

**POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND THE WORLD CITIZEN**

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New York, New York

The Seventeenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences  
Los Angeles, California      November 24-27, 1988

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Traditionally in the United States and in other countries the mission of the schools has included political learning as well as the academic and social development of students. This paper focuses on the role of schooling as an agent of political socialization of children and youth.

Political socialization refers to the process of transmitting the values, attitudes and norms of political culture of a country. Research indicates that there are several agents of political socialization such as the family, the school, the peer group, the church, the work place and youth organizations. Several studies have examined the effectiveness and the extent of influence of these agents (Krug 1960, Hess 1963, Hess and Torney 1965, Laughton 1967, Jennings and Niemi 1968, Dowse and Hughes 1971, Campbell 1980 and others).

Certain research studies on political socialization have focused on the role of one such agent, the family, insofar as developing political attitudes and expectations and propensity for political participation. Hess and Torney (1965), for example, have found that the family is a key transmitter of partisanship preferences as well as a consensus toward the existing government in the United States. The family helps shape in their children a compliant attitude and acceptance of existing laws, authority and establishment norms.

With the rise of the modern nation one observes a concomitant phenomenon which is the development of "nationalistic ethos" among the members of a modern state. The extension of this condition expresses itself as "ethnocentrism", "ingroup loyalty" and in some cases

"chauvinism". These orientations invariably lead to international conflicts, and in some cases, armed conflicts.

Most agencies of political socialization, such as the family, peer group, church, political parties, youth organizations contribute to narrow nationalistic sentiments. Children growing up in countries where a nationalistic ethos prevails are involuntarily affected by this circumstance. As Lambert and Klineberg (1967) found in their seminal study, very young children begin to develop ethnocentric feelings as a result of their interaction with these agents of socialization. The children also categorize other nations and their peoples based on these attitudes, describing them as "good, religious, peaceful, intelligent or poor, bad, not like us, etc." (p.11).

The family, as extended or clan, also helps promote "ingroup loyalty" and a mistrust of or hostility toward "outgroups". This translates into loyalty feelings toward one's own nation and negative feelings toward other nations. Other agents of socialization, such as the school, consciously or unconsciously promote nationalism, ethnocentrism, parochialism and narrow "geopolitical" sentiments which subvert not only the development of a citizen but also a citizen of the world. (Campbell 1980; Jaspersen & Russell, 1987).

As young children grow up, the categorizations often become internalized and part of their personality and political attitudes. International studies of socialization patterns indicate the saliency of ages three to thirteen in developing ingrained ethnocentric attitudes. (Hess and Torney 1965; see also Massialas 1972).

Schooling can play a critical role in socializing children's development of political orientations toward their own and other nations.

Certain studies offer evidence of the significant impact of textbooks, curriculum, teacher, school organization and methods of teaching on the development of these orientations.

For example, systematic analyses of textbooks in school civics and history/social studies reveal the following:

- 1) The usual emphasis is on the country's own history rather than the history of other nations.
- 2) When events and/or episodes from own history are presented they are so exaggerated or one-sided that children are led to believe their country is far superior to other countries.
- 3) When other nations are presented they are usually treated in either as "friends" or "enemies" depending on the international political conditions at the time. For example, during the second World War, USA textbooks presented Germany and Japan as "our worst enemies;" now they are America's best friends.
- 4) Textbooks and other instructional media as a rule also do not promote critical thinking and inescapably lead the children to agree with the conclusions of authors, conclusions which often reflect ethnocentric values. The acceptance of the status quo is promulgated by these textbooks. In fact, the entire school ethos fosters such passive, uncritical attitudes and acceptance. (Massialas and Cox, 1967, Massialas 1969, 1975).

Several other studies suggest that curriculum guides and materials used in schools are also not reflective of the realities of the socio-political systems they purport to represent. Goldstein (1972) has found that "most of the materials relevant to the United States and its government ... seems to be designed to inculcate feelings of love and loyalty..." (p. 14-33). Again, the absence of true evaluative analysis of civic and historical events emerges.

