and constraints affect the translation of preferences into action.

Some aspects of institutional/contextual influences are easily observable: voters, for example, cannot choose a party that does not put forward a candidate in their constituency. Many constraints and incentives are a lot less deterministic and less visible. Constraints may be psychological as well as legal.

Verba, Nie and Kim have argued that there is a universal tendency for citizens with higher levels of 'socio-economic resources' to be more willing to participate in politics (Verba *et al*. 1978:63–79). By socio-economic resources they mean, primarily, education and income. These resources provide the skills, the stimulation and the capability to participate in many kinds of political activity. However, the influence of these personal resources is likely to vary with the particular type of activity, and with the particular institutional context.

We can distinguish three 'modes' or kinds of political participation:

1 voting;
2 electoral campaigning;
3 non-partisan lobbying–particularly on local community affairs, or even particularized contacts with officials to achieve some personal benefit or ventilate some personal grievance.

These three kinds of political participation differ in terms of the degree of institutional conflict implied, and the amount of individual initiative and effort required. Activities that involve the most individual effort and the least institutional conflict should be the least affected by institutional incentives and

constraints. Conversely, those that involve the most institutional conflict and the least individual effort should be the most susceptible to institutional influence. The act of voting requires very little effort by the individual and involves a great deal of institutional—in this case, party—conflict. So the natural propensity for individuals with high levels of income and education to participate more than others should be least evident in the case of voting. Parties will be both willing and able to mobilize relatively apathetic citizens into such an important (for the parties) but easy (for the citizen) form of political activity.

In general the evidence confirms this theory (Table 1). Within a wide range of countries there is a uniformly high correlation between citizens' socioeconomic resources and their psychological involvement with politics—that is their interest in politics and their inclination to discuss political questions. But there is a much lower and more variable correlation between citizens' socioeconomic resources and their actual, physical participation. The correlation with voting is particularly low overall, though it ranges from almost nothing at all in some countries to a modest 0.24 in the USA (Verba *et al.* 1978:75). This suggests that powerful institutional forces generally work to prevent the natural pattern of psychological involvement being reflected in actual participation.

Table 1 Correlation between socio-economic resources and various indicators of political participation

Psychological Participation	
Correlation with political interest	0.37
Correlation with political discussion	0.36
Physical Participation	
Correlation with lobbying	0.23
Correlation with electoral campaigning	0.18
Correlation with voting turnout	0.08

Source: Average figures calculated by author from figures given in Verba et al. (1978:75) for Austria, India, Japan, The Netherlands, Nigeria, USA, Yugoslavia

There is, of course, no guarantee that institutional incentives and constraints will reduce the influence of personal socio-economic resources on political participation. They may amplify the effects of personal resources. It all depends upon whether institutions mobilize citizens with few personal resources and/ or exclude citizens with high levels of personal resources or, alternatively, whether they exclude the poor and/or mobilize the rich.

In extreme cases, institutional incentives and constraints may be constitutional. Voting may be legally compulsory—in which case most (but not all) citizens are likely to vote at least in national elections. Conversely, particular

groups may be legally excluded from the franchise–like conscientious objectors after the First World War in Britain for example, or women in Spain before 1977. Such requirements and restrictions have rather obvious consequences for participation. Less obviously, some citizens may be discouraged from participation because they cannot legally form a party to represent their interests, or because politics in their country is dominated by a set of parties, none of which represents their interests and values. Conversely, citizens can be mobilized into active participation not just by legal pressure but also through psychological identification with a party which does represent their interests and values. This match or mismatch between citizens and parties has a much less obvious and mechanical effect upon participation than legal requirements or exclusions, but it none the less exerts a significant influence.

Socialist, social democrat and trade-union based parties are committed to mobilizing the relatively poor. Wherever they are strong they are likely to ensure that the poor turn out to vote even though they are relatively uninterested in politics. Less obviously, some religious-based parties in Europe and in Japan appeal to religious groups that just happen to be poor. (Rural peasant communities tend to be both poor and religious.) So these religious-based parties also tend to mobilize the poor and offset the personal factors influencing participation. But where, as in the United States, politics is not dominated by class conflict, where socialist parties are virtually non-existent, and where there are no religious parties with a strong link to a relatively poor religious or ethnic group, then there is much more scope for purely personal factors to influence political participation. So, in America especially, the rich and well-educated are not just more interested in politics, they actually participate much more than the poor and ignorant do.

Amongst the three kinds of participation studied by Verba *et al.* (1978), lobbying provides the greatest contrast with voting. Voting involves the most institutional (i.e. party) conflict, lobbying the least. Voting requires the least personal initiative, lobbying the most. So we should expect that the citizens with the highest levels of education and income would be prepared to lobby most actively and that this tendency would be relatively *un*affected by institutional incentives or constraints. That seems to be the case. The correlation between socio-economic resources and lobbying activity is moderately high–much higher than for voting, though still lower than for political interest and discussion (see Table 1).

