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POLITICAL EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:
A DECISION-MAKING RATIONALE

DISSertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

John Joseph Cogan, B.S., M.A.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1969

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This writer would like to extend his appreciation to all who provided guidance and help in any manner during the completion of this study.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Americans are a people very proud of their heritage. Since the mid-eighteenth century and the heavy influx of immigrants into this nation, the American school has played a significant role in the transmission of the historical, cultural, and political heritage of its people. Citizenship training has been and continues to be a major concern of the schools. Some believe that our schools have a greater responsibility than ever before in the development of democratic citizenship given the recent and continuing unrest, the open conflict between various segments of the society, and rapid social and political change all about us.

Schools in America teach children and youth political beliefs and behaviors directly or formally through planned instructional activities and imperceptibly or informally in such a casual manner without an awareness that any learning is taking place. A large portion of the formal elementary school social studies curriculum is oriented toward the inculcation of socio-civic and patriotic values. The development of democratic citizenship remains one of the most frequently cited objectives of the social studies curriculum at all levels, K-12. Several examples from leading scholars in the social studies field may help to illustrate this point.
The primary purpose of the social studies is to help produce people who participate effectively in the maintenance and improvement of society. Thus the ultimate objectives of the social studies are the kinds of behavior embodied in good citizenship.¹

The central purpose of the social studies is the development of personal socio-civic behavior that is compatible with the goals of democracy.²

The teaching of democratic values is the basic concern of the social studies curriculum.³

The main objective of the social studies is the same as it is for the total school program—the development of democratic citizens.⁴

The development of the self-realization of the individual and the improvement of society.⁵

The second goal of the social studies is to prepare citizens who can perpetuate and enhance their society. . . . Unquestionably the American public expects its schools to provide a continuing supply of literate, informed citizens.⁶

The social studies are more wholly devoted to education for citizenship than are other fields. Many objectives of citizenship education, therefore, constitute objectives of the social studies.⁷

The chief role of education in a democracy is intelligent or critical transmission of cultural heritages, during the course of which disagreements among individuals and incompatibilities in personal outlook are exposed and resolved creatively.⁸

A major objective of secondary education and the social studies instruction is the development of an effective citizenry.⁹

The Social Sciences, The Social Studies, and Social Education

Before continuing, it seems necessary to draw a distinction among several terms which will be used throughout the remainder of the paper, namely, the social sciences, the social studies, and social education. This will be done in order that the ensuing discussion concerning socialization in general and political socialization in particular might be more clearly understood.

The Social Sciences - The Social Studies. The most commonly referred to and most widely accepted differentiation between the social sciences and the social studies is that drawn by Wesley.

The social sciences are scholarly and advanced studies of human relationships. The social scientist is concerned with experimentation, research, and discovery to widen the frontiers of knowledge about man and his relationships with other men and with his environment. The social studies comprise a portion of the school curriculum wherein the content, findings, and methods of the social sciences are simplified and reorganized for instructional purposes. Thus, the social studies are those studies that provide understandings of man's ways of living, of the basic needs of man, of the activities in which he engages to meet his needs, and of the institutions he has developed. Briefly, the social studies are concerned with man and his relationship to his social and physical environments.10

Most of the major writers in the elementary social studies field concur with this distinction, the notable exceptions being two essays in which the authors have seen fit to define "social study" as a verb in contrast to the collective noun, "social studies." Douglass defines "social study" as "Any inquiry which has as its central focus the study of one or more aspects of man's relationships with his fellow man is a social study."11 Clements, Fielder, and Tabachnick are somewhat more explicit.

Social study, therefore, is the process of learning about variety and change in the actions of people as they arrange to live together in groups. This learning goes on through the gathering and interpreting of social data, as well as through critical

11 Douglass, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
examination of the conclusions and generalizations of social scientists.\textsuperscript{12}

The latter thus contend that children are engaged in social studies, "when they are encouraged to study every evidences of human variety: people, their acts, and the arrangements for living by, with, in spite of, because of, one another."\textsuperscript{13} This definition thus is primarily concerned with the process in which children are engaged in the act of social inquiry. The Wesley\textsuperscript{14} definition above, on the other hand, is more intent on the product of their inquiry.

The Social Sciences. The disciplines of knowledge commonly referred to as the social sciences typically include history, geography, anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, social psychology, and philosophy,\textsuperscript{15} the latter two being excluded by some social studies professionals. In addition, several writers refer to history and the social sciences, denoting the former as the primary discipline around which the others are grouped.\textsuperscript{16, 17}

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 10.
\textsuperscript{14}Wesley, loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{15}Jarolimek, op. cit., p. 5.
Preston further describes the social sciences as "... the fields of knowledge which deal with man's social behavior and his social institutions." Ragan and McAulay note that the social scientist "... is concerned primarily with expanding the boundaries of knowledge and with developing specialized scholars. ..." The writings of Douglass, Wesley, and Cartwright, Dunfee and Sagl, Otto, and Jarolimek add support to this point of view.

The Social Studies. The term social studies is essentially one of twentieth century origin. Although the Report of the Committee of Ten of the NEA, published in 1893, made reference to the term "social studies," it was not until 1916 and the report made by the Committee on Social Studies of the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education that the term was used in an official sense for the first time.

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20Douglass, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-7.
24Jarolimek, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.
This report has been considered one of the most influential documents in determining the social studies curriculum at the secondary level during the first half of this century.

The term "social studies" was not accepted without opposition. Some historians believed that this meant "diluted" history in the curriculum. Others feared an indoctrination of socialistic ideas. Still others believed that the blending together of the several disciplines would in turn destroy the strength of the individual discipline. However, the social studies did gain acceptance as an area of study in the curriculum especially as concern grew over the assimilation of immigrants and minority groups into the American culture.

Wesley and Cartwright assert that the social sciences and the social studies do not differ in the kinds of subject matter involved but rather in the level of difficulty of the knowledge being worked with and the primary purpose for working with it.

With regard to purpose, Dunfee and Sagl believe that,

The central purpose of social studies is the development of personal socio-civic behavior that is compatible with the goals of democracy. In social studies, knowledge about subject matter is not an ultimate goal. Rather, knowledge is the means by which the understandings,


26Wesley and Cartwright, op. cit., p. 3.
attitudes, and behaviors needed for responsible citizenship are achieved.27

As indicated earlier in the essay, the above stated purpose is an overriding goal of the social studies. The social studies is, then, that particular portion of the curriculum that enables the child to study man in relation to his social, economic, physical, and political environment, in relation to his fellow man, in relation to established and developing institutions, and in doing so gain a clearer picture of who he is as a person functioning in his own particular culture and society. Social studies are thus primarily concerned with process whereas the social sciences are more actively engaged in the expansion of knowledge, the content realm.

Social Education. Social education on the other hand
". . . refers to the deliberate instruction, by teachers, parents, and other adults, designed to promote children's social development in desirable directions. It is by no means confined to one area of the curriculum or to the school day. . . . Social studies shares in this social education task."28

The writings of Otto lend support to this definition and further draws a distinction between "social development" and "social education."

27 Dunfee and Sagl, op. cit., p. 17.
The author\(^\text{29}\) recognizes that much of children's social development happens incidently, without anyone making a deliberate effort at teaching. It is even possible that most of one's social development 'is caught', and that much or all of that which is acquired through the unstructured activities of everyday living may be wholesome and useful. The point is that the term 'social education' is used to refer to a deliberate teaching venture. Deliberate instruction may take place almost anywhere, in almost any type of situation, and with practically any kind of materials or activities. . . . In the United States of America social education means the induction of our youth into the traditions, the mores, the ethics and the ideals which characterize the so-called 'American way of life'.\(^\text{29}\)

Thus for Otto, social education is purely and simply the "Americanization" of the child through planned instruction as opposed to the broader view of social development which encompasses both planned and unplanned activities.

Michaelis narrows the concept to include merely "... all school activities designed to promote social learning and to promote social competence,"\(^\text{30}\) whereas Ragan and McAulay believe that social education refers "... to all the deliberate efforts of adults in our society to direct children's social development in desirable directions."\(^\text{31}\)

Jarolimek cautions, as does Preston,\(^\text{32}\) that social education and social studies education should not be thought of as synonymous.

\(^\text{29}\)Otto, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 34-35.
\(^\text{30}\)Michaelis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 3.
\(^\text{31}\)Ragan and McAulay, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 7.
\(^\text{32}\)Preston, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 22-23.
The social studies have been defined as '... those portions of the social sciences ... selected for instructional purposes.' Social education, on the other hand, is a more inclusive, broader concept embracing the entire interpersonal social life of the child. Social studies as an area of the curriculum is a regularly scheduled part of the school day; social education takes place whenever the child is in a social situation. This can occur during an arithmetic lesson, in the school lunchroom, on the playground, in and out of school. It is true that the social studies make an important contribution to the social education of children and have, indeed, a special responsibility to assist children to learn social living skills. But a distinction should be drawn between the broad term social education and the specific area of the elementary school curriculum referred to as the social studies. This is not to say that desirable social education will not take place if the child is left unguided. It suggests, rather, that the task is beyond the scope of the social studies program.

Miel and Brogan in their book about social learning in the elementary school, *More Than Social Studies*, concur largely with the above statement. They envision the task of social education as,

one of developing a planned and positive program of democratic socialization which uses all kinds of opportunities for fostering social learning in mutually reinforcing ways. The program must include an improved social studies offering, to be sure, but it must contain more than social studies.

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33 Jarolimek, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
Conceptualized in this manner, social education is viewed as an all encompassing concept which might be more appropriately termed socialization or induction into the social, economic, and political culture. The social studies area of the curriculum accepts primary responsibility for this process but not total as all areas of the curriculum contribute. The social studies, which draw upon the several social science disciplines as sources of data are concerned primarily with the development of responsible democratic citizenship and the development of the individual as a self-fulfilling person. The way in which a child becomes socialized into his particular culture seemingly would have a significant bearing on the type or kind of citizen he would become. Let us examine the concept of socialization in more detail.

Socialization

It is through the socialization of its young citizens as to the traditions, values, mores, attitudes, beliefs, and accepted norms that a society seeks to maintain itself. Each generation is not born with this social awareness--it must be learned through both formal and informal processes. Just as the newborn child learns the accepted ways of satisfying his physical, nutritional, and emotional needs, so too does he become socialized as to political, social, and economic norms of the culture and society which he is entering.
Several leading psychologists and sociologists have conducted a great deal of research and inquiry into the area of socialization. Among these Child defines socialization as

... the whole process by which an individual, born with behavioral potentialities of enormously wide range, is led to develop actual behavior which is confined within a much narrower range—the range of what is customary and acceptable for him according to the standards of his group.36

Ritchie and Koller define the concept quite succinctly and then proceed to a more detailed analysis. Broadly interpreted socialization is, "The process by which the human organism acquires human nature, develops a personality, and enters his society."37 More specifically, however, the authors attempt to delineate the component parts of the process.

Socialization is the process whereby the neonate is fitted progressively into various social systems within the society in which he lives. The particular systems into which a given individual is introduced through this process will, of course, depend on a number of considerations such as age, sex, social class, personal attributes, and special demands. ... Socialization is viewed principally as the period of childhood up to but not including adulthood. ... The socialization process is carried on in accordance with accepted theories of the nature of the human organism, the nature of human nature, as well as certain theories of learning. ... The process of socialization


necessarily requires the employment of skills, techniques, methods, and materials. Finally, all of these are combined or systematized into structures in which and through which the process of socialization is carried on.38

Frederick Elkin, who has studied and written a great deal concerning the process of socialization, especially childhood socialization, defines it simply as "... the process by which someone learns the ways of a given society or social group so that he can function within it. Socialization includes both the learning and internalizing of appropriate patterns, values, and feelings."39

Merton discusses the process of socialization in terms of the social structure within which it occurs.

It is the family, of course, which is a major transmission belt for the diffusion of cultural standards to the oncoming generation. But what has until lately been overlooked is that the family largely transmits that portion of the culture accessible to the social stratum and groups in which the parents find themselves. It is, therefore, a mechanism for disciplining the child in terms of the cultural goals and mores characteristic of this narrow range of groups. Nor is the socialization confined to direct training and disciplining. The process is, at least in part, inadvertent. Quite apart from direct admonitions, rewards and punishments, the child is exposed to social prototypes in the witnessed daily behavior and casual conversations of parents. Not infrequently, children detect

38Ibid., pp. 24-35.
and incorporate cultural uniformities even when these remain implicit and have not been reduced to rules.\(^{40}\)

In discussing the discipline of sociology, William Cole describes socialization in much the same manner that the writers above have. Cole believes that, "Socialization is the learning of a culture—the learning of roles and statuses and the norms and behaviors appropriate to the roles and statuses."\(^{41}\) He goes on to differentiate between childhood and adult socialization and to describe the disciplining effect that the socialization process has upon the individual. In addition, Cole elaborates concerning the various agents involved in the total process, especially the family and the school.

Ragan and McAulay note that the child gives as well as receives during the course of the socializing process. To these writers, socialization is ". . . the process by which children born into a given culture avail themselves of its opportunities and contribute their share to its improvement."\(^{42}\)

The common thread which permeates each of these definitions or conceptualizations is that of adaptation or

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\(^{40}\) Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957), p. 158.


\(^{42}\) Ragan and McAulay, op. cit., p. 42.
acculturation, conformity if you will, to a society or a culture. Different cultures and societies have different ways of approaching the task. However, the underlying purpose is the same, the maintenance and stability of the system. The process in the United States might be more properly termed "Americanization," the learning to adjust to group approved behavior patterns of the American culture. This particular conceptualization has been formulated by Whiting and Child:

Conformity to rules is then, with the exception of special cases, ensured primarily by the process of socialization—that is, by the development in each individual of habits which lead him to make responses which conform to rules instead of transgressing them.\(^\text{43}\)

Further, Hyman defines the process of socialization as the individual's "... learning of social patterns corresponding to his societal positions as mediated through various agencies of his society."\(^\text{44}\) Conceptualized in the latter manner, "Political socialization, then would be defined as the learning of politically relevant social patterns corresponding to societal positions as mediated through various agencies."\(^\text{45}\) These agencies might properly include


the family, education, peer groups, and the mass media.
Political socialization, then is but one of the many aspects of the total socializing process.

Political Socialization Defined

Perhaps before continuing further it would be best advised to attempt to delineate more specifically what is meant by the term "political socialization." Simply defined, political socialization refers to "... the way in which a society transmits political orientations—knowledge, attitudes or norms, and values—from generation to generation."  

Political orientations represent the content or substantive ideas which are learned through the process of political socialization.

Attempts to define political socialization have been approached typically in one of two ways--inquiry at the individual level or inquiry at the system level. The above definition refers to the latter level of inquiry in contrast to individual oriented definitions by Hyman 47 and Froman 48 also

47 Hyman, loc. cit.
48 Froman, loc. cit.
noted previously. Greenstein, Sigel, and Hess are also explicit in defining the process in terms of individual behavior.

Almond, on the other hand, views political socialization as an important function of the system as it seeks to maintain itself.

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49 Fred I. Greenstein, "Political Socialization," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Crowell-Collier Pub. Co., 1965), p. 551. Professor Greenstein defines political socialization as follows: Narrowly conceived, political socialization is the deliberate inculcation of political information, values, and practices by instructional agents who have been formally charged with this responsibility. A broader conception would encompass all political learning, formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned, at every stage of the life cycle, including not only explicitly political learning but also nominally nonpolitical learning that affects political behavior, such as the learning of politically relevant social attitudes and the acquisition of politically relevant personality characteristics.

50 Roberta Sigel, "Assumptions About the Learning of Political Values," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 361 (September, 1965), 2. Professor Sigel defines political socialization as the gradual learning of norms, attitudes, and behavior accepted and practiced by the ongoing political system. . . . The goal of political socialization is to so train or develop individuals that they become well-functioning members of the political society (a well-functioning citizen is one who accepts, internalizes, society's political norms and who will then transmit them to future generations).

51 Robert D. Hess, "The Socialization of Attitudes Toward Political Authority; Some Cross-National Comparisons," International Social Science Journal, 14 (1963), 542. Political socialization is the process by which the child learns about the political culture in which he lives.
Political socialization is the process of induction into the political culture. Its end product is a set of attitudes, cognitions, value standards, and feelings--toward the political system, its various roles, and role incumbents. It also includes knowledge of, values affecting, and feelings toward the inputs of demands and claims into the system, and its authoritative outputs.52

Easton and Hess view the process both from the individual and the system level although their primary emphasis is with the latter. Viewed from the individual level of inquiry political socialization is "The processes through which a young person acquires his basic political orientations from others in his environment. . . ."53 Further, the writers describe the process from the system level.

But regardless of the specific devices any system utilizes to perpetuate itself, no system is able to function, much less maintain itself for any length of time, without educating its young politically in the broadest sense of the meaning of these terms. Either intuitively or consciously it must undertake to transmit some of its political heritage to the maturing members of the society or to construct a new heritage for them so that a system that is undergoing serious transformations may anticipate future supports.54

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54 Ibid., pp. 231-232.
Marvick also defines the concept from both an individual and a system perspective.

Political socialization refers to one's induction into a political culture, and perhaps one's capacity to change it. . . . It is concerned with how a person 'comes to terms' with the roles and norms of the concentric political worlds—local, regional, and national—into which he passes as he grows up. Necessarily it focuses on formative experiences—in the family, school, and primary group contexts of childhood—that shape ideals and give insight into political aspects of life.55

Hess and Torney perceive the socialization process in a formalized educational process "... whereby a junior or new member of a group or institution is taught its values, attitudes, and other behavior."56 Conceptualized in this manner political socialization would then be the process whereby a junior or new member of a group or institution is taught its political values, attitudes, and behaviors. Further, the writers envision socialization to be a life-long process, although they believe much of the basic orientation apparently takes place early in one's life.