Similarly, the research suggests that teachers in their own way contribute to the cultivation of a narrow political attitudes, and, more specifically. the fostering of political allegiance to the target region or nation rather than the global community. Teachers also promote acceptance of authoritarianism directly or indirectly by closing the opportunity for student participation in the decision making process in the

classroom, and by blocking attempts to objectively review world events. Several studies have confirmed these general propositions. Levenson (1972) noted that secondary school teachers were reluctant to deal openly with political controversy; they stressed obedience not participation; and they did not make provisions to guarantee free and intelligent discussion of socially significant issues (p. 123-36). Glenn (1972) reported similar findings regarding elementary school teachers. His study found that teachers "saw the social studies as helping children know about other people and socializing them into becoming good and loyal citizens who had respect for and obedience to authority." (p. 51-53).

Similarly, school curricula in various countries apparently devote very little time to questioning the role of a nation as a member of a world community. Normally, all that is taught in so called "social studies" and civics education refers to one's own nation-state with a strong emphasis on developing national loyalty and patriotic fervor. For instance, the history curriculum of the United States, which sometimes excludes South America and Canada, is usually taught in the 5th, 8th and 11th grades and is compulsory.

This ethnocentric phenomenon is also true of the history curriculum of other countries. World history is rarely offered in schools and when it is it is usually as an elective. Courses in civics which are required usually focus on the political process of one's own country, conveniently ignoring the political process in other countries of the world. In some states of the United States such as Florida, some courses such as "Americanism vs. Communism" seek to indoctrinate students as to the "good" qualities of the American system of "free enterprise" and the "evils" of the communist system. Thus, the curriculum overtly generates

loyalty to one's country as a critical and "life-preserving" attitude. Mistrust and hatred of "unfriendly" political ideologies or nations is expected and approved, without question or objective comparative analysis.

International studies also reveal that the positive impact of conventional civics curricula on the various political indices, such as political trust, political efficacy, political knowledge, and expectations for political participation is often negligible. Farnen and German (1972), and Ehman (1972) support this proposition that the teaching of social studies often makes no difference on any political attitude indices. Some of the reasons given are: the materials presented to youth are repetitive; there is no substance to the course of studies; controversial social issues are ignored; the content of civics is dull - students are bored by it; and students are not involved in generating and trying out their own ideas about the political process (see also, Massialas and Hurst, 1978).

Likewise, the school organization was found to be able to affect the feelings and attitudes of students in a negative or positive manner. Wittes (1972), exploring different organizational arrangements, found that students felt a greater confidence about their ability to control a predicted environment than an unpredicted one. Thus, "a student in an orderly school would tend to have a higher sense of personal control or efficacy than in a more disorderly one." (p.118).

Classroom transactions also often involve a "closed system" wherein students are prevented from expressing themselves freely. Students become passive and are expected to follow orders and perform rote memory activities. Ideas and concepts which are in conflict with the prevailing social ethos of or world community are introduced and passively digested and followed. Controversial issues of society and the world are excluded

and students develop a naive view of nation and the world.

As a result of the above-noted classroom environments, the school, as well as other traditional socializing agents, directly or indirectly promote conformity, passivity, ethnocentrism, patriotism, parochial pedagogy and negative geopolitical sentiments instead of internationalism, cosmopolitanism, heliocentrism and global awareness.

## **II. THE NEED FOR DEVELOPING GLOBAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY**

Nations can no longer afford to offer a parochial pedagogy and exist in isolation; nor can they afford to ignore world conditions, change, and problems in other parts of the world. Sooner or later, all nations will be affected by accepting socialization processes which reflect traditional outlooks and uncritical views of the international or world community perspective. The need to change both the processes and the practices of political socialization is necessitated by the radical changes that have taken place in all domains of society world-wide.

Most countries are experiencing significant changes in the family. The extended family has changed to the nuclear family and in recent years countries around the world have experienced a significant increase in single parent or polyparent families, while separation and divorce have become commonplace.

Political unrest, discontinuities and partisan politics on a national and international basis characterize most modern political environments. Political power around the world is often used as a tool by Machiavellian individuals exercising their right to rule as monarchs, dictators, duly elected prime ministers, presidents or leaders appointed by others. The political rule of most modern nations is not based on world-wide accepted principles such as peace, international cooperation, honesty, respect for

human rights and law, and mutual respect, but rather on the narrower concerns associated with partisan politics and clientelism.