The three kinds of participation discussed by Verba *et al.* have been christened 'conventional' or 'elite-directed' to distinguish them from other 'unconventional', 'protest' or 'elite-challenging' modes of participation such as demonstrations, strikes, damage to property and violence against people (Inglehart 1977:299). Perhaps surprisingly, citizens tend to see at least some of these options as supplements rather than alternatives to voting, campaigning and lobbying. Few citizens express support for outright violence against people or
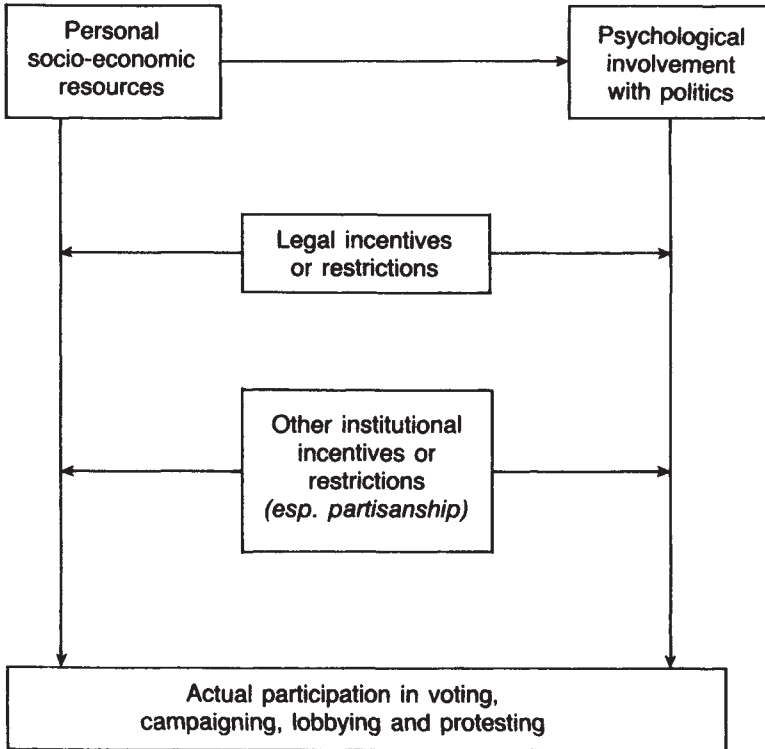
Figure 1   A general model of participation

property. So most of the empirical findings refer to protest activity that goes no further than demonstrations and occupying (not damaging) buildings: this has been described as 'democratic direct action' because it is in fact as much a part of conventional democratic activity as the three modes discussed by Verba *et al.,* and should not be confused with terrorist activity or 'violent direct action' (Miller *et al.* 1982).

There is a moderately sized *positive* correlation between support for such (peaceful) protest activity and 'conventional' participation such as voting and electoral campaigning. Across Austria, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA this correlation averages 0.24 (Marsh and Kaase 1979:93). There are some differences in the patterns of elite-directed and elite-challenging participation. The young are much more inclined than the old to support demonstrations and occupations, while they are less inclined than the old to turn out and vote. However, the highly educated and strong partisans are more likely than others to engage in all kinds of political activity/protest activity as well as electoral activity (Dalton 1988:51–69).

In summary therefore, the rich and well-educated are almost always more interested in politics than the poor; they *do not* usually participate much more than the poor in easy activities like voting (except in the USA) because working-class or religious parties mobilize the poor in order to compete in elections. But the rich and well-educated *do* play a much larger part than the poor in electoral campaigning and even more so in lobbying. They also play a larger part in (peaceful) political protests.

There is a great irony here. Western democracies provide responsible government but they do not, in general, provide representative government—at least not socially representative. Elected bodies are notoriously unrepresentative in the social sense. The American Congress is a congress of lawyers, the German parliament is a parliament of civil servants, and British local government councils are councils of the self-employed and the retired. Even at much lower levels of participation than holding elective office, political activists are socially unrepresentative and are drawn disproportionately from those who are adding the advantage of political influence to the advantages of income and education. Young elites may challenge old elites, but even protest action fails to compensate for the unrepresentative nature of political activists.

What are the likely effects of increasing levels of education and income? They are likely to have least effect upon voter turn-out which may well be 'saturated'. Party competition has proved sufficient to mobilize even the relatively ill-equipped and apathetic into this minimal form of political activity. On the other hand, rising levels of education and affluence should have most effect on those forms of activity which depend most on citizens' own personal resources: that suggests further growth in campaigning—perhaps single-issue and pressure-group campaigning as much as party campaigning, further growth in lobbying activities and more willingness to challenge established, incumbent elites through protest activity.

Voting choice, like participation, is not just a matter of personal preferences. Obviously voters are more likely to vote for a party they like than one they dislike, but their likes and dislikes are influenced and conditioned by a variety of outside forces—in particular by their social and family background and by the way the parties are portrayed in the media. And irrespective of their likes and dislikes, voters cannot vote for a party that does not put forward a candidate in their constituency. Even when their preferred party does contest the election, voters may be reluctant to vote for it if they feel it has no chance of winning in their local constituency and/or if they feel it has no chance of winning a majority or even holding the balance of power in parliament. At other times—especially at by-elections—voters who want to protest about specific government policies without throwing the government out of office may switch their votes to a new or extremist party precisely because they are sure that it cannot win power. So it

makes little sense to discuss voting without paying attention to the situation of the voter and the circumstances of the election.