However, perhaps Patrick illustrates the concept of political socialization in terms most easily understood by the educator, especially the classroom teacher.

When American children obey the commands of a policeman directing traffic, pledge allegiance to the flag, select a class president by majority vote, or profess a preference for democracy, they are conforming to politically relevant cultural norms. They are performing particular cultural cues. This behavior results from political socialization, the gradual learning of sanctioned political conduct and beliefs.57

Each new member born into a society is much like the immigrant seeking an orientation to that society. Each generation passes on to the next the particular political orientations which are deemed necessary for the system to persist. If a society's political culture is transmitted effectively and largely intact from one generation to the next, political stability is usually maintained; if it is not, a breakdown in the system is likely to occur.

The political system, then, in order to persist, depends in large part on each new generation or incoming group conforming to it, being indoctrinated into it. Thus, it would seem that political socialization as traditionally conceptualized implies conformity. This view is further supported by Sigel who notes that political socialization is essentially a conservative process which facilitates the maintenance of the existing system. She indicates, however, that the conservative nature of political socialization does not or should not negate the possibility for change.

In none but the most static systems is the political value system transmitted completely intact from generation to generation. As generational and group needs change, values, too, do change. It must always be borne in mind that the political world of one generation differs from that of the next. The external and technological changes of modern society... bring with them gradual or sudden changes in political values which then get transmitted as part of the socialization process... Values thus respond to changes in the environment.58

This writer would posit that education for maximum individual and social development in a democracy is not compatible with the conceptualization of political socialization as simply conformity to or maintenance of the status quo. The self-fulfilling individual is one capable of making rational decisions based on the reflective inquiry of problems and issues confronting him, and this often necessitates the questioning of the existing structures which sometimes result in change. Yet, insofar as the political realm is concerned, educators, and social studies educators in particular, have seen fit to indoctrinate children with certain culturally accepted political orientations, attitudes, beliefs, and values.

Hess and Torney report, for example, that the elementary school teachers whom they sampled focused attention upon the importance of authority, conformity to school rules, and

58 Sigel, op. cit., p. 8.
obedience to laws to the almost complete exclusion of inquiry into the need for rules, laws, and authority.\textsuperscript{59} These emphases on the products or ends of political education to the rejection or omission of the processes or means for achieving them, seemingly are inconsistent with stated objectives of the American school.

For example, in 1961, the Educational Policies Commission pinpointed the development of the ability to think as the overriding purpose of education in America:

The purpose which runs through and strengthens all other educational purposes—the common thread of education—is the development of the ability to think. This is the central purpose to which the school must be oriented if it is to accomplish either its traditional tasks or those newly accentuated by recent changes in the world. To say that it is central is not to say that it is the sole purpose or in all circumstances the most important purpose, but that it must be a pervasive concern in the work of the school. Many agencies contribute to achieving educational objectives, but this particular objective will not be generally attained unless the school focuses on it. In this context, therefore, the development of every student's rational powers must be recognized as centrally important.\textsuperscript{60}

What is needed, then, insofar as political education in the schools is concerned, is an emphasis on the processes involved in political decision-making. This would facilitate

\textsuperscript{59}Hess and Torney, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 110-115.

the development of individuals oriented toward the "... acceptance and understanding of the need for active participation in a political system," as opposed to contemporary modes of political socialization which are more oriented toward the possible development of dogmatic, authoritarian, apathetic, cynical, alienated individuals according to Patrick. 62

The Problem

The twofold purpose of this study will be to (1) review the literature and research in the areas of political socialization, child growth and development, and the nature of reflective thought in order to extrapolate data for (2) the development of a rationale for political education in the elementary school as the process of decision-making based on the reflective inquiry of civic and political issues confronting the individual.

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Review of the Literature and Research

In reviewing the literature and research in the area of political socialization, particular attention will be given to those studies concerning the importance of early childhood learning in the political sphere. The data accumulated in this review will then be used to develop a rationale for political education as an active, decision-making process. This will necessitate finding out what is known about the process of political socialization, the nature of the content that is learned, who the learners are and when learning is most likely to be best achieved, who the principal agents of political socialization are, and possibly most important, the effects of political socialization, that is, the kinds of citizens the process produces. This review will indicate both what is known about political learning and what is yet to be discovered, giving the writer some data with which to formulate the decision-making rationale.

In addition, this writer will review the relevant literature from the areas of child growth and development, child psychology, educational psychology, and learning theory in order to attempt to answer the question of whether elementary-age children should be or can be introduced to problems and issues calling for reflective examination. The
work and theory of Piaget\textsuperscript{63} and Bruner\textsuperscript{64} will be reviewed especially as these two men have concentrated their efforts in large part on the development of thinking abilities in young children.

Finally, it will be necessary to define and clarify the nature or reflective thought, the basic process or mode of thinking on which the ensuing rationale will rest. The theories and studies of Dewey,\textsuperscript{65} Hullfish and Smith,\textsuperscript{66} Bayles,\textsuperscript{67} Hunt and Metcalf,\textsuperscript{68} Griffin,\textsuperscript{69} and Jewett\textsuperscript{70} will be considered.


\textsuperscript{65}John Dewey, \textit{How We Think} (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1933).


\textsuperscript{69}Alan F. Griffin, "A Philosophical Approach to the Subject Matter Preparation of Teachers of History," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1942.

Development of a Decision-Making Rationale

Hess and Torney have hypothesized that the school is one of, if not, the most influential political socializing institutions or agents. Yet, political socialization research seems to indicate that the schools approach the task of political education with one primary emphasis, conformity. The school seems to value the docile, accepting child while it spurns the curious, probing, inquiring thinker who poses questions concerning the socio-political scene.

It would seem to this writer that a primary objective of the modern elementary school social studies program, as related to the political realm, should be to enable children to cope with the ever-present change all about them in a reflective, analytic manner. Children should be taught and helped to understand the process of making decisions in order that they may become more active, effective, fully functioning individuals. The present system of inculcation or indoctrination though does not provide for this. Individuals, children as well as adults, cannot be expected to become personally committed to goals or causes which provide them with little or no opportunity for active inquiry.

Thus, the implications and recommendations drawn from the review of the literature will be used to formulate a

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71 Hess and Torney, op. cit., p. 114.
72 Patrick, op cit., p. 62.
rationale for political education as a decision-making process in the elementary school social studies program. It will enable the child to confront socio-political issues, examine them, and make judgments or decisions based on his reflective examination.

This rationale accepts conflict as a part of the political socialization process. To date the political socialization literature has paid very little attention to this variable. Values change during the process of transmission from one generation to another. All segments of a society do not share the values of the larger society. Thus, it would seem that the political system should teach its younger members "to accept conflict as a natural ingredient of the political process and to consider change as inevitable. In other words, the socialization process must be congenial to change and not just to continuity."73

Justification of the Study

**Improvement of Political Education**

The study of political socialization can contribute significantly to the improvement of the elementary school social studies program by enriching our knowledge of what American youth believe about politics, how they come to learn

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73 Sigel, op. cit., p. 9.
some things and not others, and the effects or consequences of their learning. This data will, then, point the way to needed research and theorizing and hopefully to the function of the modern elementary school social studies program in educating young citizens for an active, decision-making role in politics.

Research indicates that thus far formal programs in political education have had little or no impact upon the development of political attitudes, values, and beliefs. This is due mainly to inadequate course content, usually restricted to textbook prescriptions, and a low level quality of instruction. What is needed, it seems, is a classroom environment and instructional program in which the learner becomes actively engaged in the act of reflective inquiry into the political world in which he lives. It is hoped that this study will result in an instructional rationale necessary to begin an in-depth study of the elementary social studies curriculum and instructional program with respect to the area of political education.

Further, research seems to indicate that young children "... become aware of first the national government, then local government, then state government." Yet most current

74 Patrick, Political Socialization of American Youth: Implications for Secondary School Social Studies, p. 64.
75 Ibid., p. 65.
social studies programs have adopted the traditional "expanding environment" or "widening horizons" curriculum scheme which causes the child to begin study at the local level and work progressively through a series of books and grade levels toward study of the state, the nation, and finally the international scene. This writer would posit that this course of study is no longer a tenable one. The mass media alone have rendered the model obsolete.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, and the justification of the study. An extensive review of the research and related literature in the area of political socialization is found in Chapter II. A review of the pertinent research and literature concerning the psychological foundations of young children's thinking is found in Chapter III. Chapter IV consists of a theoretical discussion of the nature or reflective thought. Finally, the proposed rationale for political decision-making in the elementary social studies is outlined in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND LITERATURE IN POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION PERTINENT TO THIS STUDY

The concept of political socialization is a relatively new term in the political inquiry vocabulary. The status of systematic research in the area to date has been characterized by few studies, largely descriptive in nature. Many of the relevant data are to be found in related fields such as social anthropology, social psychology, and sociology. Most studies are of recent origin, few of any import being conducted prior to 1955. Greenstein notes that one plausible reason for the recent attention to the area of political socialization is the establishment of political science as an academic discipline freeing itself from its origins in philosophy, law, and history.¹

As a result of the recent interest in this area, much of the research is highly tentative and concerns primarily the development of political orientations and forces affecting

that development. Dennis has noted several major conceptual concerns which currently guide the large portion of the existing research.

1. The content of value orientations
2. The nature of the political learning process
3. The agencies or influential sources in the acquisition of these orientations and their supporting or conflicting roles in the politicization process
4. The acquisition of political versus non-political skills
5. The impact of personality characteristics on the development of political and social orientations
6. The apparent generational variations and permanence of early formed values
7. The differences between and among cultures, and
8. The implications of the political socialization process for the political system.

Ideally, each of these concerns deserves an elaborate, in-depth summary of the related research. However, insofar as the concept of political socialization is in fact relatively new and not well developed, research and theory concerning the subject are rather limited. Thus, in reviewing the research and literature pertinent to this study, an attempt has been made to select only those studies which focus directly upon the problem, the development of a decision-making rationale for political education in the elementary school social studies program.

The general format of the chapter observes the following topical sequence:

1. The study of political socialization in historical perspective
2. Proposed conceptual schemes for studying political socialization
3. What the research says
   a. The process of political socialization
   b. The products of political socialization
   c. The agents of political socialization and the setting or circumstances under which it occurs
   d. Other mediating factors.
Political Socialization in Historical Perspective

Although the intensive study of the political socialization of children and youth is recent, interest in the area can be traced back to the classical social and political theorists. Plato and Aristotle exhibited concern with the role of political education in the training of citizens. Both saw education as a vital instrument of politics.

The premier English philosophers of sixteenth and seventeenth century England, John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, made reference in several of their writings as to the significance of the authority structure and the significance of power within the family for political behavior in a civil society.

Political leaders are often likely to promote programs of political education in an attempt to ensure the preservation of the stability of a given political system. In the early nineteenth century the Emperor Napoleon was said to have commented that, "as long as children are not taught whether

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they ought to be Republican or Monarchist, Catholic or irreligious, the State will not form a Nation." And even more recently, official Soviet publications urge extensive formal political education in order to preserve the State.

Today we should pay special attention to rearing the rising generation in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and devotion to the cause of communism. . . . The success of upbringing is decided precisely in the early years, when the character of a person, his attitude toward people and to life, is being formed.7

Children in the United States are exposed to patriotic songs and rituals at a very early age through both formal civic instruction and more informal means, the latter being the case more often than not.

Much of American civic education takes place informally. From an early age, children learn about government and politics and begin to prepare for their adult political roles, through processes which neither they nor those who instruct them are especially conscious of, but which nevertheless provide the basis of democratic participation. Political awareness and involvement gradually grow as children are exposed to political events and actors, some of which they experience directly, but more of which they become familiar with through the conversations of adults and peers, and through the mass media.8

8 Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 5.
Twentieth century America has witnessed renewed interest in the study of political education of the part of social scientists. During the late 1920's and early 1930's, the American Historical Association sponsored a number of studies which were designed to examine the formal aspects of civic training. Merriam⁹ and Pierce¹⁰ published representative volumes in this series. In addition, during the same period, Merriam edited a nine-volume collection concerning the training and development of citizens. This comprehensive study of political learning viewed the school as "the dominant figure in the new process of civic education. . . ."¹¹ The press also figured in this viewpoint as being "an immensely important agency in the presentation, interpretation, shading and coloring of political events. . . ."¹² Interestingly enough, however, Merriam failed to discuss the role of the family as a political socializing agent while more recent research indicates that it is one of, if not, the foremost agencies


¹²Ibid., p. 350.
of politicization, the shortened term used for political socialization.

The need for research in the area of the development of the child's political orientations was recognized by Merriam as early as 1925. He indicated at that time that,

The examination of the size and development of the political ideation and the political behavior of the child has in store for us much of value in the scientific understanding of the adult ideal and conduct.13

However, it was not until the late 1950's and the decade of the 1960's that a number of scholars, working largely independent of one another, began to conduct direct research relative to the political development and behavior of children and adolescents.

In 1959 Hyman analyzed the results of numerous earlier studies of childhood and adolescent development for their political implications.14 This valuable contribution paved the way for a number of other investigators launching political socialization research during the late 1950's and early 1960's.

The decade of the sixties has seen increased interest in political socialization by political scientists and

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educators alike. Studies by Greenstein in New Haven and Hess and Easton in Chicago were reported almost concurrently in 1960. These were two of the most significant early studies concerning the development of political orientations among children. In addition, research by Almond and Verba, Froman, Hess and Torney, Jahoda, Jaros and others, Langton and Jennings, Litt, Easton and Dennis, and Sigel to note but a few has contributed significantly to the growing body of knowledge about political development.


Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children.


Conceptual Schemes

The efforts to date at conceptualizing political socialization have centered primarily around the "individual level" or the "system level" of political analysis. The former concentrates on individual political beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors as dependent variables. The emphasis at the individual level is upon the process through which one acquires his peculiar political orientations. Definitions by those scholars working from this point of view use the verb to learn to denote the process of political socialization or politicization.

Other scholars approach the process as a political system function, the emphasis here being placed on the maintenance and stability of the system. The verb usage or intent in this point of view is to induct into the political system.


This prescribes a conceptualization in which the individual within the system is acted upon by the system, i.e., the education for or transmission of the political heritage or culture of a system to its incoming members. This then is primarily a product oriented approach, the end, the politically indoctrinated individual, being more important than the means or process through which he attained this political stability.

**Individual Level Conceptualizations**

Hyman, in his analysis of psychological and sociological studies for their political implications, focuses his attention almost exclusively at the individual level of political analysis. He contends that the individual begins to learn his political behavior early and well and that the family is the primary socializing agent in the process. Other agents, such as the school, peer groups, and the mass media serve primarily as supportive, reinforcing agents or conversely, as forces which reduce the initial impact of the family position.

After reviewing numerous studies, Hyman summarizes his conceptualization in the following manner:

> While socialization is mainly a product of experiences within the formative years, these studies show that the individual is not then fixed in politics for life. He may show further

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27 Hyman, *Political Socialization: A Study in the Psychology of Political Behavior*. 
changes with cumulative experience in the larger society or in a particular segment of that society. And as he ages his general viewpoint may change with consequences for his politics.\textsuperscript{28}

Like Hyman, Greenstein\textsuperscript{29} conceptualizes political socialization from the individual level as a learning process. His conception of the process leans heavily on Lasswell's formulation of the communication process: (a) Who (b) learns what (c) from whom (d) under what circumstances (e) with what effects?\textsuperscript{30}

Regarding "who learns," Greenstein notes that this varies "according to the social and psychological characteristics of the individuals socialized. These characteristics affect both the educational influences an individual will receive and his receptivity to them."\textsuperscript{31} He notes that sex, social class, and personality are three of the major social-psychological characteristics influencing political learning. His assertions concerning sex and social class will be discussed in greater depth later in this essay. For the present then we shall concentrate on the import Greenstein lends to variable of personality as related to political socialization.

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\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., p. 151.
\textsuperscript{29}Greenstein, \textit{Children and Politics}.
\textsuperscript{31}Greenstein, \textit{Children and Politics}, p. 12.
In his discussion of the role of personality in the political socialization process, Greenstein focuses on the "nonpolitical personal development that affects political behavior." He is especially interested in the political socialization process as related to the theories of authoritarian and democratic character. He summarizes his beliefs as follows:

Personality formation may be along ego-defensive or more cognitive lines; the connections between personality and political belief need to be examined rather than assumed; both personality and beliefs must be examined in situations in order to understand behavior; the ways in which individual predispositions and actions aggregate and affect the political and social system need to be explained. And, to turn the circle, it is the political and social systems which provide the socializing environment for 'political' and 'politically relevant' personal development and the situations within which political action takes place. In a newfangled way, this is to suggest no more than was evident to Plato: that politics needs to be understood (and undertaken) in the light of human nature and human development.

These social-psychological characteristics—sex, social class, and personality—affect the acquisition of content of political education, the "what is learned." Greenstein


\[33\text{Ibid., p. 95.}\]
distinguishes here between learnings which are "specifically political" and those which are "politically related" aspects of personality development. He, in turn, categorizes the former as,

1. learning related to the citizen role
2. learning related to the subject role
3. learning related to the recruitment of and performance of specialized roles.\(^3^4\)

The political knowledge acquired, as well as the values, attitudes, and beliefs developed come about through the teachings and influence of various personalities and institutional agencies. Included among the agents of politicization, i.e., "from whom," are the family, the educational system, the peer group, and the mass media of communication. These, of course, correspond to those identified earlier by Hyman. The "circumstances" of politicization refer to such variables as the age at which learning takes place and the sequential experiences involved in the learning process. Greenstein, like Hyman, stresses the importance of early political learning during the formative stage of development and before critical capacities are refined.

Regarding the "effects" of political socialization, Greenstein notes that potentially, possibilities exist both for the maintenance of the existing system or the initiation of change.