Children around the world are thus being socialized to accept their national leaders and their international dealings on the strength of their personalities. Students are not led to review their actions and evaluate platforms against the backdrop of events, situations, political ideology and political processes in the world community. Other changes in the socio-economic sphere internationally mark the need for discontinuing the traditional socialization practices and adopting new ones which will bring unity among countries.

World conditions and changes in areas such as demographics, employment and the environment cannot be ignored. Environmental problems, for example, which have been accentuated with the population changes, and people concentrating in one area for the purposes of employment, must be addressed internationally. The lack of appropriate programs, as well as the inability of many countries to change the structure of their ecological system, will upset the balance between human beings and nature world-wide. In addition to the usual problems that stem from this condition such as air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, housing problems, and the creation of slum areas, we now have more immediate threats such as nuclear pollution. The recent example of Chernobyl showed us how the world ecological system can be affected and how quickly an international disaster can come about.

Another area which can affect the world community concerns the domain of health. A "recent" incurable disease, such as AIDS, resulting in the death of large, unprecedented numbers of people in many countries of the world, has made salient the need for a world view in which



individual governments unite and cooperate to stem a common force of destruction.

The aforementioned issues have implications for national survival as well as for global welfare and peace. The school can play a key role in making student aware and sensitized to these issues by including them in citizenship education courses. As Anderson notes (1980), children need to perceive people as having the potential to control and contribute to the social order as well as the world community; to perceive the dilemmas inherent in social issues; to be empathic, socially responsible, and considerate of others; to be able to make mature judgements in dealing with ethical and moral problems.

Torney (1980) has recognized that the low interest in American high school students for global issues stems from the neglect of such issues at the middle-childhood level. According to Torney,

"the elementary years are optimal for the teaching of global issues such as human rights. Currently, American school children are exposed to the subject of rights only through learning about the U.S. Constitution. The middle-school years are marked by significant development in social-cognitive abilities, which may be particularly receptive to a global perspective" (p. 97).

There is a consensus of opinion that global education is needed to develop a world citizenry. The importance of knowledge of other countries, including their government, language, and culture, has been popularized since the later sixties. According to the Ad Hoc Committee on Global Education, (1987), the development of international understanding in our children will enhance our national security as well as lead to international cooperation. (p.245).

There is a distinct need for the appropriate political education of youth, especially at the high school level, since it may be a catalyst for subsequent political activism such as that which characterized American

youth in the late sixties. Merelman and King (1986) argue further that

"Democracies depend perhaps more than any other form of political system on the self-selection of their citizens into political involvement...unless by the age of 18 a person had expressed an intention to become politically involved, activism thereafter was extremely unlikely." (p.487).

### **III. THE EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR GLOBAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD CITIZEN**

To socialize the individual into a world citizen many modifications must take place both within the nation and its various educational programs. Several changes must also occur in the relations among nations, and cooperation must be attained to meet this goal. The development of an international educational organization is warranted which could teach cross-cultural or inter-cultural values from various parts of the world, for example.

A primary goal for implementing a world citizenship program is to identify a set of universal values that will alleviate local, national and international conflicts, war potential, parochial and ethnocentric values and concurrently promote self-development, world unity, peace and cooperation among people and countries. A second goal is to identify appropriate means and agents through which the universal values can be promoted.

To meet the first goal we must find a set of values that will be accepted and agreed upon by the various nations which would be bias free. To generate such a set of values, international organizations which are already in existence, such as UNESCO and the United Nations, as well as countries themselves, ought to have a consensus for educational planning that stress mutual understanding, cooperation, tolerance, avoidance of conflict, peace, moving away from the nation-state concept and moving toward heliocentrism and world citizenry.

As far as the means or the agents through which the universal values for global awareness can be promoted, educators explore to what degree some of the traditional socialization agents have the potential to carry out the above goal and how these agents should be dealt with in the classroom to embrace the issue of world citizenship effectively.