Various models have been proposed to explain why people vote the way they do. Figure 2 summarizes and synthesizes these models into a single, comprehensive, general model of voting. Apart from voting itself, the general model contains six elements:

1 **The social context.** This includes not only the voter's own class, age, sex, religion, region, etc., but also the social characteristics and political attitudes of the voter's family, neighbours, workmates and friends.
2 **Party identification.** This has been a key concept in the most popular models of voting behaviour. It means the voter's sense of attachment to or 'identification' with a political party–the extent to which the voter is a party
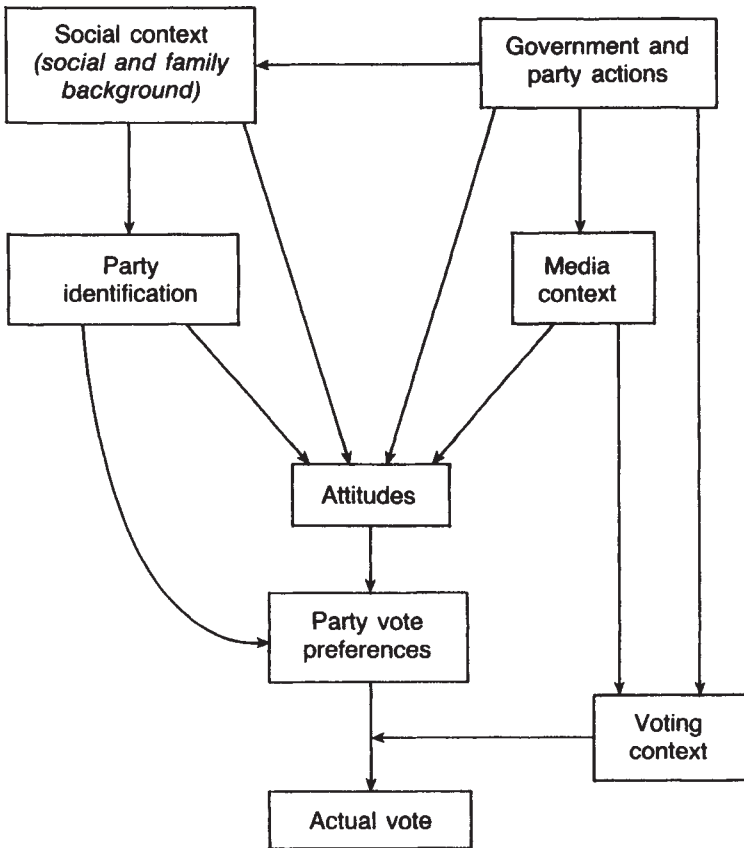

Figure 2   A general model of voting

'supporter' rather than a dispassionate observer of the party battle. Party identification has two aspects: *direction* (which party) and *strength*. Mere preferences give an indication of the direction of party choice but the concept of party identification is particularly important because it draws attention to the difference between those who have a deep preference and those who have only a shallow, lightly held preference.

3 **Attitudes.** The term 'attitudes', in the wide sense in which it is used in the general model, includes attitudes towards issues, performance, personalities, values and ideology. For example: the *issue* of defence policy; the *performance* of the government in managing the economy; the *personality* of the president or prime minister; the *values* of egalitarianism; the *ideology* of socialism.

4 **The election context.** This includes the voter's assessment of the point or purpose of the election and the range of credible options available. If voters feel the election is unimportant or pointless they may ignore it and abstain. If it is a by-election they may feel it is a suitable and safe opportunity for a protest. If it is a local government election they may feel it is appropriate to express a view on domestic affairs but not on defence policy. Their choice *must* be limited by the range of available candidates; it *may* also be limited still further by the (smaller) range of credible candidates.

5 **The media context.** This includes all the news, commentary, and advertising that reaches the voter through channels of mass communication rather than by word of mouth. The most pervasive medium is now usually television, though a minority of voters may get more information from the 'highbrow' press.

6 **Government and party actions.** Party activity provides much of the input to the mass media. It makes news. Of course, the media make their own selections from the available news and sometimes create or even concoct the news, but to a large extent the media are just that—media through which politicians conduct a public debate and communicate with the voters. However, it is important to stress the unique role of government. The governing party is not just the 'first among equals'. While opposition parties argue, governments act. Oppositions propose policies and criticize policies, but governments implement policies. So there is far more action, and more important action, by governments than by other parties.

The literature on voting behaviour is littered with the names of more limited and specific voting models which stress particular aspects of this general model. Though the exigencies of academic debate may obscure the fact, differences between these more limited models are not essentially differences of principle so much as differences of focus and emphasis. Of course, differences of emphasis are not unimportant: the difference between an ostrich and an eagle is also a difference of emphasis rather than principle. The real question is not which

model of voting is *correct* but which is *relevant* to an understanding of voting behaviour in a particular time and place. Across the range of recent experience in contemporary democracies, none of the elements shown in the general model can be dismissed as irrelevant.

Since there is so much in the general model, however, we can use partial models as a way to focus attention on different parts of the general model in turn. Amongst widely discussed partial models are the *sociological* model, the *party identification* model, the *rational choice* model, the *dominant ideology* model and the *election context* model.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL MODEL

The basic claim of the sociological model is that each social group votes for the party that serves its interests. Individuals as individuals—that is, as independent decision makers—do not exist. What voters claim to be their own, personal political attitudes simply reflect the interests of the group to which they belong. Some social theorists qualify the stark, elegant simplicity of this model by introducing the question of what might induce a social group to mistake its real interests, but that is tantamount to an admission that the sociological model is incomplete and that a more general model is required.