Political learning has effects on the later political behavior of the individual exposed to socializing influences and, by extension, upon the political system. Most commonly, socialization seems to have conservative consequences for existing political arrangements. We have seen, for example, that class and sex differences in political participation tend to be transmitted from generation to generation. The conservative effects of socialization are not necessarily in the direction of encouraging political stability: political socialization in both stable and unstable societies is likely to maintain existing patterns.

Nevertheless, socialization is a potential source of change. It is always possible that the link will be broken in the attempt to transmit one generation's predispositions to the next. And since the training of the young is in part future-oriented, one generation may deliberately inculcate the next with values that differ from its own (Inkeles, 1955). More generally, wherever different generations are exposed to different experiences, the seeds of change are present.35

Froman in his conceptualization also depends upon Hyman to a considerable extent. He views the study of political socialization as "directly concerned with the 'what' and 'how' of the politically relevant values, beliefs, and attitudes."36

Froman's scheme introduces the personality of the individual as an intervening variable in the process of politicization. Other variables to be considered are

36Froman, op. cit., p. 343.
(1) the environment, which includes the four primary agents of socialization as conceived by Hyman (the family, the educational system, peer groups, and the mass media), and (2) politically relevant behavior (being active in a party, giving time to a campaign, solicitation of political funds, etc.). Further, he draws relationships between each of the variables. He notes that (1) the environment affects the development of personality which, in turn, (2) affects behavior. Thus, personality becomes the intervening variable mediating between the environment and political behavior.

Froman goes on to explain what is needed to implement his asserted beliefs.

What is involved, then, in the study of political socialization is not one but two problem areas. . . . What is needed are laws (empirical generalizations) which relate the environment to personality, and a separate set of laws which deal with the influence that personality has on behavior.37

Thus, for Froman, the personality of the socializing agent influences the political personality of the learner and, in turn, his political behavior. The intervening variable of personality, then, has a significant bearing it seems on "what" and "how" political behavior is learned.

Sigel,38 who also conceptualizes the political socialization process as an individual level behavior, notes

37 Ibid., p. 351.
that socialization is a learning process which begins very early in the child's life and proceeds in large part "incidental to other experiences." The learning of political norms does not always take place as a result of deliberate, formal instruction according to Sigel.

... much of this norm-internalization goes on casually and imperceptibly—most of the time in fact without our ever being aware that it is going on. It proceeds so smoothly precisely because we are unaware of it. We take the norms for granted, and it does not occur to us to question them.

Sigel further subdivides her concept of incidental learning to correspond with Greenstein's "specifically political" and "politically related" learnings. The former might include an observation of a public official accepting a bribe while the latter "involves social values, notions of morality, and the like, which are not per se political but which may well influence how political stimuli are perceived and internalized."

Sigel contends that the nature of socializing process is as important as the content which is learned, the product.

Thus the how as well as the what of the socialization process contributes to political socialization in that it may or may not teach the child the skills which will facilitate adult political effectiveness.

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39 Ibid., p. 4.
40 Ibid., p. 3.
41 Ibid., p. 5.
42 Ibid., p. 6.
Sigel, like Froman, believes that the variable of personality enters into the socialization experience and contributes to the articulation of political attitudes and behaviors.

In short, people with different personality structures simply perceive the political world differently; their perceptions (opinions) are to some extent a reflection or extension of their personality. Thus, although political values are learned by the child at a very early age and tend to be in harmony with his important reference groups (notably the family), personality accounts for some of the variation in political beliefs.43

Although the process of political socialization is viewed by Sigel as having essentially a conserving, conforming effect, she notes that the possibilities for change are very real. Regarding change, she indicates further that conflict and tension occur usually as natural parts of the political process and are likely to arise when differences in value perceptions between generations or groups become significant. Thus, Sigel contends that "the socialization process contributes not only to a society's political stability but also to change and to the strain or ease with which change takes place."44

Each of the preceding conceptualizations views political socialization as a process of learning by the

43 Ibid., p. 7.
44 Ibid., p. 9.
individual. Several factors or variables are seen as crucial in the process, for example, the social-psychological make-up of the learner, the agencies influencing his learning, the setting in which learning occurs, and the personality make-up of both the learner and the influencing agent to note but several. However, other conceptual schemes have concentrated on political socialization as a phenomenon within the context of the political system.

System Level Conceptualizations

Easton and Hess⁴⁵, ⁴⁶ conceptualize political socialization in terms of consensus formation with respect to three levels of the political system: the government, the regime, and the community. The authors are explicit in defining these three major levels.

Government refers to the occupants of those roles through which the day-to-day formulation and administration of binding decisions for a society are undertaken. Regime is used to identify the slower changing formal and informal structures through which these decisions are taken and administered, together with the rules of the game or codes of behavior that legitimate the actions of political authorities and specify what is expected of citizens or subjects. The political community represents the members of a society looked upon

as a group of persons who seek to solve their problems in common through shared political structures.\footnote{Easton and Hess, "The Child's Political World," p. 233.}

The Easton and Hess framework is based, in large part, upon the work of David Easton in the area of political analysis.\footnote{David Easton, "An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems," World Politics, 9 (1956-1957), 383-400.} \footnote{David Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965).} \footnote{David Easton, A Systems Analysis of Political Life (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965).} \footnote{David Easton, "Political Science," in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Crowell-Collier Publishing Company, 1965), p. 285.} Easton conceives the political system as "that behavior or set of interactions through which authoritative allocations (or binding decisions) are made and implemented for a society."\footnote{David Easton, "An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems."} He differentiates between "inputs" (demands and supports) and "outputs" (authoritative decisions or policies) of the system. Political socialization is but one of the means through which the political system gains and maintains support. This support for the political system is effected through integration of the members of the system into a cohesive political unit, i.e., the development of consensus concerning various political phenomena.
Within this context, Easton and Hess are concerned with the development of political orientations toward the political system. They describe what is meant by political orientations as follows:

There are of course many factors that contribute to the maintenance of a political system. Here we wish to deal with one only, namely, the one implied in the hypothesis that no system can attain or remain in a condition of integration unless it succeeds in developing among its members a body of shared knowledge about political matters as well as a set of shared political values and attitudes. As they move toward maturity, members of a system must develop common expectations or consensus with regard to the way political phenomena are to be perceived and interpreted, the standards to be used in making political evaluations, and the way individuals ought to feel toward political institutions and personalities, including the kind and extent of participation to be exhibited in political activities. These three kinds of expectations—that is, knowledge, values, and attitudes—we shall call the basic political orientations. When they are shared by some empirically unspecified minimum of the members of a system, we shall say that consensus exists. 52

Thus, for Easton and Hess political socialization is the development of basic political orientations toward the government, regime, and political community levels of the political system. The authors operate on the assumption that certain amounts of consensus are required at each of the three levels to ensure such phenomena as system maintenance and stability. But unless there is a relatively high degree of

52 Easton and Hess, "Youth and the Political System," pp. 227-228.
consensus at the political community level and a significant amount at the regime level, the system will experience instability. The system, in effect, survives or crumbles on conformity.

Easton and Hess, as do Hyman, Greenstein, and Sigel, stress that political socialization which results in the development of these political orientations begins at an early age, possibly even before the elementary school years. They further contend, as do Hyman and others, that the family, the school, the peer group, and the mass media all play a very influential role in the development of these orientations.

Almond approaches political socialization in much the same manner as do Easton and Hess—the development of a set of political orientations toward the political system. He further subdivides the process into "manifest" and "latent" political socialization, which broadly conceived closely approximates Greenstein's "specifically political" and "politically related" learnings. He regards political socialization as an input function which perpetuates the political culture of a society.

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... all political systems tend to perpetuate their cultures and structures through time, and they do this mainly by means of the socializing influences of the primary and secondary structures through which the young of the society pass in the process of maturation.55

Almond has done an about face during the past decade concerning the age at which political learning experiences are likely to be most influential. In a 1960 article he notes that, "More of an impact occurs here in the early stages than at any other point in the process."56 Yet in a 1963 essay in collaboration with Verba, Almond suggests the following:

Early socialization experiences significantly affect an individual's basic personality predispositions and may therefore affect his political behavior, but numerous other factors intervene between these earliest experiences and later political behavior that greatly inhibit the impact of the former on the latter.57

Almond and Verba, like Easton and Hess, develop a framework for the classification of political orientations which is based on their concept of the political system and its functions. They identify four objects of political orientation beginning with the political system as the general object, followed by input objects, output objects, and the

55 Almond, op. cit., p. 27.
56 Ibid., p. 28.
57 Almond and Verba, op. cit., p. 324.
self as object. The political system is then broken down further into three component classes:

(1) specific roles or structures, such as legislative bodies, executives, or bureaucracies; (2) incumbents of roles, such as particular monarchs, legislators and administrators, and (3) particular public policies, decisions, or enforcements of decisions.58

Almond and Verba comment further regarding these three component parts of the political system.

These structures, incumbents, and decisions may in turn be classified broadly by whether they are involved either in the political or 'input' process or the administrative or 'output' process. By political or input process we refer to the flow of demands from the society into the polity and the conversion of these demands into authoritative policies. . . . By the administrative or output process we refer to that process by which authoritative policies are applied or enforced.59

With respect to the objects outlined above, Almond and Verba postulate three kinds of political orientations, namely, cognitive, affective, and evaluative. These correspond very closely with the knowledge, attitudes, and values orientation developed by Easton and Hess.60

In contrast to other writers, Almond and Verba emphasize that the sources of political socialization are numerous and include many varied experiences throughout the

59 Ibid.
60 Easton and Hess, "Youth and the Political System," pp. 227-228.
life-span of the individual. Whereas most of the other writers limit the principal political socializing agencies to the family, the school, the peer group, and the mass media, Almond and Verba extend their scope to include the church, community, work group, voluntary associations, and even the political institutions themselves, such as political parties. However, they stress the role of the family and the school as being centrally significant.

Summary

The conceptual schemes described above are in many respects similar in their approaches to the topic of political socialization yet significantly different in their particular emphasis. All are in some way concerned with the acquisition of political orientations and patterns of behavior. However, several would approach this subject from the individual or process-oriented level while others would be more likely to approach the topic from the product-oriented system level. These two points of view are ultimately related, of course, with the variations stemming from differences in the kinds of political questions posed.

Each of the above conceptualizations, regardless of specific emphases, develops a framework upon three mediating variables in explaining the complex process of political socialization. These variables follow.
1. The processes of political socialization—
   the manner in which it takes place, the
   "how"

2. The products or content of political
   socialization— the "what"

3. The socializing agencies, the "from whom"
   and the setting or "circumstances" under
   which the process takes place

Each of these variables will now be discussed in some
depth in terms of the relevant research.

What the Research Says

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a
review and analysis of the research in the area of political
socialization as related to each of the three major variables
identified in the preceding section. In the course of this
review an attempt will be made to determine what is known
about political socialization and what further research is
needed to provide the data necessary to fill the gaps in
theory and knowledge concerning the process. Further, this
will enable this writer to gain a better perspective of the
political socialization process which in turn will serve as
the basis for his rationale for decision-making.
The Process of Political Socialization

As noted previously, political socialization is basically a series of social and psychological processes. It occurs as the individual relates to other persons in his social and political environment. Orientations toward the political system develop and change through time, thus, posing questions concerning the age at which learning is most likely to take place and be most significant in terms of impact on later political behavior. Also, the question is raised as to whether the process of politicization is a continuous, lifelong process or rather a process that has one or more periods of rapid learning followed by a plateau.

Age. The age at which political socialization takes place has been a topic of considerable debate. Research in the area of political socialization during the past decade has indicated the importance of early childhood learning in the formation of political attitudes and beliefs.

... it is apparent that the elementary school years rather than the high school years present the crucial time for training in citizenship attitudes and the wider range of behavior we have called political socialization.61

The above conclusion is in accordance with Bloom's finding that learning tends to be most rapid in the early, formative years. Bloom further concluded that due to environmental factors the lack of learning in one time period may be difficult, if not impossible, to make up later; whereas, that which is learned in the early stages is not easily lost. Seemingly, this has implications relative to the formation of the political orientations of the child and later in his role as an adult citizen. For example, Easton and Hess have concluded that many of the basic political attitudes and values have become firmly entrenched in the child's thinking before he has completed elementary school. They further contend that the truly formative years in one's political maturation would seem to be the years between the ages of three and thirteen. Their research shows that it is during this period that the most rapid growth and development in political orientations takes place.

Greenstein adds support to this point of view. He contends that the pre-school and early elementary school years are "a time of great plasticity and receptivity:

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nothing in later life can compare with this period for the
sheer volume of learning that takes place. The most commonly
accepted assumptions of a culture . . . are typically acquired
during this period." 64

Greenstein further contends that early learning
greatly influences later learning by conditioning attitudes
toward politics throughout the adult life.

. . . the political orientations which are
most important in the behavior of adults
arise earliest in the childhood learning
sequence; this is so partly because these
are the orientations adults are most likely
to display before children; but the sequence
of learning is also affected by what children
are able to absorb at various ages. 65

These studies are important in that they indicate that
significant aspects of political development, such as orienta-
tions toward political authority, political parties, the
nation, and the political community, take place both before
and during the elementary school years.

Jennings and Niemi 66 accept in part the importance of
early childhood political learning but reject the implication
by others, notably Greenstein 67 and Easton and Hess, 68 that

64 Greenstein, *Children and Politics*, p. 79.
65 Ibid., p. 78.
66 M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi, "Patterns of
Political Learning," *Harvard Educational Review*, 38 (Summer,
1968), 443-467.
67 Greenstein, loc. cit.
68 Easton and Hess, loc. cit.
the development of political orientations begins early in life, develops quite rapidly and achieves stable adult levels by the end of the elementary school years, with only minor changes occurring during the adolescent and adult years. On the contrary, their analysis of the aggregate studies of political socialization indicates that the hypothesized pattern of others is not a wholly accurate picture of the development of a number of political orientations.

In the first place, some changes do occur in the high-school years. . . . We observed sizable alterations in political interest and activities, in the conceptualization of political parties and attachment to them, in the differential saliency of political systems, in the relative emphasis on various citizenship norms, and in overall political cynicism and objects of political trust. . . . Most but not all of the modifications and reorientations appear to occur in the first decade or so of adult life.69

The conceptual schemes described in the previous section appear to indicate that the early acquisition of basic political orientations has significant implications for certain characteristics of the political system, such as stability, cultural transmission, and even the potential for change. Apparently large scale changes in political orientations will take place only over an extended period of time and primarily because of basic changes in the

69Jennings and Niemi, op. cit., p. 466.
primary socializing agencies, especially the family and the formative levels of education.

The major difficulty facing one as he attempts to draw meaning from these several studies is that to date there have been no comprehensive studies—K-12, for example—which would allow one to posit well-founded conclusions regarding the age variable in the political socialization process.

**Continuity or Discontinuity.** A second major aspect of the process of political socialization concerns the continuity or discontinuity of the process. If childhood socialization experiences are designed to prepare the child for specific adult roles and all learning is directed toward that goal, then continuity prevails. For example, if the home, the school, the peer groups, and so forth all teach the same basic ideas and in effect reinforce and support each other, then the continuity of the politicization process is harmonious. If, however, situations arise where certain socializing experiences or agents are inconsistent with other socializing experiences or agents, then discontinuity occurs in the developmental process and disharmony occurs.

The pattern of political socialization in American society is characterized in large part as one relatively free of major discontinuities. The research data reported by
Hyman, \textsuperscript{70} by Greenstein, \textsuperscript{71} and by Easton and Hess, \textsuperscript{72} as well as others, indicate the following pattern:

\begin{quote}
\ldots gradual and steady increase in political knowledge, interest, and involvement that begins in the preschool family, continues in the schools with peer-group reinforcement during childhood and adolescence, and is further bolstered by a series of non-political and political role and group involvement in later life. The basic political orientations acquired in the family and in other childhood socializing experiences are more often than not reinforced rather than challenged by later socializing influences. The individual passes through a series of socializing experiences that increasingly expand his political horizons. \textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote}

The absence of research regarding the continuity or discontinuity of the politicization process makes it extremely difficult for one to draw many well-founded conclusions or perceive accurate implications for further study. The major studies to date have been of a developmental or cross-sectional nature which in effect is the examination of different groups of children at successive age levels for evidence of developmental change. This assumes, of course, that variations from year to year will be of a systematic nature. What is needed, is a longitudinal study tracing the development of political orientations of the same group of individuals throughout a lifetime. However, the possibilities for this type of study

\textsuperscript{70}Hyman, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 18-20.
\textsuperscript{71}Greenstein, \textit{Children and Politics}, pp. 78-79.
\textsuperscript{73}Dawson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 39-40.
appear remote at this time as studies which produce more immediate feedback are currently in greater demand.

**Direct or Indirect Learning.** As noted previously in the discussion of the several conceptual schemes, much of the political learning which takes place in the politicization process, occurs in a very indirect, incidental manner. This is a basic factor in any socialization process. The child learns through the imitation of and identification with parents, teachers, and other authority figures. He learns as he watches public officials—including the President, the mayor, the policeman—and others, perform their duties. He learns from conversations carried on by his parents, relatives, and other adults. The child trusts the judgments and opinions of older persons and as a general rule has no personal information to judge otherwise.

In addition, research to date has indicated that attempts at deliberate or direct instruction have met with little success. Direct attempts at civic education in the schools have led to an undue emphasis upon conformity where the primary emphasis is upon obedience of rules without knowing why.\(^7^4\) Also, much of the substantive content directed at children is dysfunctional in the world of political reality. Teachers and textbooks depict an idealized political system

\(^7^4\)Patrick, Political Socialization of American Youth: Implications for Secondary School Social Studies, p. 64.
that ignores the realities of political life and behavior. There is apparently a significant lack of reality between what is taught in the formalized curriculum and what the child perceives as he faces the political world.