Among the traditional socialization agents, religion seems to have the potential, to a certain extent, to act as an effective agent of world citizen socialization. With the exception of a few religions, all major religious denominations have accepted individual regardless of their sex, race, nationality, and status. Traditionally, the usual criterion that most religions created for selecting members was the acceptance of dogma. Perhaps religions may widen the purview of their dogma in order to embrace and unite more people around the globe, placing themselves into the service of universal ideals such as: "all people are equal", "world peace", "promote love for one another".

Another agent which has been successfully utilized by societies and as an agent of socialization is the mass media in its many forms. Countries must capitalize upon the potential of mass media and through it they can pass on universal ideals which aim at educating and/or socializing world citizens.

What type of program or curriculum is needed in order to attain the goal for global awareness and world citizenry? More specifically, what types of knowledge/information, skills, values, attitudes and other learning outcomes are necessary for the collective training of individuals as world citizens?

It is important to point out that this type of global education program should not be based on knowledge and information alone. It should aim in

the development of thinking, decision-making and coping skills, critical mindedness and universal values. To meet these goals it is not sufficient to prepare children for a specific situation or reality on a local basis but to enable them to project and visualize their future by preparing them to cope with each situation on a local, national and international level.

There seem to be two broad areas in which global education could concentrate: one is the individual level and the other is the mass level.

On the individual level, each nation's education program should aim at developing self-awareness, self-development, personal efficacy, sense of internal control, personal flexibility and adjustment, and the enhancement of a positive self-concept. Children ought to be given the opportunity to develop attitudes of self-respect and self-worthiness so that they can become self-actualized. Learning activities should be designed in such a way that will permit individuals to increase their sense of self-confidence and efficacy and develop a feeling that they are part of the world community and thus feel competent to influence matters and decisions which can affect them in ecological, economic, social and political spheres locally and internationally. To be unable to promote a positive self-concept, children ought to be actively participating in whatever they learn, beginning with their own feelings, sentiments, attitudes, and values. (Flouris, Coulopoulos and Spiridakis 1981; Flouris 1983, 1988). Active participation in learning about one's self as well as in decision-making about matters which concern others, enhances the power of the individual to cope with his/her environment. As Toffler (1974) states:

"The combination of action learning with academic work and both of these with a future orientation ... helps close the gap between change occurring 'out there' and change occurring within the individual, so that learners no longer regard the world as divorced from themselves, and themselves as immune to (and perhaps incapable of) change" (p. 18).

The sense of internal control and personal efficacy is being stressed by various experts, especially when they discuss future schools and the education programs of the next century.

Closely connected to the above is self-expression and self-management goals. People must learn to let others know their needs, desires, wishes, beliefs and values. The individual's ability to articulate personal feelings is important for effective participation in local, national and world community, for the development of interpersonal relationships and for harmonious communication and interaction with other people in the world. Self-management refers to the ability of a person to handle and be in command of various personal matters. This includes the sense of responsibility for actions and an awareness of others. Another necessary condition that is required at the individual level of global awareness is personal adjustment. Thus, individuals need to be flexible and able to consider the existing alternatives before making a final decision or taking action. (Toffler, 1974).

Regarding the mass level, global education should address itself on social/international problems, issues, events and situations on interpersonal relations, on world citizenship and cross-cultural awareness. The content of the social/international issues, problems, events and situations should be drawn from a variety of real episodes on a local, national and international level. Children of the world should be aware that the problems of poverty, overpopulation, environmental destruction, shortage of natural resources, intercountry conflicts, violence, and wars will eventually affect everyone. (Graves et.al 1984). Furthermore, children should become aware in a creative, sensitive manner, that human problems and needs are common to all and that there are similarities in the

way people feel, interact and influence one another at all societal levels; the family, the school, the peer group, the local community, the state, and the international community. This type of multi-level understanding will enhance their self awareness as well as the awareness of others. (Jespersen and Russell, 1987).

Through interpersonal skills, individuals can learn ways to behave toward others and solve problems of common concern. These skills assist individuals in obtaining "social empathy", an ability to take another person's place. Individuals should be cultivated to arrive at what Salk (1975) called "strategy of double benefit", which translates as follows: "if you benefit I will also benefit" rather than "if you benefit I will lose". This type of practice will eventually transform the "I" to "we", the "mine" to "ours" and the "they" to "we".