The sociological model focuses on only two elements from the general model: social context and voting choice. All other elements are ignored. Party identification and political attitudes have no real independent existence, they merely reflect social backgrounds and do not significantly qualify the simple causal link from social context to voting choice. It is an elegantly parsimonious model if it fits the facts, or even if it approximates the facts. It is a sufficient explanation of voting behaviour in a society that is highly polarized along class, religious or ethnic lines. In Northern Ireland for example, the amount of cross-sectarian voting—Catholics voting Unionist or Protestants voting Republican—is negligible. However, it is not much help in explaining why some voters in Northern Ireland vote for 'non-sectarian' parties that are neither intransigently Unionist nor Republican. And it offers even less help in explaining how Protestants choose between the various Unionist parties, or how Catholics choose between different Republican parties.

The sociological model could also explain highly polarized class voting which characterized so much of European, Commonwealth and American politics in the past (Alford 1964). However, sequences of survey studies show a very sharp decline in class polarization in the USA during the 1950s, followed by a similar decline in Germany in the 1960s and in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s (Dalton 1988:157). In the USA, middle-class and working-class voters split their votes more evenly between the Republicans and the Democrats. In Britain, class

depolarization had another dimension: not only did the two classes split their votes more evenly between Labour and Conservative, but many voters in both classes switched to the self-proclaimed 'classless' alternative–the Liberals and their successors, the Alliance and the Liberal Democrats. The class version of the sociological model is clearly declining in relevance–though not yet irrelevant.

There is little evidence of a similar decline in sectarian and religious (i.e. the religious versus the irreligious) polarization. Regional polarization has been increasing at British elections for three decades now. And long suppressed but well-remembered ethnic tensions within the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe point to the possibility of increasing social polarization–though not on class lines.

THE PARTY IDENTIFICATION MODEL

The party identification model (sometimes called the *socialization* model, or *expressive* model) stresses the importance of enduring partisan commitment. Its basic claims are that:

1 substantial numbers of voters self-consciously identify with a party and regard themselves as party supporters; they inherit their partisanship from their parents or are 'socialized' into it by their acquaintances as they grow up;
2 their party identification is a relatively stable and enduring part of their political outlook–certainly more stable than their attitudes to particular issues and political personalities;
3 their party identification has a significant influence upon their attitudes towards issues, personalities and government performance;
4 their party identification also affects their voting choice directly, i.e. it partially outweighs their attitudes as well as influencing them.

Although party identification may be *relatively* stable and enduring, there is no suggestion that it is immutable. This model can be used to explain, and possibly even predict, periods of electoral stability or volatility. If party identification is widespread and strong, then relatively few voters will be swayed by current events, their voting choice will largely reflect their party identification and will be stable because party identification itself is stable. Conversely, if few voters identify with parties or if they only weakly identify with parties, then their votes are 'up for grabs'–they can be swayed quickly and easily by events, election campaigns, advertising, temporary economic booms or set-backs, scandals and the like (Crewe and Denver 1985).

During the late 1960s and the 1970s, the number of voters with a strong sense of party identification declined sharply in Britain and America–from, it should be said, rather high starting levels. In the 1980s partisanship began to increase

again in the USA, though it continued to decline in Britain. This erosion of partisanship was accompanied by increasing voter volatility and a rise in split-ticket voting (where two or more votes had to be cast for different offices at the same time).

It has become clear that the strength of party identification is not nearly so stable and durable as its direction. It is a big step to switch from being a Labour supporter to being a Conservative supporter, but a much smaller step to switch from being a strong to a weak supporter or vice versa. An electoral cycle is clearly visible with the strength of partisanship declining between elections and rising again at election time. Such cyclical fluctuations are superimposed on longer-term trends and serve to remind us that trends can be reversed.

Even though the strength of partisanship has declined, it remains a significant influence upon both attitudes and behaviour. For example, British panel surveys show that, by manipulating the economy as an election approaches, the government is able to increase the economic optimism of uncommitted voters more easily than that of its own supporters (who already feel loyally optimistic) or of opposition party supporters (who remain stubbornly pessimistic) (Miller *et al.* 1990:100–1).

THE RATIONAL CHOICE MODEL

The rational choice model focuses attention on the link between attitudes and voting. It ignores the question of where the voters derive their attitudes from and confines attention to the fit between voters' attitudes and their voting choice. A variety of even more specific names are used for rational choice models, depending upon the particular attitudes that best predict voting choice. So the model may be called an *issue voting* model, a *values* model, a *prospective* model (if votes reflect attitudes towards future party policy), a *retrospective* model (if votes reflect attitudes towards the government's past record), an *economic* model (if votes reflect attitudes to the government's economic performance record in particular), an *egocentric* model (if votes reflect reactions to the voter's own personal economic experience), a *sociotropic* model (if votes reflect reactions to the voter's assessment of national economic performance), or a *leadership* model, a *personality* model or a *candidate* model (if votes reflect attitudes towards party leaders or presidential candidates). Though these are important differences, all these models are merely variants of the same *rational choice* model.