It would appear that educators need to reconsider the nature of the course content and instructional procedures employed as related to political education. More emphasis needs to be placed upon actively engaging the learner in reflective inquiry which would enable him to better understand and cope with the political issues and events in his environment.

Now let us turn to a review of the research concerning the products of the political socialization process.

The Products of Political Socialization

The second major variable in the political socialization process concerns the acquisition of political orientations directed toward the political system, the products of the socializing process if you will. As previously noted, Easton and Hess assume the development of orientations toward three levels of the political system: the political community (the political system or nation as a whole), the regime (political institutions, roles, and processes), and the government (partisan and specific policy positions).\(^75\) Their research findings indicate this to be the typical pattern of development.

If so, it seemingly would have significant implications for the development of political orientations. Given the belief that what is learned early in life is difficult to displace later, the fact that orientations toward the political community and toward the regime are acquired early and precede the development of orientations toward the government level lends clarity to the long standing stability of the American political system. Conversely, Levine\textsuperscript{76} suggests that this same pattern might be responsible, at least in part, for the lack of stability of the political systems in new and developing nations. The pattern of development in these situations is reversed, thus, not allowing a wide base of support to evolve.

\textbf{The Development of Orientations.} The data collected by Easton and Hess\textsuperscript{77} and Greenstein\textsuperscript{78} in their descriptive studies suggest that attitudes or affective orientations toward political objects are acquired before knowledge or cognitive orientations toward these same objects. For example, their research indicates that the stability of the American political system has traditionally rested upon or been supported by favorable attitudes toward political leaders,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77}Easton and Hess, "Youth and the Political System," pp. 229-230.
\item \textsuperscript{78}Greenstein, "The Benevolent Leader: Children's Image of Political Authority," pp. 934-945.
\end{itemize}
political authority, government, law, and the system in
general. These objects of the political system are perceived
as supportive and benevolent by the child long before their
roles and functions are understood. 79

Hess and Torney concur regarding this notion of the
child's positive attachment to his political heritage.

The child's relationship to the country is
established early and depends heavily on
national symbols such as the flag and the
Statue of Liberty. The child's attachment
to the governmental system is achieved
through attachment to personal figures, par-
ticularly the President. This feeling of
positive regard is later transferred to insti-
tutions of the system as these objects become
more clearly defined. Changes in the child's
conceptualization of the government parallel the
perception of his own relationship to it. 80

Easton and Dennis lend further support to this notion
that the child's initial attachment is through emotional rather
than rational processes and note that this has future implications.

Two things stand out in our data. First, the
child begins with a view of government as
composed of palpable, visible persons—such
as the President or a past President,
Washington. Second, as he makes his initial
contact with government, it becomes a symbol
of orientation to political life that is
charged with positive feelings. . . . From
this we would draw the hypothesis that the
personalizing of the initial orientation to
political authority has important implica-
tions for the input of support to a political
system as the child continues through his
early years into adolescence. As he fills in

79 Ibid., pp. 934-945, and Easton and Dennis, "The Child's
80 Hess and Torney, op. cit., p. 91.
his picture of government, adding, to leading figures, such institutions as Congress and such regime rules as voting, we would suggest that the affect originally stimulated by his personalized view of government subtly spills over to embrace other aspects of government and the regime itself.81

The work of Gustav Jahoda 82, 83 also supports these findings. Jahoda studied the development of Scottish children's ideas about country, patriotism, nationality, and foreign countries. Using Piaget and Weil's 84 procedures to establish developmental concepts of country and nationality, Jahoda analyzed the emergence of these concepts and developed tentative developmental norms for children of contrasting socio-economic backgrounds. His results correlate closely with those of Greenstein and Easton and Hess regarding the pattern of development for orientations to the political system.

Orientation Toward Authority. The child's orientation toward political authority, authority in general for that matter,

has also received considerable attention in the political socialization literature. The child's political learning and his attitudes toward authority begin to develop during the pre-school years in the family environment. The child sees his parents in particular and adults in general as significant controlling figures in his life. The child then begins to transfer this image of ideal parental authority to far removed and relatively unknown political figures. \(^{85}\) He begins to respect authority.

Hess and Torney note that one of the earliest orientations to develop regarding authority is the orientation toward law.

Induction into a pattern of compliance with authority and law occurs through visible authority figures—the President and the local policeman. The young child believes that punishment is an evitable consequence of wrongdoing, but this view declines with age in favor of a more realistic opinion. In general, children have a positive image of the policeman and see him as helpful; however, they also see him as a somewhat more fear-inspiring figure than parental authority. \(^{86}\)

Greenstein concurs with the above findings and summarizes his work concerning the orientation toward political authority.

\[ \ldots \text{Children} \] are at least as likely as adults to perceive high political roles as being important; they seem to be more

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\(^{85}\) Hess and Easton, "The Role of the Elementary School in Political Socialization," pp. 262-263.

\(^{86}\) Hess and Torney, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 91-92.
sympathetic to individual political leaders (and, in general, to politics) than are adults; in at least some cases their actual images of political leaders are qualitatively different from the images one would expect adults to hold, especially in the emphasis on benignancy; and most important, the widespread adult political cynicism and distrust does not seem to have developed by eighth grade (age 13). 87

Levine indicates that imitation of adult roles plays a significant part in the acquisition of childhood orientations toward political authority. 88 Sigel lends further support to this view noting that the young child trusts his parents' judgment and in essence has no personal evidence to evaluate the wisdom of parental opinions otherwise. 89

Very much in contrast to the conclusions drawn in the statements above, Jaros, Hirsch, and Fleron, in a study of the children of a region of Appalachia, found that their subjects were,

... much less favorably inclined toward political objects than ... their counterparts in other portions of the nation. Moreover, the image which these children have does not appear to develop with age in the fashion observed for others; there is no indication that a process conducive to the development of political support is operative in Appalachia. Here, children's view appear to be relatively static. 90

88Levine, op. cit., p. 299.
89Sigel, op. cit., p. 5.
The researchers concluded from this that positive characterization of children's views toward politics so often emphasized by other scholars may be a culturally bound phenomenon. In addition, in testing the thesis which posits the family as the prototype of the authority structure, they found that,

There is no support at all for the notion that affect toward the father is extended to remote, political authority. Relationships between specific aspects of children's father images and parallel components of Presidential images are not significant.91

These findings would suggest, it seems, that much more empirical research is needed regarding the development of the orientation toward political authority. Except for the study cited immediately above, few, if any, investigations have focused upon the political socialization of children in rural, racial, or ethnic subcultures of the United States. The content of socialization may very well differ and differ significantly from culture to culture and even from subculture to subculture.

Orientation Toward Political Party. Another important childhood political orientation is directed toward the identification with a political party. The studies by Greenstein,92

91Ibid., p. 575.
92Greenstein, Children and Politics, pp. 71-75.
Hess and Easton, Hess and Torney, and Hyman indicate that this particular orientation develops quite early in life. Campbell et al. suggest that, in addition to being a stable, basic political orientation which is acquired early, political party identification also serves as a key factor in the formation of other types of political orientations.

Apparently party has a profound influence across the full range of political objects to which the individual voter responds. The strength of relationships between party identification and the dimensions of partisan attitude suggests that response to each element of national politics are deeply affected by the individual's enduring party attachment.

Patrick indicates that American children are for the most part born into a political party preference that lasts through adulthood. He notes further that strong party identification is more likely to develop when both parents consistently indicate a preference for the same party. In contrast, children from homes where parents either have no

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94 Hess and Torney, op. cit., pp. 197-211.
95 Hyman, op. cit., pp. 17-29.
party preference or who do not reveal it tend not to acquire a political party identification. 97

In their massive study of children's political development, Hess and Torney found that, although children's party preference usually matches their family's, children believe that, "firm commitment to a party should be deferred until adulthood. The proportion of children who report that they would vote independently of party affiliation is large and increases with age." 98 Hess and Torney found further that although children begin engaging in political activities, such as wearing campaign buttons, quite early in life, their understanding of the specific role of political parties in elections is vague and develops fairly late. For example, they note that young children have a firm conviction that all conflict which arose during the heat of a campaign should be forgotten following the election. They expect the loser to be gracious, forgiving, and supportive of the winning candidate. 99

It would seem that we would do a greater service for children by helping them to think reflectively about political matters, such as party affiliation, than by forcing upon them

98 Hess and Torney, op. cit., pp. 91-92.
99 Ibid., p. 216.
various values, attitudes, and beliefs which are not warranted; which are open to question on many grounds. For example, the political conventions and national elections of 1968 show us that there are as many if not more differences within each of the major political parties than there are between the parties. People are tending to vote more independently than ever before, voting for the individual rather than a straight party ticket; voting more along liberal and conservative lines than along Republican or Democratic party lines. Yet we do not open these issues to scrutiny and examination by the child in what seems to be an obvious reflective situation.

Summary

What all of this data seems to point to is that the child is socialized toward an ideal norm. A major question to be posed then concerns the nature and ultimate goal of the political socialization process: should the child be informed about political conflict and disagreement before he has sufficient time to internalize and become familiar with the ideal norms of the system? What are the consequences of painting a rosy picture only to have the colors fade?

The Agents and Circumstances of Political Socialization

The third major variable in the political socialization process concerns the four primary socializing agencies and the social circumstances or setting in which the process takes place.
The four principal socializing agents, the family, the school, the peer group, and the mass media, do not function exclusive of one another but rather are really quite united, in American society at least, in supporting the teachings of one another. However, for purposes of discussion and analysis in this paper, each agent will be approached and discussed separately.

The Family. Most of the writers in the area of political socialization agree that the family is the most influential socializing agent in the development of basic political orientations. Dawson hypothesizes why this belief prevails.

The most extensive evidence offered in support of the role of the family is found in correlations between parental and offspring political orientations. In most of these studies the political orientations of the parent and child are measured independently and agreements in orientation are used to support the proposition that the family transmits the orientations to the children.100

Hyman has conducted an in-depth analysis of this relationship and draws the following conclusion:

... studies establish very clearly a family correspondence in views that are relevant to matters of political orientation. Over a great many such correlations from the different studies the median value approximates .5. The signs, almost without exception are never negative. The only negative findings bear on the area of war where we might expect the larger social climate to be powerful and these are but two correlations out of a total of perhaps 100. The import is clear. While

100 Dawson, op. cit., p. 42.
influence might conceivably flow from child to parent, what is much more likely is that parents are the agents who transmit politically relevant attitudes to their children. The almost complete absence of negative correlations provides considerable evidence against the theory that political attitudes are formed generally in terms of rebellion and opposition to parents.¹⁰¹

Davies contends that the development of these early political beliefs affect one's political behavior throughout his lifetime.

Even the aged citizen who freely and secretly cast his last ballot in an election that presents free alternatives to him is never quite free of those people who have influenced him—most particularly his childhood family. And the political leader, like all others, likewise remains under the influence of his family background—if not in the content, then at least in the style of his rule.¹⁰²

Further, this point of view would seemingly picture the family as society's foremost conserving and stabilizing political entity.

However, recent studies have begun to question this stated influence of the family. Hess and Torney note that the family may be a valid agent of socialization in some contexts, but not with respect to the development of attitudes toward political objects or regarding the growth of active political involvement.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹Hyman, op. cit., pp. 52-55.
¹⁰³Hess and Torney, op. cit., p. 95.
Hess and Torney explain further that their findings indicate that,

The effectiveness of the family in transmitting attitudes has been overestimated in previous research. The family transmits preference for a political party, but in most other areas its most effective role is to support other institutions in teaching political information and orientations. 104

According to the findings reported by Hess and Torney, the school rather than the home is the key socializing agency. The public school appears to be the most important and effective instrument of political socialization in the United States. It reinforces other community institutions and contributes a cognitive dimension to political involvement. As an agent of socialization it operates through classroom instruction and ceremonies. 105

Jennings and Niemi have completed a study which also questions the importance of the family influence in politicization. They suggest that apart from a few basic political values in our culture which are passed from most parents to most children, parental political values are variable and highly inaccurate in determining the political values of children and adolescents. 106

104 Ibid., p. 217.
105 Ibid., p. 101.
Patrick notes that the urban, industrialized character of American society may place a significant restriction upon family influence as related to political behavior and beliefs. The family no longer has the continuing and nearly exclusive control over the child's behavior that it once did when our nation was primarily an agrarian society. Instead, the several socializing agencies of modern society create cross-pressures by often teaching conflicting values which serve to undercut the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the family.\(^{107}\)

It goes without saying that the family plays an important role in the politicization process. However, the question must be raised as to just how significant its role really is. Some sociologists are beginning to contend that the family's role as a basic socializing institution is beginning to break down and that other institutions including the school are beginning to accept more of this responsibility.

It would seem, then, that the growing debate concerning the role of the family in the politicization process has important implications for the school and the social studies in particular. If the school is, in fact, the primary agency of political socialization, i.e., if the foundation of political values, attitudes, and beliefs laid in the home is fixed for all practical purposes, then social studies

education in the schools will have little success in dealing with the development of political orientations. If, on the other hand, the influence of the family is less than had been thought previously, then given the nature of our complex, depersonalized society, the social studies program in the school may assume the major role in the development of political beliefs and behavior patterns. Obviously much more research is needed before a judgment of this kind can be made. Perhaps the discussion of the role of the school in the political socialization process in the following section will shed more light on this issue.

The School. According to V. O. Key, "All national educational systems indoctrinate the oncoming generation with the basic outlooks and values of the political order."\(^{108}\) This is one way in which the political system seeks to maintain itself. The curriculum, the teachers, the administrators, all are purveyors of the status quo. This is an assumption in reality based on rather sketchy evidence.

One of the real problems, however, regarding the role of education in the process of politicization is that despite statements like the one above identifying it as a key socializing agent, little research is available concerning the schools' role in developing political knowledge and attitudes.

The studies which deal in one way or the other with the role of the school trace quite well the development of some political attitudes, values, and beliefs, but fail to indicate how or why the development takes place. No empirical evidence apparently exists which demonstrates the role of the formal educational framework or the school setting in the determination of political attitudes, values, and beliefs. The findings do suggest, however, that if the curriculum of the school is to be used to formally and directly influence the development of political orientations, efforts should be made at the elementary school level as well as in the civics and problems of democracy courses traditionally taught at the secondary school level.

The extent to which formal instruction influences the development of political orientations in the elementary and secondary school is not at all conclusive. Several research studies indicate that formal instructional programs in civic and political education have relatively little impact upon political attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Langton and Jennings\(^\text{109}\) recently conducted a study concerning the impact of formal instruction in civics upon the political attitudes, values, and beliefs of high school students. They found the impact of the curriculum to be very slight in developing political orientations. The one notable exception

in their findings was that when Negro youth sampled were isolated and compared to Caucasian youth, the curricular impact was significantly greater on Negroes in terms of increased political knowledge, participation, tolerance, and sense of political efficacy. However, the Negro students still lagged behind the Caucasian youth with respect to each of these factors. Langton and Jennings reason that this is due to the fact that the Negro student is introduced to new information and insights through the curriculum while conversely, most of the Caucasian students had already been introduced to the same data previously.

Horton, in what has been perhaps the most widely publicized study of the political attitudes and values of youth, concurs with the findings of Langton and Jennings. His studies of high school youth show that about one youth in five disagrees with the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. He concludes that formal instruction in civics and government has little or no effect in shaping favorable attitudes toward the Bill of Rights. Those youth who have had a civics or government course are more certain of their beliefs and have formed definite attitudes toward citizenship responsibilities than their counterparts primarily because they have not had to

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examine or clarify their beliefs. Their learning has been instead more of a passive acceptance of time honored traditions and beliefs. Horton summarizes his work best by noting that,

It may well be that courses in civics and government concentrate more upon the mechanics of government than upon the values of democracy. In considering the teaching of 'good citizenship,' one may well question the value of instructional objectives that consist of certain dates, names, etc., to be committed to rote memory. From the results of this research, it seems that a need exists for greater emphasis upon the basic values of freedom upon which the existence of our democratic society depends.\textsuperscript{111}

Remmers and Franklin obtained similar results in a 1960 survey of high school youth. They found that the teen-agers sampled favored certain kinds of press censorship, prohibiting some people from speaking on the radio, and the use of police terror tactics on occasion to obtain information. On the positive side, youth favor rights such as freedom to worship, trial by jury, and the right of property.\textsuperscript{112}

These findings indicate quite clearly to this writer the results of teaching children and youth the "right" values, attitudes, and beliefs. We expect the young to accept certain values, attitudes, and beliefs as good because we say they are, not because the students have been given the opportunity to

\textsuperscript{111}Ibid., p. 58.

examine and clarify them through reflective inquiry and, thus, arriving at their own tentative conclusions. This pattern of indoctrination has been prevalent since the elementary school years and perhaps even before that. It would seem that if we are in reality not developing the kinds of citizens that further the democratic principles on which this nation was founded by actually engaging in practicing them, we had better well do some rethinking to determine why we are failing to achieve our stated purposes.

Patrick indicates that two of the primary reasons for the failure of formal programs in political education having little impact upon the formation of political orientations might be a poor quality of instruction and/or inadequate substantive content. The latter factor would, of course, include textbooks because texts are still for the most part the most widely used instructional materials in the implementation of the school curriculum. In these texts, the United States government is pictured as the leading advocate of democracy, morality, and rationality while other political systems and ideologies are often depicted as inferior, unjust, and immoral, i.e., we judge the world according to our standards and way of life.

In addition, textbooks describe the political process and the structure of the political system in an idealized

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113 Patrick, Political Socialization of American Youth: Implications for Secondary School Social Studies, p. 64.
114 Ibid., p. 28.
fashion showing what ought to be rather than what is. They fail to motivate students to confront political, social, and economic issues; they fail to develop the skills necessary to conduct reflective thinking and inquiry. Rather, they are designed to force the student into the memorization of a great deal of factual matter, most of which the student has little use for as he has no special purpose for knowing it.