Cross-cultural awareness is also important in global awareness. Accepting the values, customs, ideals, and modes of behavior of cultural groups around the world and appreciating similarities and differences of these groups is important to overcoming ethnocentric attitudes.

Similar views are proposed by various experts regarding future education programs. The Committees of the California State Department of Education states the following program goals which can very easily be incorporated into a global education program for world citizenship.

- "To encourage students to become increasingly self-directing.
- To help students understand and appreciate the world as a multiracial, multicultural, multilingual, and multinational phenomenon.
- To help students recognize and avoid behavior and attitudes based on prejudices toward sexual, ethnic, racial, political, economic and religious groups.
- To help students develop feelings of self worth and confidence in their own capabilities.
- To help students develop and use positive interpersonal relationship skills in social activities." (pp.25-26,45).

In similar fashion, Massialas and Hurst (1978) take the stance that the traditional school cannot meet the needs of the future world. Thus, they contend that the school must change its purview and functions to help children as early as the primary school level, understand their environment and acquire the necessary skills for coping effectively with their world. To this end Massialas and Hurst (1978) propose a new form of learning environment which they call the "school as a laboratory".

The major goals of this school are to enable children to:

1. Understand the key political, social, economic and ecological issue in their world;
2. To relate macro issues to micro concerns - to relate for example, world or national problems to individual or school problems and thus acquire "multilevel understanding";
3. To participate directly in decisions affecting them;
4. To apply ethical norms, both to the substance of decision-making and the procedures used in making decisions;
5. To develop a sense of efficacy and internal control (p.4-5).

The school can play a decisive role, but it must be supported by other socializing agents to carry out the task of assisting children to cope in an age of world crises.

Similarly, Mayer (1973) has proposed a "dynamic education" program for the children of a new society. In this program autonomous learning is encouraged and an interdisciplinary form of studies, where selected areas, such as consumer education, sex education, and future education, constitute natural settings for learning. Ongoing education of both teachers and parents is part of such a "dynamic education" program.

Several futurists have proposed radical changes in the form and function of the school. Weinberger (1976) supports that a new curriculum is needed which should be comprised of problem solving situations, decision making, autonomous learning, social, political and professional education and self development.

World history is a key area for developing a positive citizenship attitude which transcends a narrow nationalistic prospective and embraces the values of international awareness. As Adler and Lindhart aptly state:

"The average person often considers public issues from an emotional - even a dogmatic-base. The result, often based on prejudices, can be discrimination, abuse, injustice, violence, or terror." (p.549).

The authors recommend an analytical classroom focus on the concepts of "partisanship" and "propaganda" to lead students to fuller awareness of nationalistic socialization processes which cloud perceptions of world-wide concerns.

One interesting dilemma faced by schools is effectively resolving the seemingly inherent contradiction in stressing global peace and national loyalties. Students must be made to realize that appropriate allegiance to one's country need not be tied to an aversion or ignorance of other cultures. Recognition of the legitimacy of other cultures and their comparative aspects may lead to a positive perspective of the fit of one's country in the patchwork of all nations.

Schools must move away from maintaining existing systems and established ways of life. Students need to become good citizens, global citizens, who are prepared for change, able to anticipate future events, and willing to participate and take appropriate actions. As Pietila observes, the development of world citizens requires innovative learning..."recognizing human survival as the first purpose of learning... (and) human dignity." (p. 158).

Nations' need to reshape their curricula to integrate notions of an ideal citizen who is also a model world citizen. Transcendence of ethnocentric political attitudes in the school curriculum can be achieved through goals of active participation for students in issues-oriented



discussions, debates, and real-life projects which immerse students in investigating critical world issues. Along this vein, as Ridley (1982) asserts, the political education of children should extend to their out-of-school experiences. Children from low socio-economic backgrounds, according to Ridley, require training in life-skills in which there is a continuity between the issues discussed in school and the realities of the workplace. Political literacy, the first step in preparing the world citizen, will require "practical politics...to reach those at the bottom of the pile." (p.35).

Schools should abandon the parochial pedagogy that prevents children from becoming world citizens. It is imperative that educators institute citizenship education curricula that inhibit indoctrination and enhance linkages among nations ethnocentric values.

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