The basic claim of the rational choice model is that voters make up their own minds about issues, performance and personalities, and then vote for the party that comes closest to delivering the policies and performance they want. The model fails some simple tests in spectacular fashion, though that may be the fault of the

tests rather than the model. If voters voted for the party they said had the best policy on the issue they themselves said was most important then Labour would have tied with the Conservatives in 1983 and beaten the Conservatives in 1987 instead of losing both elections by a landslide (Heath *et al.* 1985:98; Crewe 1987:7). But the rational choice model is not restricted to policy attitudes. Though analyses suggest a great deal of variation from place to place, from time to time, and across subgroups of voters, the general pattern of findings suggests that economic performance is more influential than policy preferences, that retrospective evaluations are more influential than prospective, that attitudes towards the government are more influential than attitudes towards the opposition, and that sociotropic evaluations are more influential than egocentric. Clearly the nature of the parties, their leaders and their programmes affect the relative weights of these different influences. As long as two parties maintain a bipartisan foreign policy they may be judged solely on economic performance, but if they become bitterly divided over foreign policy that issue may suddenly become more influential.

We might usefully contrast extreme and over-drawn caricatures of the party identification and rational choice models. In their purest, most extreme, and therefore most unrealistic forms the party identification model suggests that partisanship determines political attitudes while the rational choice model suggests that political attitudes determine party choice. Which is correct? Reality is not so clear-cut as these caricatures. Empirical studies suggest that they are *both* correct: pre-existing partisan loyalty helps to form political attitudes towards issues, performance and leaders–but it does not completely determine those attitudes; and both old party loyalties and current political attitudes influence voting choice in a particular election.

We can be more precise than that. Panel studies suggest that for relatively uncommitted voters–that is, voters who may have party preferences but deny being party supporters–political attitudes have more influence on party choice than vice versa; conversely, among those who do claim to be party supporters, party choice has more influence on political attitudes than vice versa (Miller *et al.* 1990:124–6). In crude and very approximate terms, the *party identification* model explains the attitudes and behaviour of *party supporters,* while the *rational choice* model explains the behaviour of the *rest of the electorate.* In the 1980s about half the British electorate claimed to be party 'supporters', while nearly all the rest declared a party preference yet denied being party supporters.

THE DOMINANT IDEOLOGY MODEL

The notion of a dominant ideology has been used by Marxist scholars to explain why the simple sociological model (in their case, a simple class-interest model) does not fit the facts. Here, I shall use it in a looser sense and focus upon

government rather than the elusive concept of ideology. Incumbent governments hold the levers of power; so they are administratively dominant. Governments are also intrinsically much more news-worthy than oppositions; so they can be politically dominant without having to resort to administrative devices to control public debate or media reporting.

Government can influence the voters in three ways. First it can act to influence political attitudes directly–for example, by cutting unemployment or negotiating an arms-reduction treaty. Second, it can act to influence the media and thus indirectly influence political attitudes–for example, by changing the way in which the unemployment rate is calculated in order to bring about an apparent, but not real, reduction in unemployment or by attending an international summit conference which provides good television pictures even though nothing of substance occurs. Third, it can use its power to change society–for example, by privatizing industries, houses, the health service or the school system, or by curbing trade union power and membership. By these means, government can change even the social context. In electoral contests, governments are not only players, they also set the rules–even in mature, liberal, Western democracies.

Once again we have to ask the questions avoided by rational choice theorists: *Why* do voters have the attitudes they do? *Where* do they get their attitudes from? For example, there is general agreement that perceptions of economic prosperity were the key to the British government's re-election for a third term in 1987, yet we cannot ignore the fact that the voters had been extremely pessimistic about the state of the economy a year previously and only became optimistic a few months before the election. This pattern is not unique to Britain nor to the 1980s.

As the election approached, the government put great pressure on the BBC to give it favourable coverage, the Prime Minister went on a series of very glamorous foreign visits, taxes were cut and public spending increased at the same time, rising inflation was tolerated, unemployment reduced and a consumer boom encouraged. No wonder the voters began to feel more optimistic. But if government was the cause of their new optimism then their behaviour fits a dominant ideology model rather than a rational choice model; personal political attitudes can be as illusory in such circumstances as in the highly polarized world of the sociological model.

THE ELECTION CONTEXT MODEL

Academics have paid remarkably little attention to voters' perceptions of the electoral context, though they loom large in popular journalists' accounts of electoral behaviour which are full of such terms as 'tactical voting', 'protest voting', 'party credibility', 'momentum', or 'by-election atmosphere'.

Voters clearly do not regard all elections as equally important and the turnout rates reflect that. At Congressional elections in the 'off-years' (when there is no presidential contest), only two-thirds as many Americans vote as in a presidential contest. In Britain, elections to the European Parliament or to local government councils attract only half as many voters as at UK parliamentary elections. When elections are held simultaneously, large numbers of voters (though more in the USA than elsewhere) 'split their ticket' and vote for different parties in the different contests. When elections do not take place simultaneously, many voters still distinguish quite consciously between their votes in different contests. Some voters in by-elections and local elections explicitly state that they would vote differently in a parliamentary general election. Voters who claim that their local government vote is cast on the basis of local issues and/or local candidates are particularly likely to deviate from their normal parliamentary preference (Miller 1988:167).