Another important influential factor in the role of the school in political socialization is the attitudes, values, and classroom styles of teachers. The behavior of the teacher may either serve to support or undermine the formal program of political education in the schools. A 1950 study by Woodward and Roper demonstrated that teachers are uncertain about many principles of democracy. Their responses depicted a pattern of authoritarian values and the rejection of certain American political ideals.115 These findings are further supported by a study reported in 1966 by Weiser and Hayes. In administering the same questionnaire to both prospective and in-service teachers (the same type of poll instrument used by Remmers and Franklin116 and Horton117 in

117Horton, op. cit., pp. 18-60.
their study of high school youth), Weiser and Hayes found that teachers had an inadequate or distorted understanding of the principle of democracy and the meaning of the Bill of Rights. Further, many teachers were preoccupied with authority, especially authority over children. In addition, their findings closely resembled those of the students studied by Remmers and Franklin and Horton.

Research by George Stouffer also lends support to this authority preoccupation by teachers. He found that teachers evaluated the behavior of their students primarily on the basis of respect for authority and orderly behavior and were much less concerned about withdrawn, introverted students as they represented no threat to the natural order of the classroom. Further confirmation of this attitude comes from conclusions drawn by Jules Henry and Edgar Friedenberg. They


concurred that teachers encourage conformity, dependence, docility, obedience to authority, and strict maintenance of order at the expense of the building of self-esteem and individuality. Henry summarized it best when he noted that children spend the major portion of their elementary school years "hunting for the right signals in giving the teacher the response wanted." 122

As noted previously in this paper, Hess and Torney reported similar findings regarding the classroom styles and behavior patterns of teachers they studied in grades one through eight. They concluded that the teacher's preoccupation with conformity and authority were contrary to stated purposes of instruction, the development of democratic citizens.

Compliance to rules and authorities is a major focus of civic education in elementary school. Teachers' ratings of the importance of various topics clearly indicate that the strongest emphasis is placed upon compliance to law, authority, and school regulations. Indeed, it seems likely that much of what is called citizenship training in the public schools ... is an attempt to teach regard for the rules and standards of conduct of the school. If it does characterize the school, this type of socialization is oriented toward authoritarian values rather than toward acceptance and understanding of the need for active participation in a political system. 123

Hess and Torney note further that the school curriculum fails to emphasize the rights and obligations of citizens to participate in government. The right and responsibility to

122 Henry, op. cit., p. 204.
vote are noted but procedures open to the individual citizen for influencing governmental decisions are left untouched. Nor are attempts made to explain the importance of cooperative group action to achieve desired goals. The name of the game is conformity rather than inquire and make decisions.

The behavioral patterns of teachers described above cause one to question seriously how our schools differ from those of totalitarian states. They, too, demand conformity and unquestioning obedience to authority. They, too, discourage the reflecting, inquiring individual in constant pursuit of new knowledge as he resolves issues confronting him.

It is clear that a controversy persists regarding the relative influence of the American school as a political socializing agent. Some social scientists believe the school plays a major role in the process, Easton and Hess and Torney, for example. Others indicate some reservations, placing the school in the role of a supporting agent of political orientations already instilled by the family rather than being a primary source.

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124 Ibid., p. 218.
126 Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children.
The role of the school in the political socialization process is in need of much more attention by researchers in the area of civic and political education. More systematic evaluations are needed regarding the curriculum, methods, materials, and timing of political learnings. Topics and concepts dealing with political and civic education in our democratic society are typically taught in an unsystematic, haphazard manner. Students are confronted with and are expected to assimilate great amounts of factual material. However, they are then usually incapable of utilizing these data in an attempt to clarify certain values, attitudes, and/or beliefs. For example, this writer would not be concerned if a child were unable to recite the several articles of the Bill of Rights or any of the amendments to the Constitution. However, this writer would be quite concerned were the child incapable of locating and explaining why certain articles or amendments were important and further the resulting consequences were they not upheld.

The Peer Group. The peer group of the child also plays a role in the politicization of American children. The peer group refers to the group(s) of children with whom each individual child interacts. This relationship does not play the dominant, influential role as do the family and the school in molding one's political attitudes, values, and behavior. However, strong friendships and loyalties are established in
these groups and when the group stresses values or beliefs which are in opposition to those of the family, the possibility exists for the child to be more responsive to the demands of the peer group. This possibility is especially relevant when the concerns or issues are of an immediate personal nature.

Very few studies have explored the influence of the peer group upon political socialization. Langton examined "the impact of the class climate in peer groups and schools upon the reinforcement or resocialization of political attitudes and behavior patterns." He indicates that the peer group acts as a transmitting or reinforcing agent of the political culture of the society and may also provide a social system in which the child learns new attitudes and behavior.

Coleman concludes that during the adolescent years peers rather than parents and other adults become the most influential agents of socialization noting that adolescent peer groups frame values that are in conflict with those of adults, especially parents. Lane and Sears concur with Coleman for the most part indicating that where political affairs are concerned, youth tend either to accept the political attitudes, values, and beliefs of their parents or be almost

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totally indifferent to them. Those who do search for other possible alternatives to parental political orientations seem to depend heavily on the influence of the peer group.\textsuperscript{129}

Both of these several studies stress the important role of the peer group as an agent of socialization in a modern, complex, urbanized society. The literature contains a number of studies which stress the important role played by the peer group in the socialization process. However, very few investigations deal specifically with socialization in the political sphere. Much more research related directly to politicization is needed, then, before the degree of influence of the peer group can be scientifically determined.

The Mass Media. Relatively little is known about the actual impact of the mass media as an agent of politicization, although many claim they have an early and lasting effect upon the child's social and political perceptions. Research by Key indicates that the mass media tend to function in more of a reinforcing supporting role of values and beliefs. This reinforcing role stems in part from the self-selection of media users as individuals show a tendency to be attentive to that information with which they agree and ignore information which is in conflict with their values and beliefs.\textsuperscript{130} Klapper


\textsuperscript{130}Key, \textit{op. cit.}
concurs with this point of view noting that, "A number of studies, some performed in the laboratory and some in the social world, indicate that persuasive mass communication functions far more frequently as an agent of reinforcement than as an agent of change."\textsuperscript{131}

The idea also has been proposed that the content of the mass media is received and interpreted in a particular social setting with the recipients having socially conditioned predispositions. Friedson stresses that both the social setting and the preconceived notions of the individual affect the impact of the information transmitted to him by the mass media. These factors will in time determine how the individual recipient will react to the message.\textsuperscript{132}

Perhaps Richard Dawson best summarizes the evidence on the subject:

The predisposition of the individual to be attentive to given mass media communications and his interpretation of their meaning are conditioned by the social setting and social relationships of the individual and his exposure to the mass media.

These findings should not be taken to mean that the influence of mass media is unimportant in the development and maintenance of political orientations, but rather that the process of impact and influence is a complex set of social


\textsuperscript{132}Eliot Friedson, "The Relation of the Social Situation of Contact to the Media in Mass Communications," Public Opinion Quarterly, 17 (1953) 230-238.
relationships and rarely a simple isolated relationship between the individual and instruments of mass media. In all likelihood, the mass media play an increasingly important role in the dissemination of political information and political cues. By and large, their role is probably a standardizing and integrating one.  

Once again, as in the case of the several other socializing agents, much more research is needed to conclusively determine the role played by the mass media in political socialization. The potentialities appear to be significant. Television alone has greatly reduced the size of the globe in terms of the time it takes to report news information. Almost hourly, the child is confronted with social, political, and economic events as they are happening from just about any place on the face of the earth. Every day he sees actual battlefield scenes from Viet Nam, children starving in Biafra, Arabs and Israelis confronting each other in the Middle East, various political figures in Washington and around the nation, and minority groups and youth demanding equality and the rights guaranteed them under the Constitution. Political conventions and campaigns now receive complete coverage through the mass media. In fact, television seemingly plays a very important role in national elections in that voters in the western part of the nation are able to hear eastern returns and see trends developing. Conceivably, this could influence voters as they went to the polls, had they not already done so, especially those desirous of backing a winner. Also, and in large part due to the

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133 Dawson, op. cit., p. 75.
influence of the mass media, many adult Americans as well as their children know more about national and international political figures and issues than they do about local candidates and affairs. Yet, in spite of this fact, the child is confronted daily by a social studies curriculum which continues to embrace the expanding environment plan beginning with the local community and eventually expanding to the international community.

The proponents of this framework have apparently never considered other rational alternatives. They usually contend that the young child is incapable of social perceptions of any consequence outside his immediate environment. Perhaps this was a logical rationale before the age of mass communication. However, the relevant issues of the times now confront the child daily and this writer contends that although the child may not be able to locate Viet Nam, Biafra, or Washington, D. C., on a map, he is still very much aware of crucial events taking place and even to some extent the issues at stake in each of these situations. This writer would, therefore, hypothesize that one major reason why educators have traditionally contended that the child cannot deal with issues and events outside his immediate environment is that no real attempt has ever been made to confront him with relevant material appropriate for his level of development.
The Social Setting. Research evidence indicates that the social setting or circumstances in which the child's political learning takes place has an impact upon the socializing process. For example, Easton and Dennis report findings which indicate that the social class of the child influence significantly his sense of political efficacy.

The child higher on the social ladder is at every grade level likely to be a step or two higher in relative sense of political efficacy. . . . The child whose share of social resources is larger is thereby in a more favorable position to receive relevant information, communications, and reinforcement for adherence to this standard. His position and that of his family in the social structure expose him more frequently to events and interests congruent with this sense. His parents are more likely themselves to be interested and participate in politics and to have a higher sense of political efficacy. The consonance of such a milieu of efficacy and involvement, for the child's own acquisition, is therefore apparent.134

Greenstein also found that the socio-economic status of the child has a significant bearing on his political learning. He explains that lower social strata children are less likely than their upper-status counterparts to become interested in or actively engaged in political activity.135 Further, Patrick asserts that even the school tends to contribute to this factor through implementation of its curriculum content.

135 Greenstein, Children and Politics, pp. 85-106.
Curriculum content experienced by the lower-status child is geared toward the simple and direct indoctrination of the cliches of Americanism and the prescription of idealistic virtues as viewed from middle-class perspectives. A strong effort is made to infuse these marginal children with the moral precepts of our society's middle-class elements. Political education programs are devoid of information about the realities of government functions or political behavior and are scarcely relevant to the needs of underprivileged youth. Lower-status children are not given an understanding of how the political system can help them to achieve desired socioeconomic objectives. Usually, the educational climate is authoritarian in schools with predominantly lower-status children. Such children are not encouraged to express readily or freely their own opinions, to participate in decision-making activities, to assume important responsibilities at school, or to think critically or divergently.136

These studies seem to indicate that the social circumstances under which political socialization takes place are influential in the process. Lower-class children seem to be at a disadvantage in the politicization process. This could conceivably have significant consequences for adult political behavior. The major question for the educator then is what can be done to overcome what Patrick terms "the politically debilitating effects of family and neighborhood life among lower socio-economic status individuals."137 This writer would hypothesize that a social studies curriculum which allowed the

lower-status child to inquire into political realities and which enable him to acquire the skills necessary to influence political decisions which affected him would be a major step forward in the development of more functional attitudes toward the political system.

One cannot guarantee that children will be happier, better adjusted, or more positive in their attitudes toward the political system by virtue of functioning in this manner. That is not the purpose of thinking rationally and reflectively. Rather it is to give the child a better grasp of what is. Through this process the child may be able to arrive at his own warranted beliefs in such a manner that he knows who he is and what the consequences of some of his commitments may be. The decisions he makes are his own doing. He has made these judgments in light of the data he has gathered and verified. The conclusion he reaches may not be the same one the teacher, a parent, or a peer would have drawn, but then they are not he. He becomes a self-directed, self-fulfilling individual.

**Other Mediating Factors**

In addition to the major agents of influence in the political socialization process noted above, two other mediating variables also appear to have some impact upon the development of political orientations. These are sex identity and intelligence.
Regarding sex identity, Greenstein reports that, "From an early age girls show less political interest and awareness than boys." Hess and Torney concur with this finding noting further that girls also tend to be more attached to personal figures in the system. They summarize their findings as follows:

There are no differences between males and females in basic attachment, loyalty, and support of the country. In general, the differences between males and females are consistent with sex differences reported by other investigators. Girls tend to be more oriented toward persons, more expressive and trustful in their attitudes toward the system, its representatives, and institutions. Boys tend to be more task-oriented and are more willing to accept and see benefit in conflict and disagreement.

Research indicates that these role differences continue into adulthood although recent evidence suggests that these, and many other matters, are lessening with respect to voter turn-out in national elections.

Concerning the factor of intelligence, Hess and Torney report that it is one of the most influential mediating characteristics in the development of the child's political behavior. They indicate that generally,

... the effect of high I.Q.'s to accelerate the process of political socialization for children of all social status levels. ... Although the acquisition of political attitudes and of the concept of institutional

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138 Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 156.
139 Hess and Torney, op. cit., p. 222.
aspects of government is accelerated in children of higher I.Q., there is no difference between children of high and of low intelligence in their basic attachment to the nation. These fundamental allegiances are apparently taught so thoroughly that virtually all children within normal I.Q. range have been socialized in these critical areas. 140

Children of high intelligence do not always seem to regard laws in absolute terms nor do they concur that justice always prevails. They tend to be more realistic concerning the operation of the political system and voice their concerns about it more openly. Further, they appear to be more open to change, have a stronger sense of political efficacy, regard voting as a salient aspect of government, and are totally more active where political affairs are concerned. 141

Summary, Analysis, and Implications

Since the time of Plato, political leaders and educators have concerned themselves in varying degrees with the political socialization of the young. Yet, it has been only in recent years that political scholars and educators have begun to systematically investigate, to some degree, the politicization process and its effects upon political behavior and activity. The recent interest in this area has produced a number of studies which have gathered and reported basic descriptive data regarding the political sphere but little else. As a result, the research is highly tentative and deals mainly with

140 Ibid., p. 223.  
141 Ibid.
the content of children's political attitudes and beliefs, the products of political socialization. Studies have not focused upon how these attitudes and beliefs are formed, the process of politicization, except for data that has been drawn from related fields such as social psychology, sociology, and anthropology. The question of which political beliefs and processes, if any, should be deliberately taught to the developing citizen has not been dealt with adequately.

In addition to the descriptive nature of the research, no well-developed conceptual model or rationale has appeared, save possibly the "system" theory or approach developed by Easton. However, this design is primarily concerned with the acquisition of values, attitudes, and roles necessary in the preservation of or maintenance of the stability of the political system. Political scholars have not concerned themselves with the individual in the political process and his ability to influence political decisions. Rather, the emphasis has been upon the induction of the individual into the political system. This has seemingly important implications for the elementary school social studies program. However, before continuing this analysis, a summary of the findings is in order.

142 Easton, A Systems Analysis of Political Life,
Summary

These, then, are some of the major aspects of the process of political socialization. The processes through which politicization takes place are primarily social and psychological in nature. Political socialization involves interaction between the individual being socialized and the socializing or influencing agency. The process embodies both time and developmental dimensions. The conceptualizations noted previously would seem to indicate that several of the developmental variables are significant in understanding or interpreting the politicization process. Included among these are (a) the age at which socialization begins, (b) the continuity or discontinuity of the process, (c) the degree to which learning is formal (direct) or informal (incidental), and (d) the mediating factors of sex identity and intelligence.

It seems that the development of political orientations begins early in the life of the child and that these values, attitudes, and beliefs are rather firmly established by the time the individual completes his elementary school years, although there is some evidence that some changes do occur during the high school years. The learning process is sequential and cumulative and relatively free of discontinuity in American society. This is due mainly to the fact that the several major socializing agents in our society support and reinforce teachings by each other rather than espouse
conflicting doctrines. This is the prime moving force behind the relative stable political system each new generation inherits. Our socializing institutions do a very thorough job of transmitting the political heritage from one generation of Americans to the next almost completely intact. This is effected through both deliberate instructional techniques and, more often than not, through incidental means such as imitation and identification. Finally, the factors of sex identity and intelligence also appear to have an important bearing on the politicization process.

The variable on which there seems to be the greatest degree of consensus between and among the various scholarly frameworks concerns the principal agents of political socialization. The family is usually identified as the primary agent, with the school, the peer group, and the mass media also playing crucial roles. Regarding the role of the socializing agents, several writers also denote the social setting or circumstances under which the socialization took place as a major factor.

No attempt will be made at this time to review specific research findings as this was accomplished adequately in the body of this chapter. Instead, let us now turn to a more searching analysis of the research data and the ensuing implications for political education.
Analysis

One of the most important aspects of the political socialization process is the effect or impact it has upon the individual. Yet little or no attention was given to this factor in the conceptualizations noted previously. Greenstein\(^{143}\) and Sigel\(^{144}\) mentioned the area briefly but had really very little empirical data to offer in support of this variable. Yet, it seems to this writer that this is one of the most, if not the most important, aspects of the political socialization process. It is the consummation, if you will, of the entire phenomenon. Does the process have the potential to promote change in the political system or does it merely transfer the existing political structure from generation to generation? Does the process have a narrowing, conforming effect upon the learner or does it enable the individual to be more open to inquire and make decisions for himself, i.e., is the process one of indoctrination or one of reflective inquiry? Does the school or educational institution value and teach for conformity or for the free, inquiring mind? These are but several of the many questions to which this variable of the "effect" of the political socialization process should be addressed.

In attempting to answer these and many other questions, the nature of the research in political socialization comes into

\(^{143}\)Greenstein, "Political Socialization," p. 555.
\(^{144}\)Sigel, loc. cit.
play. The factor which continually permeates the research in the area of political socialization as it is now constituted is that much of the work is biased, inaccurate, unrealistic, and nonfunctional. This is due primarily to poor research design and survey techniques.

The researcher often sets out to do one thing and in the final analysis hypothesizes relationships which go far beyond what the data suggest. A glaring example of this is to be found in the conclusion drawn by Hess and Torney that the school, not the family, is the most influential and effective instrument of politicization in the United States.\textsuperscript{145} This conclusion is based upon a few simple correlations between teachers' practices and the expressed attitudes of their students. No effort was made to determine whether the attitudes of children in the classroom covaried with those of the teacher.

Further, the survey instruments used in several of the studies leave a great deal to be desired. Again referring to the Hess and Torney study,\textsuperscript{146} the use of the fixed-response-alternative approach imposes serious limitations when attempting to draw meaningful analyses of the data. If the choice the respondent would have selected is not present, he must either

\textsuperscript{145}Hess and Torney, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 101-105.
\textsuperscript{146}Ibid.
choose a less relevant alternative or indicate no choice at all. A free-response, open-ended technique would be much better it seems. Yet the one designed by Greenstein for his New Haven study is so loosely constructed and nebulous that one questions any of his findings. Perhaps the use of a smaller sample and an interview situation which provide for an in-depth discussion of children's political orientations would be most reliable. Given this situation, the interviewer could frame the same question in several different ways to attempt to gain the true feelings of the respondent. The researchers to date have given very little attention of the possibility that the children in their samples may be responding superficially concerning matters which they think and care little about. The resulting analysis in most instances, then, is superficial and contains a great deal of conventional wisdom.

Thus, given the factors of poor research design and technique, this writer would posit that many of the so-called findings or results of these studies can perhaps be termed more accurately opinions or assertions rather than empirically verified data. For example, the family is viewed as the primary socializing agent and it is generally agreed that the early teachings of the family have significant ramifications for later political development. The researchers suggest further that many of these early learnings are fixed and

unalterable, thus, leaving the school and other societal institutions to play supporting and reinforcing roles. Yet nowhere does anyone give empirical evidence to support this belief. There is no reason to suspect, therefore, that these orientations cannot be altered by changing the processes and content children are exposed to in school.

But in spite of the several flaws and inconsistencies in the research designs and in the research findings, the following trend is the most disturbing factor of all to this writer. What comes through again and again as the various researchers describe their particular hunches and findings is that the process of political socialization almost inevitably is one in which the developing citizen, the child in this instance, is expected to conform to the status quo. Reflective inquiry is discouraged while conformity to norms and traditions without really knowing 'why' is rewarded. The crucial question for political education, then, is this: "Does this overemphasis on conformity contribute to some unanticipated and undesired consequences for adult political behavior, such as alienation or cynicism, apathy, and intolerance?"\textsuperscript{148}

\textbf{Implications}

The implication of the role of the school in general and social studies education in particular appears quite clear

\textsuperscript{148} Patrick, "Implications of Political Socialization Research for the Reform of Civic Education," p. 19.
to this writer. Children and youth simply must be taught the skills and processes involved in reflective inquiry early in their lives so as to enable them to be capable of making rational decisions regarding the discrepancies in the socio-political environment. And, further, the charge that the young child is incapable of effectively making well-founded decisions for himself is inappropriate until the hypothesis or proposal noted above has been thoroughly tested with situations and materials which are truly relevant to the needs, interests, and abilities of the individual child. Bruner strongly suggests this with his now famous hypothesis that "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development." However, more attention will be devoted to this hypothesis and its implications for rational decision-making by the child in subsequent chapters.

Thus, it would seem that a re-thinking of the traditional political education processes and practices of the American school is in order. A rationale for decision-making regarding civic and political education in the elementary school social studies program should be developed to enable children to inquire reflectively into social and political issues and further to make rational judgments based on their examination of all relevant data after having considered possible alternatives.

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Above all, the issues, events, and topics to be considered should be relevant. Facts, concepts, and generalizations should not be used or studied for their own sake in a decontextualized manner but rather they should be used as data essential for reflection. In this process there are no "right" or "correct" answers or solutions. The individual makes his own decisions or judgments based upon the data which he has considered and verified in his inquiry.

Now let us turn to a review of the literature concerning the psychological foundations of young children's thinking.
CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF YOUNG CHILDREN'S THINKING

Any educator engaging in the formulation of an instructional strategy for children is obligated to review and to make use of the relevant data from the fields of child growth and development, child psychology, educational psychology, and learning theory. To be most effective, any teaching-learning strategy must rest upon a sound theoretical foundation. The particular strategy to be considered in this essay concerns the development of reflective thinking abilities in young children, i.e., to help children become independent thinkers capable of making decisions for themselves. In order to accomplish this task, it will be necessary for this writer to review how thought processes develop and in light of this data to determine whether or not young children are capable of engaging in reflective inquiry. The review will concentrate upon the aspects of intellectual development relating to the nature of reflective thought and will not attempt to analyze the vast accumulation of knowledge in the several fields noted above.

The major portion of the review will be organized around two major approaches to children's thinking. On the
one hand there is Jean Piaget who argues that young children are not able to perform the logical reasoning operations essential to reflective thinking. On the other hand there is Jerome Bruner and his dictum that the age of the child is not the determining factor in learning. Rather it is the manner in which content and problems are presented to the child that determine his ability to learn. A brief review of these two theories of learning and major works related thereto will be conducted followed by an analysis of the works for their implications for the ensuing rationale.

Jean Piaget is a Swiss psychologist who has carried out a number of investigations into the development of cognitive thought processes in children. He has made extensive use of the "clinical method" which combines the techniques of observation and interviewing, contending that the usual measurement devices disrupt the orientation in the child's mind, therefore, invalidating the results. He further rejects observation as a technique when used as the sole device due to the difficulty involved in distinguishing between the child's genuine beliefs and those resulting from play activity. Instead, Piaget prefers to observe the child's behavior in his own environment, develop a hypothesis as to why such behavior occurs and then test the hypothesis by changing the environment, presenting the problem in a different manner, and so forth.
The work of Piaget which is most relevant to the development of the rationale in this essay concerns his theory of the development of intelligence. According to Piaget, intellectual development is the never-ending process of organization and reorganization of structure, the systematic properties of an event including all internal and external aspects of an act. Each new structural arrangement integrates the previous one into itself. Even though the process is continuous, the results are qualitatively different from time to time. For this reason Piaget has broken the entire order of development into specific units called periods, subperiods, and stages in order to facilitate clarity.¹

Developmental Periods

Piaget's framework consists of three major periods.² The first is the period of sensory-motor intelligence which occurs between birth and age two. During this important period the infant proceeds from neonatal, reflex level of complete self-world undifferentiation to a fairly coherent arrangement of sensory-motor actions through his immediate

The organization is an entirely pragmatic one, however, in the sense that it involves fundamental perceptual and motor adjustments to phenomena rather than symbolic manipulations of them.

The second period, the time of preparation for and organization of concrete operations, encompasses the years from two until eleven. This period begins with the first crude symbolizations late in the sensory-motor period and concludes with the initiation of formal thought in early adolescence. This period is broken down further into two very important subperiods.

The first, that of preoperational representations, ages two through seven, refers to the preparation for concrete operations as indicated above. It is the period in early childhood in which the individual makes his first rather loosely organized, fumbling attempts to confront the new and strange world of symbols. Piaget sometimes denotes three stages in this first subperiod: (1) the beginnings of representational thought, ages two through four; (2) simple representations or intuitions, ages four to five and one-half, and (3) articulated representations or intuitions, five and one-half to seven years of age. During the preoperational subperiod, then, the child is transformed from an organism whose most intelligent functions are sensory-motor, overt acts to one whose upper-limit
cognitions are inner, symbolic manipulations of reality. However, the child still makes judgments on face value and is not reflective in his thought.

The labor of this preparatory era comes to full realization in a second subperiod, that of concrete operations, ages seven through eleven. Here, the child's conceptual arrangement of the surrounding environment slowly takes on stability and coherence due to the formation of a series of cognitive structures called groupings. Initially, the child begins to appear rational and well-organized in his adaptations; he seems to have a relatively stable and orderly conceptual framework which he systematically imposes on the world of objects around him. During this subperiod and the total period of concrete operations, then, the reasoning processes are increasingly logical but still not completely separated from concrete data.

The third and final period in the child's intellectual development, that of formal operations which are truly logical, occurs between the ages of eleven and thirteen. According to Piaget, it is at this time that the child in truth finally is able to think abstractly and to conceptualize. He can now reason from hypothetical data, i.e., he can think reflectively. He is able to formulate hypotheses and make judgmental decisions. In brief, the individual (adolescent) is able to deal effectively with the world of probability, the world of
abstract, propositional statements as well as with the world of reality. He can truly engage in his own analytical investigations because he is able to organize a number of combinations in a systematic order whereas before he was incapable of handling more than one variable at a time.

Piaget further contends that intellectual development occurs in unchanging sequential order and that the child must move through each step in order to achieve the kind of logical thinking usually associated with adults. He perceives an adult as thinking logically when he can formulate hypotheses, has the ability to handle symbolic material, and can deal with representations. The child must learn how to perform certain mental operations, how to detach himself from the environment, and to reason formally in abstract terms. He must learn to think in a hypothetical, deductive manner as well as learning how to solve problems through induction. Piaget asserts that these skills are acquired as the child progresses through the several periods described above toward more mature adult kinds of thought. Piaget believes that the child is incapable of this type of reasoning before early adolescence.

**Related Research**

The concern of this writer in proposing a rationale for reflective decision-making for elementary school children, then, is with Piaget's second major period, that of concrete operations. The apparent conclusion to be drawn from Piaget's framework is
that most elementary school age children would be unable to engage in reflective problem-solving activity. In support of this belief and directly related to the social studies, Piaget and Weil, using a Piagetian theoretical orientation, conducted a study designed to determine the stages in the development of the concept of nationality. They interviewed a number of preschool and elementary school children from Geneva, Switzerland, asking them to make value judgments about their country and others. The researchers outlined three levels of geographic understanding which are paralleled by three stages of affective evaluation. At the first level the children had only a simple notion of where they lived based primarily on concrete knowledge. The children were concerned only with their own immediate interests and expressed no preference for Switzerland over other countries.

At the second level the children were able to verbalize that Geneva is in Switzerland but were unable to conceptualize the two as existing side by side. This is characteristic of the preoperational thought period in Piaget's model.

By the third level the children were able to grasp the notion that Geneva is part of Switzerland, thus, realizing the idea of country. This level of thought occurred in children between the ages of seven and eleven, that is, the period of concrete operations.\(^3\)

\(^3\)Piaget and Weil, *op. cit.*, pp. 561-578.
In addition to Piaget's own studies, the recent work of Smedslund in Scandinavia and Almy in the United States generally lends support to the basic pattern of intellectual development formulated by Piaget. Almy notes, however, that there may be some delay in the growth of human thought processes, especially at the level of concrete reasoning, due, she contends, to a downpulling effect in some cultural and subcultural patterns.

Impressive as these findings are, the bulk of research evidence outside of the European environmental situation does not lend support to Piaget's framework and ensuing implications for education. For example, Hazlitt, in investigating some of Piaget's assumptions about young children's thinking, found that children were capable of problem solving at about three or four years of age. She studied the abilities to make exceptions and to generalize among some 88 children between the ages of three and seven. She asserted that the ability to generalize and to make exceptions occurred at each of the levels studied.

Mc Andrew also questioned the validity of stages in reasoning ability as described by Piaget. After interviewing some 151 children between the ages of three and seven, she


concluded that even the youngest child interviewed was capable of reasoning and that with age there was an increase in the numbers of logical answers. She noted further that the nature of the question being asked determined whether the child was able to elicit a reasoned response.\(^7\)

Heidbreder\(^8\) found that children could reason at about two and one-half years of age while Isaacs\(^9\) noted that there is sufficient evidence that children are able to engage in problem-solving activity at three years of age and possibly even before.

More recently, Wann and others reported the results of a three-year longitudinal study of some 233 children, ages three to six, from varying social levels to determine their ability to understand certain concepts. The attempt was made to find out how young children deal with information and to enable them to proceed more rapidly and more efficiently in their task of ordering their world than they normally would. The authors concluded that Piaget's animistic theory of the young child's intellectual development is invalid, at least insofar as the children they were sampling. These children were able to

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\(^8\)Edna Heidbreder, "Problem Solving in Children and Adults," Journal Genetic Psychology, 35 (1928), 522-545.

engage in simple associating, classifying, generalizing, and reasoning activities. The children were great collectors of information with accompanying satisfaction in having and using this information. The children were curious about and wanted to understand the world beyond the here and now. Learning still began with the known but the television has opened vast new worlds to the child. The children wanted to know about the phenomena that surrounded them. They were interested in the demands of social living and confronted such issues as meeting aggression and resistance, giving and receiving attention, and winning friends.  

Further, Estes' investigation of the acquisition of children's mathematical and logical concepts caused her to reject Piaget's theories concerning the developmental periods.  

Finally, Hyram carried out an experiment with upper-grade elementary children and concluded that there was evidence that logical or critical thinking is increased by the knowledge of the principles of logic. He further contends that through instructional procedures which emphasize the principles of logic, upper-grade elementary children can be taught to think

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logically. He implied that current teaching methods do not
develop critical thinking skills, that there is a need for
deliberate instruction in logical thinking skills and that more
attention needs to be given to the use of reasoning techniques
in solving problems. 12

With the exception of the first investigation by
Piaget and Weil, 13 none of the studies reported above appears
to lend empirical support to Piaget's theory of periods or
stages in thinking abilities and the distinction he draws
between reasoning with concrete materials and abstract
propositions as separate processes. Quite in contrast, the
bulk of the evidence seems to support the belief that young
children are indeed capable of reasoning and inquiring
reflectively during the elementary school years. The research
seems to indicate that Bruner's hypothesis, as noted earlier, is
correct; children can learn just about anything as long as it
is presented in terms they can understand.

Let us now turn to a more intensive analysis of Bruner's
rationale followed by an evaluation of the entire body of work
for implications regarding the development of a decision-making
rationale.

12 George H. Hyram, "An Experiment in Developing Critical
Thinking in Children," Journal of Experimental Education, 26
(December, 1957), 125-132.

13 Piaget and Weil, op. cit.
Jerome Bruner while on the one hand largely in agreement with Piaget's three-period model of intellectual development, on the other hand posits that any child can learn at any stage of development as long as the subject matter is approached in terms he can understand. This is a seeming contradiction on the part of Bruner as acceptance of Piaget's very precisely defined theoretical framework necessitates acceptance of the idea that children are capable of certain tasks at particular stages of development and incapable of others.

In contrast to Piaget's reasoning, Bruner contends that "the intellectual development of the child is no clockwork sequence of events; it also responds to influences from the environment, notably the school environment."\(^{14}\) He notes further that, "Experience has shown that it is worth the effort to provide the growing child with problems that tempt him into next stages of development."\(^{15}\)

This seems to this writer to be at the heart of the whole issue. Possibly the reason why Piaget and others contend so adamantly that the elementary school age child is incapable of analytic reasoning is due to the fact that they have never challenged the child nor given him the opportunity to forge ahead in his development because this would destroy the Piagetian rationale. Regarding this, Bruner in his important


\(^{15}\) Ibid.
essay, *The Process of Education*, cites a comment by David Page, one of the most noted elementary mathematicians. Page comments:

In teaching from kindergarten to graduate school, I have been amazed at the intellectual similarity of human beings at all ages, although children are perhaps more spontaneous, creative, and energetic than adults. As far as I am concerned young children learn almost anything faster than adults do if it can be given to them in terms they understand. . . . Given particular subject matter or a particular concept, it is easy to ask trivial questions or to lead the child to ask trivial questions. It is also easy to ask impossibly difficult questions. The trick is to find the medium questions that can be answered and that take you somewhere.16

Bruner, of course, is considering his hypothesis in terms of the development of cognitive structure as directed toward the learning of concepts. He is more prone to accept a guided discovery approach to learning than the pursuit of reflective inquiry urged by this writer.

**Structure and Discovery**

Bruner asserts that "the most general objective of education is that it cultivate excellence . . . helping each student achieve is optimum intellectual development."17 He emphasizes that this objective could be met more effectively if educators would concentrate on emphasizing the structure, the basic underlying ideas of a subject rather than the mastery of factual information.

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16Ibid., pp. 39-40.
17Ibid., p. 9.
In light of this premise Bruner contends "that intellectual activity anywhere is the same, whether at the frontier of knowledge or in a third grade classroom . . . . The difference is in degree, not in kind."\textsuperscript{18} Bruner asserts that intuitive thinking is an intellectual tool that lies basically unused.

Intuitive thinking, the training of hunches, is a much neglected and essential feature of productive thinking not only in formal academic disciplines but also in everyday life. The shrewd guess, the fertile hypothesis, the courageous leap to a tentative conclusion—these are the most valuable coin of the thinker at work.\textsuperscript{19}

Bruner goes on to describe intuitive thinking in more detail as contrasted with analytic thinking.

In contrast to analytic thinking, intuitive characteristically does not advance in careful, well-defined steps. Indeed, it tends to involve maneuvers based seemingly on an implicit perception of the total problem. The thinker arrives at an answer, which may be right or wrong, with little if any awareness of the process by which he reached it . . . . Usually intuitive thinking rest on familiarity with the domain of knowledge involved and with its structure, which makes it possible for the thinker to leap about, skipping steps and employing short cuts in a manner that requires a later rechecking of conclusions by more analytic means.\textsuperscript{20}

Reflective inquiry is more dependent upon analytic thinking but the learners intuitive hunches also could play

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 13-14.
\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 58.
a significant part in formulation of hypotheses and viable alternatives in the examination of social and political issues. This type of educated guess might provide for a much more creative, open-ended problem-solving process. However, this will occur only if the teacher encourages intelligent intuitive guessing and refrains from stringent penalties when the child is incorrect. This requires a sensitive teacher who is able to render approval and give suggestions for correction at the same time.