In any election, voters take account of the 'tactical' situation—that is which parties have local credibility, and which are strong enough to win or at least be the main challenger to the incumbent party. The local tactical situation varies from time to time as the parties' national strength varies. It also varies from place to place according to local traditions. Less obviously it varies according to the office for which the election is being held. Local government wards are small, parliamentary constituencies much larger, and European parliament constituencies very much larger still. So the same voter may face a different tactical situation in different contests. A party may have a very good chance of victory within the local government ward yet have no chance of even coming second in the larger Euro-constituency.

In general, the larger the constituency the more local variations will be 'averaged out'. So local government contests are the most likely to take place in safe constituencies (i.e. wards) while European Parliament contests are the most likely to take place in marginal constituencies. Generally weak parties that have carefully built up pockets of support (the Liberals, for example) will have a credibility advantage in small local government wards. Even weaker parties which have no local pockets of support, scant funds and very few competent candidates (the Greens, for example) may have a better chance of winning votes in a European election where there are a few large constituencies than in a local government election where there are many small wards.

The issues also vary according to the nature of the election context. Central-local government relations have a higher profile in local elections, defence issues a higher profile in national parliamentary elections, environmental issues and consumer protection a higher profile in European parliament elections.

Questions about the election context are inevitably highly specific and detailed. None of these details may be of general importance. What is of general importance is that there always is an electoral context—whatever the content of

that context—and that the electoral context has a significant influence on the way voters translate their preferences into votes. Voters' preferences are not usually so strong or so uniquely tied to one single party that they will vote only for their most preferred party. During the 1980s, panel surveys showed that at least half the British electorate switched preferences between two or more of the three main parties and, at any one time, a similar number indicated that they only *marginally* preferred their first-preference party to their second. Consequently it is not surprising that the degree of volatility was high nor that voters' choices were influenced by tactical considerations as well as by party loyalties and political attitudes.

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POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

STANLEY RENSHON

Over thirty years ago, Herbert Hyman (1959) used the term political socialization in the title of his study on the psychology of political behaviour. He did so to call attention to the fact that political orientations could be productively analysed as learned behaviour, a view which, though obvious now, represented a new departure at the time. In doing so, he laid the groundwork for an interdisciplinary field combining psychological theories of learning with political theories of regularity and change (Turiel 1989:48).

That foundation also corresponded with a paradigmatic change in one of the field's three major disciplinary sources: political science (Dahl 1961). The behavioural paradigm in political science emphasized four major points in studying political process: the importance of the individual in the functioning of political institutions and processes; the importance of interdisciplinary political theory; the use of systematic measurement strategies; and the development of generalizable theories regarding political behaviour and its causes. The result of these congruent trends in political socialization and political science was an outpouring of theory and research.

The field of political socialization was attractive to political scientists for two reasons. First, it attempted to link socialization processes to the development of politically relevant views and activities, and second, it attempted to link the development of individual citizens with the functioning of the larger political system. Much of the early research in the area was generated by the attempt to document these links, as well as to establish the nature of the mechanisms that shaped the process.

Several questions now arise from these efforts. A first set of questions concerns whether political socialization has successfully demonstrated the validity of its premises. In over three decades of study, has the field accumulated empirically supported theory which links the development of individuals with their political functioning and to that of the larger political system?

A second and related set of questions concerns the state of political socialization, its prospects and the various prescriptions which are offered for ensuring its future. There is a sense in which the pace of research and publication in the field has slowed (Cook 1989; Merelman 1989; Allen 1989; Turiel 1989). It is further assumed by some that this slowing represents an intellectual hiatus. This has led some critics to suggest that the field, 'has not fulfilled its promise' (Rosenberg 1985:715). On the other hand, Dennis writes that, 'While the science of political socialization is far from the idea of a cumulative, fully codified body of knowledge, we have made considerable strides towards being able to give a systematic account of these processes and of their products since the late fifties' (Dennis 1985:vii).

Both these views reflect assumptions about what political socialization was supposed to accomplish. In the absence of agreement on this issue, diagnoses and prescriptions alike are likely to lead in varied directions. We begin our discussion therefore with an examination of several rationales that have been put forward as the basis of study in the field.

THE RATIONALE FOR STUDYING POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

There are several plausible rationales for studying political socialization. The first and most general is based on the fact that socialization is a central part of every society's social process. According to Allen, 'it is a phenomenon taking place continually in every organized society' (Allen 1989:4). Part of this process concerns learning about authority and rule-making institutions. In this formulation therefore, political socialization can lay claim to legitimacy on the basis of centrality, universality, and the fact that the general content of socialization has, or would appear to have, political implications.

A second rationale stems from a 'concern with the proper development of offspring–with their acquisition of needed skills, the curbing of aggressive tendencies, the directing of their feet to paths of righteousness' (Clausen 1968:20). In this formulation, the importance of socialization and the nature of its impact is assumed, and study is directed at the best method (s) of bringing about desired ends. Theories of socialization found in Plato's *Republic,* Machiavelli's *The Prince,* and Rousseau's *Social Contract,* to name three of many, are reflective of this rationale.

Finally, a third and somewhat more direct theoretical and political rationale for political socialization rests on its posited effects on the continuity, change and persistence of political systems (Easton and Dennis 1969). In this view, early political socialization, especially in relation to authorities and the public's understanding of citizenship roles, provides leaders and policy makers with a cushion of 'diffuse support'. This cushion represents the range of policy latitude

available to elites in pursuit of (their understanding of) the national interest, and allows them to occasionally take unpopular but necessary steps.

None of these has provided an unambiguous rationale for the field. The first rationale, for example, falters on the grounds of generality. It fails to differentiate sufficiently between the process of socialization and its outcomes. Research to be examined in this essay strongly supports the view that there is no one political socialization process, but rather a variety of processes at work.

The second rationale, which stems from a concern with attempting to socialize citizens into the 'good citizen' role, raises the basic question of whose views of that role should be paramount. Dowse (1978:409), among others, questions the wisdom of this approach as the basis for political socialization, however laudable it may appear. He points out that political alienation, for example, may be a perfectly rational response to real powerlessness. In such cases he argues, political education cannot reverse the effects of structural disadvantage, and may in fact end up reinforcing them.

The third rationale proposes a specific link between political socialization and the operation of the political systems. However, this linkage, while intuitively plausible, has proved difficult to establish. Part of the problem is the measurement of outcomes such as 'stability', 'change', 'continuity', etc., but this is only part of the problem. Because the best evidence for the systemic effects would come from the kinds of large-scale research efforts that have been comparatively rare in the social sciences, the logic of support has rested on the accumulation of inferences from small-scale studies.

Imperfect as they have proved, each rationale provides some justification for taking the concern of political socialization seriously. It is true, after all, that infants are not born with politically relevant adult characters, beliefs and skills. A logical corollary therefore must be that these characteristics develop over time. It is this fundamental insight, the 'developmental hypothesis', which forms the basis of Lasswell's early observation that political analysis must try to 'discover what developmental experiences are significant for the political traits and interests of the mature' (Lasswell 1930:8), and which functions as a continuing rationale for the field.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FIELD: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

The study of political socialization rests primarily on three major disciplinary foundations, political science, psychology and sociology, along with a somewhat smaller major contribution from anthropology (but see Almond and Verba 1963 and Pye 1968 for the linkage between political socialization and political culture). Of the three, political science has been concerned for the shortest time with three

central concepts of the field: socialization, learning and development. As a result, political socialization has borrowed many models, theories and concepts from the other two core disciplines, psychology and sociology.

There are advantages to borrowing from other disciplines. Concepts and theories not yet developed in the interdisciplinary field can be borrowed when needed. In the case of political socialization, borrowing was not only attractive but also necessary. Concepts such as learning, maturation, development, identification, etc., were central to the processes being researched in the field, but had little history of theoretical development within political science. More importantly, without theory to guide research linking these processes with political socialization, the field could not seriously address questions relevant to its premises.

However, while borrowing may be necessary it is not without costs. There is, for example, the problem of paradigmatic compatibility. It is one matter for researchers to deal with a discipline's major paradigm, but quite another when there are three or more paradigms involved. Consider in this respect some aspects of the basic paradigms of sociology and psychology. Wrong (1961) pointed out some time ago that sociology tended to view individuals as products of social forces, while downplaying the role of individual agency. Psychology on the other hand, has a long history of concern with individuals, whether with the psychology of individual differences or, more recently, with life histories. These two views of psycho-social process are not necessarily irreconcilable, but they do not automatically point researchers in the same direction. For example, in discussing the different views of sociology and psychology, Rosenberg argues that:

> The distinguishing characteristic of systematic sociology is a focus on the collective dimension of human activity. A central assumption is that social reality constitutes a domain which exists between and beyond individuals…which is understood to determine individual-level phenomena…. [T]he sociological conception of political activity renders any consideration of individual-level phenomenon inappropriate and uninteresting.
>
> (Rosenberg 1985:716–17)

The problem of paradigmatic compatibility is made somewhat more complicated by the fact that at least one of political socialization's core disciplines, psychology, has several paradigms rather than just one which is dominant. Cognitive psychology is certainly prominent within psychology (Gardner 1987), but the behaviouralist, developmental and psychoanalytic paradigms continue to maintain a strong disciplinary presence. As a result, problems of theoretical and paradigmatic integration are more complex.

Paradigmatic integration is one of several issues that using interdisciplinary theory raises. These issues make interdisciplinary research more demanding and difficult in some respects than traditional disciplinary research. Greenstein recognized one reason for this in his early analysis of the 'personality and

politics' literature. In that analysis, Greenstein noted that when researchers in the field of personality and politics look to psychology to borrow meanings of such terms as 'personality' they find that:

> Rather than finding a psychological science on which to draw for insight, [they find] congeries of more or less competing models and frames of reference, with imperfect agreement on the nature of man's inner dispositions, on the appropriate terms for characterizing them, and on the methodologies for observation.
>
> (Greenstein 1967:12–13)

Greenstein's point was that the term 'personality' had different meanings which were tied to theoretical views. Trait theorists, psychoanalytic theorists, developmental theorists, and so on, defined and researched personality in very different ways. Therefore one could not simply adapt a definition of personality and apply it without being aware of the controversies surrounding the concept in its home discipline.

Political socialization has shared this need/knowledge dilemma. On one hand, political socialization theorists needed to examine other disciplines for knowledge about processes central to the field's premises. On the other hand, detailed knowledge of, for example, development or psychoanalytic theory is no small undertaking, since each of these theories has its own historical development and theoretical controversies.