For Bruner the method of education is the method of discovery. Bruner contends that, "... the most uniquely personal of all that man knows is that which he has discovered for himself." He asserts that discovery is in essence a matter of rearranging or transformation of evidence so that the learner is able to proceed beyond the evidence as reassembled to new insights. Bruner further explains his belief in the worth of the discovery process.

It is my hunch that it is only through the exercise of problem solving and the effect of discovery that one learns the working heuristic of discovery, and the more one has practice, the more likely is one to generalize what one has learned into a style of problem solving or inquiry that serves for any kind of task one may encounter—or almost any kind of task.

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22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., p. 31.
This it would seem is what education should be all about. It should give the learner a process, a method, a technique which will serve him well in the future when he is no longer functioning in the school classroom but rather in the world classroom. The end, then, is to make the learner self-directed, one who can proceed on his own.

Related Research

As was the case regarding research which tested Piaget's theory, there is also a disturbing paucity of studies which explore the Bruner proposal.

Suchman's Inquiry Training Project\textsuperscript{24} for elementary school age children explores two basic processes of the nature of inquiry: (1) assimilation, the taking in and incorporating perceptions in terms of knowledge and perceptions; and (2) accommodation, the reshaping and reorganizing of conceptual structures to fit and account for events as perceived. The learner is faced with a discrepant event, a scientific one in this instance, and is asked to probe with questions that can be answered either "yes" or "no" as to "why" such a phenomena occurred.

He found that children usually were unable to inquire systematically or productively in this situation without some

training in inquiry skills. He, therefore, attempted to help children develop strategies and tactics of inquiry, using the question-and-answer investigation technique as the means for structuring the sessions. His primary purpose was to further the development of thinking from the intuitive and concrete to the abstract where props and devices are no longer needed.

Suchman found that evaluation of inquiry training was difficult but that conceptual growth through the inquiry approach was about the same as the growth attained through the more traditional didactic methods. What he apparently failed to consider with his emphasis upon the learning of specific concepts was the effect of the probing, postulating, evaluating process on the learner. The individual's ability to transfer these inquiry skills to other problematic situations presents the real test of his "inquiry training." If this is in fact the case, then the learner has gained autonomy which has enormous educational implications.

Torrance and Myers taught the scientific method directly to some 46 gifted fifth grade children. They, then, presented the learners with some simple research problems and had them collect and analyze data for the preparation of their written reports. They found that the children were
able to master the concepts of the scientific method and utilize them in the problem-solving process.\textsuperscript{25}

Jones\textsuperscript{26} examined the effect of a main ideas and a problems approach on fifth grader's manifestations of eight levels of thinking including facts, concepts, and generalizations. He found that children taught by the main-ideas approach did better on three of the four concept levels (concrete, qualified, and qualified abstract concepts). Girls did better than boys in most of the fact and concept areas while the boys scored higher concerning relevant generalizations.

Hunkins and Shapiro\textsuperscript{27} conducted an experimental study designed to investigate whether the case method approach was superior to the lecture-textbook method of teaching fifth grade social studies with regard to critical thinking. Their subjects were 54 children in two fifth grade classes in a community of 28,000 near Boston. One class was taught by the case method; the other by means of the traditional lecture-textbook approach.


\textsuperscript{27}Francis P. Hunkins and Phyllis Shapiro, "Teaching Critical Thinking in Elementary Social Studies," \textit{Education}, 88 (September-October, 1967), 68-72.
Their findings showed the case method to be more effective in stimulating critical thinking in students and clearly indicated that elementary school children can be taught to think critically.

In another study Crabtree tested the effects of two levels of teacher structuring on young children's thinking. Two experimental instructional programs were designed for use with two groups of second graders. One program was a Predetermined Structure in which the teacher instituted discussions and placed rigorous limitations upon the direction of children's thinking. It was hypothesized that these children would develop significantly more convergent thinking responses. The other program was a Jointly-Determined Structure in which the teacher afforded children the opportunities to explore ideas of interest to them. It was hypothesized that this program would foster significantly more divergent thinking responses. Both groups received both programs in alternate sequences. The hypotheses were supported. This study, thus, indicates that very young children have the ability to engage in convergent and divergent thinking which are necessary in the reflective process.

In still another empirical study, Crabtree demonstrated the ability of first, second, and third grade children to engage in geographic inquiry. Specifically, she investigated young children's abilities to structure relational constructs through the use of data from the physical and cultural environment of man. She found that these children were able to define problems and issues, construct search models, obtain authoritative data, derive conclusions, and relate their findings to the larger geographic structure. These children were, then, able to deal rationally with the affairs of man.

In another study dealing with primary level children, Anderson found, contrary to prominent developmental theories (I believe here he is referring to Piaget and his associates), "that children can acquire, retain, and transfer rather complex and 'advanced' problem-solving skills when presented with suitable training." In a similar vein, Stern demonstrated

31 Ibid., p. 283.
with 107 third grade children that young children could learn problem-solving strategies providing the strategy is simple and makes use of familiar materials.

With respect to upper elementary children, Hunkins attempted to determine whether the dominant use of analysis and evaluation questions in social studies content would effectively stimulate the development of critical thinking in sixth grade students and further to learn what impact, if any, these questions would have on these students' achievement. He found that students engaging in the use of materials with high cognitive-level questions (analysis and evaluation) did not differ significantly in critical thinking from students using materials with low cognitive-level questions (knowledge). However, the students utilizing the high level questions scored significantly higher than did their counterparts in social studies achievement.

Neimark and Lewis assessed the information-gathering behavior of both normal and bright children between the ages of 9 and 16. They concluded that children move to progressively higher levels of abstraction primarily in an all-or-none


fashion. Thus, when a child discovers how to avoid unnecessary steps, he refrains from doing so even though he had done so previously at a relatively uniform rate. Similarly, once the child learns that first-step gambles are not usually productive, he avoids them thereafter.

Regarding the transfer of problem-solving strategies, Wittrock\(^{35}\) found that second graders were able to learn a difficult problem-solving strategy and, subsequently, transfer it to new problems, including problems involving unfamiliar concepts.

In a study more directly related to the focus of the present essay, Merritt\(^{36}\) investigated sixth grade children's ability to comprehend and deal with broad social conflicts. His major contention was that schools should be effective agencies for social change and that in order for instruction to proceed on this basis, it would first have to be determined whether children were able to understand and cope with the conflicts involved in social change. A set of stories and an accompanying evaluative instrument was developed to assess sixth graders' understanding of social conflict. These children


exhibited considerable success in generalizing and inference-making skills as well as the expected success in recall of knowledge. Merritt concluded that older elementary children can deal with social conflicts and should be afforded the opportunity to do so asserting that the resolution of social conflicts by democratic means is essential to the preservation and improvement of American society.

Probably the most comprehensive analysis of children's thinking has been carried out by David Russell.37 After reviewing literally hundreds of studies concerning all aspects of children's thinking abilities, Russell made several observations regarding childhood reasoning and problem-solving.

There is probably no 'age of reason' which children must attain before they can do problem solving. Experimental work gives considerable evidence that the solution of simple problems occurs at least by three years. The 'why' questions of very young children may occasionally illustrate an early attempt to solve problems. During the preschool years problem-solving abilities develop rapidly with (a) accumulation of information, (b) increasing ability to see relationships and grasp patterns of ideas, (c) widening purposes, often socially induced, for solving more problems, and (d) the possible acquisition of more modes of attack on problems.38

Russell notes further that the child's insight in the problem-solving activity varies according to the nature of

38 Ibid., p. 278.
the problem and the purpose of the subject under study. He 
stresses, in accordance with Bruner, that "the most fruitful 
analysis of problem-solving behavior occurs when the nature 
and difficulty of the problems are matched to the maturation 
level and interests of the solvers." The older child is 
naturally somewhat more sophisticated in his technique and 
evaluation of a problem simply because he has a great deal 
more experience to bring to the situation. However, in essence 
the younger child solves the problem to his satisfaction just 
as readily as does the older one. As Bruner noted earlier, 
"the difference is in degree, not in kind."

Each of the above studies touches upon, in some way, 
the child's ability to engage in thinking activities. Lacking, 
however, are well-designed, empirical works relating 
specifically to the young child's ability to engage in reflect­
tive reasoning and inquiry. This apparent gap in the research 
knowledge, thus, affects any conclusions which might be drawn 
concerning the psychological bases for developing a reflective 
decision-making rationale for elementary social studies 
education.

Analysis

Before accepting or rejecting either of the theoretical 
positions described above and the resulting implications for

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39 Ibid., p. 279.
40 Bruner, loc. cit.
reflective inquiry among elementary school children, it would seem appropriate that a more careful analysis of the proposals would be in order.

The accumulated literature related to young children's thinking paints at best an inconclusive picture. Piaget's theoretical assertions are widely quoted, but empirical evidence does not generally lend favorable support to the "developmental stages" concept concerning elementary school age children's ability to reason. This writer would posit several reasons for this inconsistency.

First, there seems to be a recurrent problem of definition of terms. Piaget defines reasoning as a formal type of logical process of a highly complex, adult nature while others denote it as a simpler problem solving process. Quite obviously the scholar's orientation toward the concept of the reasoning process influences his individual perception of what it includes. Piaget, however, in viewing reasoning as essentially an adult level process, loses sight of the very pragmatic reasoning and problem solving abilities of most children. Granted their experiential and informational backgrounds prohibit them from functioning in the sophisticated manner one would expect of an adult. But this writer would question whether operation at the adult level is in reality what we should be striving for in attempting to develop skills of reflection in children. Rather, it would
seem that it would be more appropriate to let the nature of
the discrepant issue involved be the determining factor in
the level of abstraction required.

Second, it must be remembered that our knowledge of
the development of children's thinking is drawn from observa-
tions of their thought activities in a particular culture at
a particular time. What some might believe to be the "natural"
course of intellectual thought is in reality a product of the
child's living in a specific social, intellectual, and
psychological setting. Piaget's investigations were carried
out for the most part in the Swiss culture which is significantly
different from the fast moving, urbanized, industrialized
pragmatic nation that is the United States. This may indeed
account for dissimilar results by those conducting like research
elsewhere, especially in England and the United States.

Third, many of Piaget's findings and hypotheses are based
on relatively small samples and on children from one particular
background. Hence, his findings cannot be reliably applied to
a variety of different children in different socio-economic
backgrounds.

Fourth, and of significant import to researchers in
this country, is Piaget's casualness and disregard for the use
of experimental controls and scientific techniques of child
study. Further, and for obvious reasons, he seldom subjects his
data to statistical reliability measures. Retesting, extrapola-
tion, corroboration, and so forth are missing.
These criticisms do not, of course, invalidate the whole of Piagetian theory. However, these questions do cause this writer to carefully consider the Piagetian model of intellectual development in terms of these inadequacies. What we gain, then, from a review of Piaget's work and related studies is this: children's intellectual development proceeds in a sequential, orderly, irreversible pattern and that in light of this, children of elementary school age are incapable of logical reasoning. This "period of formal operations" does not occur until adolescence according to Piaget.

This writer would contend that Piaget has failed completely to consider the impact of the environment and education upon the child's thinking ability. Few scholars have considered what changes in learning would take place if environments were modified and education in reasoning skills begun in nursery and primary schools. Bloom has shown statistically that young children are capable of a great many more things educationally than educators have ever conceived possible in the past. In fact, he notes that unless we as educators begin reaching some children much earlier than we are at present, it may be too late by the time they enter the elementary school. It just may be that teaching children the skills and processes of reflective inquiry at a much earlier age would result in upper grade elementary school

\[41\] Bloom, loc. cit.
children with completely different patterns of thought than ever imagined possible.

The analysis above has concentrated wholly on Piaget's work, but it should be noted that to date Bruner's rationale is not any more convincing in terms of empirical evidence. In stating his now famous hypothesis quoted previously in this essay, Bruner adds that there is really no evidence to refute his position but that a great deal of data is being gathered to support it. Nowhere does he go on to document this assertion in detail.

Yet the majority of the curricular revisions in the public elementary and secondary schools are based upon this hypothesis and Bruner's structure idea. Many of these curriculum projects are currently in the process of being evaluated and, thus, the empirical evidence is still rather sketchy.

As noted previously, Bruner stresses a discovery approach to learning in contrast to the method of reflective inquiry in the decision-making process as adopted by this writer. What we gain from Bruner, then, is a means-ends approach to problem solving. The end is a body of key concepts and generalizations, the structures of the discipline if you will. The means to the attainment of that end is discovery learning in which the teacher in essence "guides" the learner through a series of inquiry techniques to the
understanding of the appropriate concept of generalization. This writer does not view reflective thinking in the same vein. Rather, the means and the end are one and the same—the process or method of rational inquiry. Reflective thought will be discussed at further length in the next chapter.

We also gain from the work of Bruner the bold hypothesis that the child can learn anything so long as it is presented to him in a context and manner that is in accord with his maturational and interest needs. Again, the evidence is still pending on this very important point.

In effect, then, what the research literature on child growth and development as related to children's thinking tells this writer is—draw your own conclusions! Some contend that the child cannot reason adequately at the elementary school level; others say that he can as long as the problem solving activity is relevant. With respect to the latter point of view, the attitude of the teacher appears to affect significantly whether or not the child is able to engage in and achieve at certain tasks. For example, in a recent study, Rosenthal and Jacobsen tested the notion "that one person's expectation for another's behavior could come to serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy." 42 The authors hypothesized that

if school children were perceived as being bright, then their rate of intellectual development would increase. Their hypothesis was supported. Children who were potential low achievers did much better because the teacher thought they could and conveyed this to them through her facial expressions, her postures, her person-to-person contact with them.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 174-182.}

This has significant implications for the rationale being considered in this essay. Given relevant kinds of problems and issues with which to work and teachers who believe that children can engage in reflective activity, this writer sees no reason why the elementary school child cannot learn the skills necessary for reflective inquiry.

Let us now go on to consider the nature of reflective thought in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF REFLECTIVE THOUGHT

For the purposes of this dissertation, this writer will define "social studies" in the elementary school as follows:

The social studies is that part of the curriculum which deals best with the clarification of personal, social, and political values, attitudes, and beliefs through the individual's continuing examination of relevant issues and problems from the socio-political environment in which he lives.

The method or process of the social studies in the elementary school is that of reflective inquiry, which will be discussed in detail below. The primary goal of reflection in the elementary school social studies program, as this writer sees it, is the development of the self-directed, inquiring, rational individual who, when given the opportunity, is able to make decisions for himself based on a thorough examination of all available evidence and alternatives related to the issue being considered.

In order to aid the child to become this kind of person, he must first be helped to develop a perspective on just who he is and the attitudes, values, and beliefs he holds, i.e., he needs to gain a sense of identity. This
writer believes that the developing child can accomplish this all-important task best through direct confrontation of relevant personal, social, political, and economic issues or problems which he examines in a critical and reflective manner, posing possible alternatives (hypotheses), and through the verification of accumulated data resulting in formation of tentative warranted values, attitudes, and beliefs.

Through the investigation of his personal, social, political, and economic environment, the child then gains insight into himself. He begins to realize more fully who he is and how he relates to others. Most important, however, he will be his own person.

In light of this definition and discussion of method or process, it is necessary to describe the reflective process in more detail before outlining a rationale for decision-making.

Reflection Defined

Dewey,1 Hunt and Metcalf,2 Hullfish and Smith,3 and others have identified thought as the "method of education."

1John Dewey, How We Think (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1933).
Probably the most thorough discussion of reflective thought is found in John Dewey's classic essay, *How We Think*. Dewey defined reflection as the, "Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends. . . ."

For Dewey, learning was learning to think. Genuine freedom was embodied in the intellect. Dewey puts it this way:

Genuine freedom, in short, is intellectual; it rests in the trained power of thought, in ability to 'turn things over,' to look at matters deliberately, to judge whether the amount and kind of evidence requisite for decision is at hand, and if not, to tell where and how to seek such evidence. If a man's actions are not guided by thoughtful conclusions, then they are guided by inconsiderate impulse, unbalanced appetite, caprice, or the circumstances of the moment. To cultivate unhindered, unreflective external activity is to foster enslavement, for it leaves the person at the mercy of appetite, sense, and circumstance.

Dewey's concern for freedom of the mind and purposeful decision-making has been echoed by the Educational Policies Commission in recent years.

Freedom of the mind is a condition which each individual must develop for himself. In this sense, no man is born free. A free society has the obligation to create circumstances in which all individuals may have opportunity and encouragement to attain freedom of the mind. If this

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4 Dewey, op. cit.
5 Ibid., p. 9.
6 Ibid., p. 90.
goal is to be achieved, its requirements must be specified.

To be free, a man must be capable of basing his choices and actions on understandings which he himself achieves and on values which he examines for himself. He must be aware of the bases on which he accepts propositions as true. He must understand the values by which he lives, the assumptions on which they rest, and the consequences to which they lead. He must recognize that others may have different values. He must be capable of analyzing the situation in which he finds himself and of developing solutions to the problems before him. He must be able to perceive and understand the events of his life and time and the forces that influence and shape those events. He must recognize and accept the practical limitations which time and circumstances place on his choices. The free man, in short, has a rational grasp of himself, his surroundings, and the relation between them.7

The Commission goes on to contend then that the development of the ability to think should be the central purpose of the American school. Ernest E. Bayles concurs with this goal and notes that if American education is indeed to carry out its democratic commitment, the American school is "logically committed to foster intellectual independence among our people and, therefore, to promote reflective teaching. Independent learning capacity, then ought to be a fundamental and functional part or aspect of our overall educational purpose." We need, in essence, to teach children how to think, not what to think!

7Educational Policies Commission, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
Given these beliefs, then, it would seem that the focus of education should be upon the process rather than upon the product. The schools should be oriented toward the development or probing, inquiring individuals rather than repositories or storehouses of vast amounts of factual data. This is not to suggest, however, that substantive content does not play an important role in the reflective process.