Clearly there is a balance to be struck here. Yet it appears difficult, particularly in the early stages of interdisciplinary research and field development, to integrate fully a borrowed theory's range and complexity into research designs. One result is that the full range of a theory's possible contributions are not adequately explored. For example, by the 1960s psychoanalytic theory had developed rich and diverse models of psychological functioning that went well beyond unconscious impulse and childhood. Yet early political socialization theorists made use of only a limited aspect of the theory ('fear of authority' as the basis for political identification).

This continues to be a problem for interdisciplinary work and for political socialization. Turiel (1989:49) notes, for example, that, although the use of developmental theories to explain political socialization has become more sophisticated, they are still narrowly applied. What most researchers using development models have done, for instance, is directly apply Piaget's model of stages to political thinking. This has been productive, but in Turiel's view it does not exhaust the range of potential applications of these developmental theories. Turiel proposes expanding the application of Piaget's model to include the epistemological analyses of the definitions and classifications of the substantive domains of politics.

However, even being more fully conversant with the range of a discipline's major theories and applications may no longer be sufficient in interdisciplinary research. As an interdisciplinary field like political socialization develops, it may

become necessary to be more fully conversant with a range of theories and applications *within* a discipline, as well as with theoretical applications across disciplines. Consider, for example, the question of whether social learning or developmental theory provides a better model to explain political learning. Being conversant with, and even empirically testing, one model does not necessarily resolve all the researcher's problems.

Moore (1989; see also Moore *et al.* 1985) argues that some aspects of political learning conform to social learning theory, an argument he bases on assessments of increased exposure to political stimuli. But as Turiel points out in this connection, 'both social learning and cognitive developmental approaches expect greater exposure to influence learning, but by different processes (Turiel 1989:47). In other words, the empirical findings linking exposure with political learning do not necessarily resolve the question of which theory more fully accounts for the data.

These examples suggest that the conduct of interdisciplinary research raises difficult, complex theoretical issues. In the sections that follow, we will examine some of these with a view towards laying out, even if not fully resolving, the two sets of questions raised at the beginning of this essay. We begin with an overview of the field, its framework of definitions and early studies.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION: EARLY DEFINITIONS AND FRAMEWORKS

Political socialization attracted social scientists because it promised a payoff in explaining the functioning of political institutions and processes. The framework which most clearly articulated that rationale was systems theory (Easton 1965). The political theory of political socialization derived from that framework (Easton and Dennis 1969; Hess and Torney 1969) provided researchers with an agenda as well as a rationale.

Since political systems were stable and persisted because institutions socialized citizens into providing political authorities with diffuse support, one major item on the research agenda was to see how particular agents (the word itself reflects a view of institutions as surrogates for political authorities) inculcated the relevant 'norms'. Thus a number of studies examined various agents to analyse how they shaped political development. (For an early summary of such research see Renshon (1977), which includes chapters on: the comparative analysis of agents (Beck 1977); the family (Davies 1977); schools (Patrick 1977); peers (Silbiger 1977); media (Chaffe 1977), and so on.)

Since political authorities could hardly afford to wait until adulthood to generate diffuse support, research was also oriented towards finding the origins of adult support in childhood. The number of studies examining the political

orientations of children, and later 'youth', led one researcher (Greenstein 1970) to include the study of children as one basic definition of the field. These twin related pillars, the moulding of citizens to norms (in reality those of the political regime and particular political authorities) and the focus on children, were the basis of much of the research undertaken in the field.

The understanding of 'socialization' as a conservative process has a long intellectual history. Clausen (1968:21) notes that as early as 1828 the term appeared in the *Oxford English Dictionary* with the meaning 'to render social, to make fit for living in society'. Early definitions in the field followed this lead and stressed the child's accommodation to the adult world, particularly the normative values of the society. Hyman's view that 'humans must learn their political behaviour early and well and persist in it' (Hyman 1959:17) was echoed in many theories. Sigel's observation that 'political socialization refers to the learning process by which the political norms and behaviours acceptable to an ongoing political system are transmitted from generation to generation' (Sigel 1961:1) was one of several influential views of the process that took this position.

This view has persisted, although not unchallenged, to the present. For example, Allen, in introducing a recent symposium on 'Children's political socialization and cognition' in *Human Development* (Allen 1989:2), defines the process as 'an individual's adaptation to the political environment'. Less emphasis has generally been given to the ways in which individuals selectively accept, develop and shape political orientations. Similarly, insufficient attention has been given to the ways in which individuals may influence and shape the very social and political systems that supposedly socialize them to regime support.

From the beginning there has been dissatisfaction with the view that individuals are generally passive accommodators to institutional norms. Reservations about this view were expressed quite early in the field's development (Connell and Goot 1972–3) and continued to be expressed periodically (Sears 1975; Renshon 1977). Criticisms of this view took several forms.

Connell and Goot (1972–3) argued that the forced-choice format of the research methodology imposed a structure on the children's answers which tended to suppress the expression of their full range of understandings. He pointed out that Greenstein and Tarrow's study of children using semi-projective and open-ended questions (Greenstein and Tarrow 1970) had revealed that children know more about 'political realities' than they could express in a typical forced-choice format. Sears (1975:95) pointed out that socialization models tended to overlook the child's idiosyncratic growth, while Renshon's analysis of the basic assumptions behind models of political learning (Renshon 1977:22–40) detailed exactly why this criticism was well taken.