Reflection does not deny the importance of learning concepts, generalizations, and factual information as long as they are learned in conjunction with the active examination of testable hypotheses in the clarification of values, attitudes, and beliefs. These pieces of knowledge are not be assimilated for their own intrinsic value but rather are to be used as data in the decision-making process of reflective inquiry. Taken in this way, substantive knowledge becomes a tool, a means of verifying evidence, not an end in itself.

The development of a process or mode of thinking, thus, becomes the primary purpose of the school. This does not mean the development of certain skills and attitudes to be used only in the formal educational arena but rather an educational method which, although in constant need of refinement, will serve the individual throughout a lifetime.

Thinking is defined by Dewey as "that operation in which present facts suggest other facts (or truths) in such a way as to induce belief in what is suggested on the ground of real
relation in the things themselves, a relation between what suggests and what is suggested." What is suggested here by Dewey, as well as in his definition of reflective thought noted above is much more than a problem-solving approach. It is instead a way of approaching problems and in the case of the social studies a way of attempting to clarify values, attitudes, and beliefs.

Dewey notes that reflective thinking, "involves (1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity." Thus, the learner is faced with some sort of discrepant event, i.e., a conflict or inconsistency in values, attitudes, and/or beliefs, which he searches to clarify through the process of reflective inquiry. This doubt and perplexity is, then, the origin of thinking.

Dewey notes that the demand or need for a solution of the discrepancy is the guiding factor throughout the process of reflection. He seems to be suggesting here, however, in contrast to his definitions noted earlier, that reflection is a method of "solving" problems. This writer would take exception to this point of view as related to the social studies. The

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10Ibid.
discrepancies occurring in the social studies concern primarily the affective domain, i.e., values, attitudes, and beliefs as opposed to more cognitive, substantive types of "problems" arising in fields of study, such as math and science. The reflective thought processes, as viewed by this author for the purposes of this dissertation, concern the "clarification" of personal-social issues resulting in warranted values, attitudes, and beliefs; not the search for solutions to problems.

Reflection also differs somewhat from several other types of thinking modes. An attempt will be made in the following several paragraphs to define a number of these as distinguished from reflective thinking.

As noted previously in the discussion of young children's thinking, guided discovery and reflection are not one and the same. Guided discovery implies predetermined goals, usually concepts and generalizations, to be achieved. The teacher acts as the guide or facilitator of learning in the process making sure that the individual stays pretty much "on track" in his pursuit of the objective the teacher has established as necessary. For example, the teacher might deem it necessary that the child learn the concept of scarcity, a low-level economic concept. She would, then, guide him to the discovery or realization of this basic idea through a series of well-designed, highly-structured steps noting particularly
the notion of unlimited wants and limited resources. Open-ended inquiry, on the other hand, would allow the individual to define an issue of consequence and interest to him and pursue the clarification of that issue to his own satisfaction.

Induction and deduction are also in need of further clarification concerning their respective roles in the thinking processes. Induction, often referred to as "the method of discovery," may be defined technically as "the act, process, or result or an instance of reasoning from a part to a whole. . . ."\(^\text{12}\) Induction is currently receiving considerable attention in many of the new curriculum projects. Bruner's essay, "The Act of Discovery,"\(^\text{13}\) has given additional impetus to the use of inductive methods. Deduction, on the other hand, is defined by Webster as "the deriving of a conclusion by reasoning; . . . inference in which the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises. . . ."\(^\text{14}\) Hunt and Metcalf note that reflective thinking has both inductive and deductive elements whereas the inductive process normally associated with "discovery learning" usually omits any emphasis upon deductive reasoning and, therefore, is not fully reflective.\(^\text{15}\)


\(^{13}\)Bruner, "The Act of Discovery."

\(^{14}\)Webster's, op. cit., p. 215.

\(^{15}\)Hunt and Metcalf, op. cit., pp. 96-98.
Inquiry is another term receiving a great deal of attention in the new curriculum projects. It implies a search or an investigation into areas of interest and concern. Perhaps the definition developed by Goldmark best summarizes the pattern of questioning called inquiry.

Inquiry is a reflexive, patterned search, which takes questions from the substantive level, to the criteria level, to the value and assumption level, where new assumptions can be posed and new alternatives constructed.\(^{16}\)

Goldmark notes further that inquiry is more than an operation. It is in essence a "commitment to a way of behaving--to doubting and questioning."\(^{17}\)

Inquiry then is essential to the process of reflection. It is the process through which the individual is able to examine and validate proposed evidence concerning conflicts in values, attitudes, and beliefs.

The process of reflective thinking, then, embodies elements of each of the several methods or processes defined above. Let us now turn to a description of the conditions necessary for reflective inquiry to take place.

**Conditions of Reflective Inquiry**

The primary curricular emphasis in the social studies during the 1960's has been upon the learning of the structural


\(^{17}\) Ibid.
components of the several social science disciplines; the concepts and generalizations, if you will. One of the basic means of achieving this end has been through inquiry or discovery methods employing the analytical tools of the several sciences. The idea behind this scheme is to enable the learner to function as an historian, an anthropologist, an economist, and so forth, using the organizing principles and analytic tools of a particular discipline or disciplines to accomplish that end. However, although the process of inquiry or discovery is emphasized, the attainment of specified concepts and generalizations is still held as the goal of learning. The process of inquiry employed in this rationale, then, is not that of reflection, but rather more of a method of guided discovery.

However, a humanizing trend is beginning to gain momentum in educational circles in which the individual learner is the focal point of concern. The goal is to develop what Maslow, Kelley, Rogers, and others in the 1962 ASCD Yearbook, Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming, 18 have referred to as the "mature individual" or what Jewett terms the "intellectually autonomous individual." 19 This person possesses an awareness of himself, he has a system of values, he is imbued with a

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sense of becoming. He is aware of the importance of his relationships with others but is not dependent upon their support. He is self-directed, self-disciplined, curious, inventive, and challenges problems in a rational, reflective manner. He prizes the doubt.

The process of reflection enables the individual to come to grips with the political, social, and economic issues embedded in his culture. It requires one to test beliefs and make judgments in accordance with evidence gathered relative to the issue at hand, i.e., it requires that he engage in decision-making.

Perhaps the best way to describe the process is through a brief outline of the major criteria involved. The method of approaching problems and issues through reflective decision-making involves basically five major steps:

1. The first condition is a state of doubt. This may be either emergent or teacher created. Dewey would contend that it necessarily must be emergent as unless the individual has an internal feeling that some conflict in belief exists, then there is no problem.\(^\text{20}\) This writer believes that given the modern school, this concept is somewhat unrealistic. The teacher can effectively create doubt by

noting discrepancies in student's expressed values, attitudes, and beliefs; by identifying dichotomies in the course content being considered; by selecting course content which contains problematic situations; and so forth. This requires, of course, that the teacher operate in a reflective manner if the students are so expected. The issue, emergent or created, must be defined by the student as being worthy of his attention. It must arouse a perplexing situation or conflict which the student, because of his inquiring nature, must resolve or clarify.

2. The second condition is that of carefully defining and delimiting the problem or issue. This calls upon the learner to distinguish between related and unrelated factors concerning the apparent discrepancy. This is the stage of the process where the individual delimits the problem so as to consider only that data which is in some way related to the issues under investigation. The definition and delimitation of an issue will, of course, vary from individual to individual as each perceives the problem in a somewhat different vein. This narrowing of the problem is very crucial to the formation of testable hypotheses.
3. The third condition in the reflective process is that of forming insights or testable hypotheses as to why the discrepancy exists. Hypotheses are probable ways of describing and/or explaining the discrepant event. After noting that a problem exists and after delimiting its nature and scope, the insights gained enable the learner to begin suggesting alternative solutions or outcomes. These are stated typically in an If . . . then . . . fashion.

4. The fourth condition concerns the collection of and examination of all relevant and available data in an attempt to either support or refute each of the several hypotheses. The learner must carefully consider all possible points of view concerning the issue so as to ensure a total perspective before making any judgments. This demands objectivity and thoroughness on the part of the investigator. The data may be gathered in a variety of ways and from a variety of sources so long as it is capable of being verified.

5. The fifth and final condition is that of drawing warranted conclusions; warranted in terms of the rationality and objectivity of the examination
just concluded. These then become tested values, attitudes, and beliefs, subject, of course, to continued modification based on new evidence. The conclusions reached, then, are always tentative ones subject to reexamination as new-found data warrants further consideration of the issue. This is not a process of learning the right values, attitudes, and beliefs but rather a process calling for the clarification of the consequences of several alternatives.

Several other related factors, although not of the major import of the five conditions discussed above, also have a significant bearing upon the reflective thinking activity. Notably, the content of a given act of thought includes one's personal resources, i.e., past experiences, mental set, accumulated knowledge, as well as data from the social and political environment, including relevant social science disciplines. As noted above, it is imperative that in the selection of content the individual be able to distinguish relevant from irrelevant data.

Student interest in the content greatly enhances the chances for learning. Consequently, current issues and events are often excellent sources of issues and data. Again,
relevancy in terms of the learner's needs and interests is a key variable.

Open-mindedness on the part of the investigator is crucial. It is the quality or ability of keeping oneself as free from bias and dogmatism as is humanly possible. Dewey defines open-mindedness as,

... freedom from prejudice, partisanship, and such other habits as close the mind to consider new problems and entertain new ideas. But it is something more active and positive than these words suggest. It is very different from empty-mindedness. While it is hospitality to new themes, facts, ideas, questions, it is not the kind of hospitality that would be indicated by hanging out a sign: 'Come right in; there is nobody at home.' It includes an active desire to listen to more sides than one; to give heed to facts from whatever source they come; to give full attention to alternative possibilities; to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs that are dearest to us.21

Milton Rokeach conducted an intensive investigation of open and closed mindedness and distinguishes between the two as follows:

The extent to which a person's belief-disbelief system can receive, evaluate, and act on relevant information received from the outside on its own intrinsic merits, unencumbered by irrelevant factors in the situation arising from within the person or from the outside.22

Concerning the ability to keep an open mind in the examination of personal-social issues, some issues or problems

21Ibid., p. 30.
do not easily lend themselves to rational investigation but rather appeal to the individual's emotion. Hunt and Metcalf have designated these as "closed areas" not open to reflective consideration. Such areas might include issues of race, religion, sex, patriotism, and political and economic ideologies to mention but a few. Relevant verifiable data is quite often difficult to secure in these areas. Hunt and Metcalf go on to point out the consequences of avoiding certain problem areas.

Unfortunately, very few students retain an intellectual interest in social-scientific content after having been drugged over the years by a safe and sane social-studies curriculum that specializes in an avoidance of issues in closed areas. . . . Our closed areas exist as sources of totalitarian belief practice in a culture that strains in two directions, democratic and authoritarian.

The avoidance of confronting certain personal-social issues it appears is obviously not directed toward the development of the self-actualizing, reflective, open-minded, intellectually autonomous individual alluded to previously if we can take the Hunt and Metcalf quotation at face value, and this writer believes we can. Rather, failure to consider these issues only further narrows the perspective of the individual and results eventually in dogmatism.

As for experiences necessary to develop the intellectually autonomous individual, it seems imperative that the

\[23^{23}\text{Hunt and Metcalf, op. cit., pp. 26-28.}\]

\[24^{24}\text{Ibid., p. 28.}\]
school create an "intellectually permissive atmosphere." This calls for a climate of inquiry in which the individual learner is free, and knows he is free, to express his values, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions. He is aware that his ideas will be seriously considered and rigorously scrutinized by his peers as well as the teacher. He knows that the classroom is an open forum. Unless this climate prevails, the learner will refrain from questioning and instead conform to the attitudes and expressed beliefs of the teacher. The teacher must learn to listen, to question, to probe. In essence, she must be a fellow inquirer with her students.

These, then, are some of the basic conditions and related factors necessary for the process of reflection to occur. It should not be misconstrued that the sequence of these several conditions is a fixed, lock-step progression of thought functions. Dewey elaborates on this point.

. . . the five phases of reflection . . . represent only in outline the indispensable traits of reflective thinking. In practice, two of them may telescope, some of them may be passed over hurriedly, and the burden of reaching a conclusion may fall mainly on a single phase, which will then require a seemingly disproportionate development. No set rules can be laid down on such matters. The way they are managed depends upon the intellectual tact and sensitiveness of the individual.  

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25Jewett, op. cit., p. 11.
Thus, the nature of the issue being examined and the background the individual brings to it have a bearing on the manner in which he proceeds with his reflective inquiry.

Limitations of the Reflective Process

Although the process of reflection embodies many positive aspects, such as the development of open-mindedness, self-direction, autonomy, and intellectual honesty to note but a few, it should also be indicated this writer believes that there are some limitations to the method. An attempt will be made in the following paragraphs to denote and briefly describe several of these constraints.

The reflective process is sometimes limited by the fact that at times the child may encounter problematic situations in which access to the necessary data is not always possible. This then calls for the suspension of judgment until more verifiable evidence can be secured. If the inquirer is unable to secure further sound data, then judgment must be suspended indefinitely prohibiting in large part further investigation in that particular area or even some related fields.

A second limitation, and directly related to the first, is the necessity of having to make decisions on insufficient evidence. The time variable often enters the picture in this instance. The data may, in fact, be obtainable but time simply will not permit the individual to secure it, i.e., a decision
must be made at once. This places hardships on the individual but may be one of the "evils of life" with which the reflective person may be forced to live.

A third limitation, and one which the school, in most instances, fails to cope with at all, is that students seldom have the opportunity to directly apply their tested values, attitudes, and beliefs in a real situation. This writer would grant that it is not always feasible or necessary for the individual to practically apply the fruits of his learning. But where it would enhance the inquiry conducted, it would seem that attempts should be made to enable the individual to further apply in some fashion his tentative conclusions. Otherwise, after repeated journeys through the process with no concrete application the individual may tend to lose interest in the inquiry.

A fourth limitation is that the child, by virtue of his engaging in reflective inquiry which calls upon him to question and make decisions for himself, might possibly become frustrated due to his inability to effect change in his social, political, and economic environment. The process of reflection may be taught to the child, and rightly so, in such a manner that he sees himself as an active force in his own personal betterment as well as the general improvement of societal conditions. However, the reality of many situations in the environment
may deter him from achieving his goals. There is the possibility of creating a group of cynics it would seem.

A fifth limitation, that of community pressure and possibly even that of the school system to instill the basic American values concerning loyalty, patriotism, reverence, and so forth in the child. "These are the values and traditions that have made this nation what it is today. This is what we believe. Teach these things to our children." In other words, refrain from questioning, probing, and reflecting about these values and traditions. Just learn them. After all, if the child examined his own values, attitudes, and beliefs in an attempt to further clarify them, he might become aware of problems and issues he never considered before and this might tend to make him unhappy. And, isn't happiness the end of education?

A sixth limitation is that if the curriculum follows Dewey's "emergent problem" philosophy, then serious gaps in learning could occur. Under this schema one could not be assured of complete continuity in learning. Some problems and issues would naturally be excluded. This would necessitate, it seems, the development of a scope and sequence pattern to assure that individuals would not be exposed to the same problems year after year.

Closely related to the above is a seventh limitation concerning the responsibility of the teacher in the process. If she, the teacher, is indeed to become a facilitator of learning
and a resource for her students, she must then have an enormous wealth of knowledge and sources of information at her fingertips at all times. This requires, of course, a great deal of out-of-class preparation time but is essential to the success of inquiry.

These, then, are some of the problems and limitations impinging upon the reflective process, some of them being of more consequence than others. However, this writer believes that the strengths of the process greatly outweigh the weaknesses in that in the long run the self-directing, autonomous individual will be able to overcome many of these limitations.

Now let us turn to the consideration of the rationale.
CHAPTER V

A DECISION-MAKING RATIONALE

Having considered the research and related literature in the area of political socialization, the psychological foundations of young children's thinking, and the nature of reflective thought, the writer is now prepared to propose a rationale for political education as a decision-making process in the elementary school social studies program. The rationale, very simply stated is this: The development of a citizenry capable of making rational decisions through the reflective examination of socio-political issues of personal or public concern should be the underlying purpose of social studies instruction. The primary concern in this essay is with the elementary school, although this writer believes that this rationale is applicable to the entire social studies program, K-12, and even beyond. It is, indeed, a method or a process usable by the individual for a lifetime as opposed to a strategy to be used just in the formal educational setting.
The remainder of the chapter will include a brief resume of several "assertions" underlying the rationale followed by the description of the rationale itself.

Assertions

The proposed rationale rests on the following assertions:

Political education should take place within the unified structure of the social studies curriculum. It is not the intent of this rationale to develop a separate instructional program just for political education. The decision-making rationale described in these pages is applicable to the social studies in general, not just to its political aspects. This writer would not want to be misinterpreted as advocating a program, such as one of the several curriculum designs in economics education, geographic education, anthropology education, and so forth, which are emanating from various curriculum reform projects throughout the nation.

Political education should encourage open-mindedness as essential to the development of self-directed, fully functioning citizens. The freedom of the mind through the development of the rational powers should be a primary goal of social studies education. This open-mindedness is developed gradually and continuously by the individual as he engages in the reflective examination of socio-political conflicts and issues in the environment surrounding him. The development of open-mindedness
is thwarted when individuals are discouraged from considering alternative approaches to problems and issues, or even more debilitating, when they are not permitted to examine problems and issues at all.

Political education should teach children how to inquire, not how to conform. Most of the definitions of political socialization, as well as the related research and literature reported earlier in this essay, conceptualize the process of politicization as the induction of the individual, in this instance the child, into the political culture in order to preserve and maintain the stability of the existing political system from generation to generation. Conceptualized in this manner, political socialization is of necessity a conforming, inculcating phenomenon which is not compatible with education for maximum individual development. The writer rejects this approach as unacceptable in the development of citizens who will function in a democratic society. Rather, what are needed are self-directed, open-minded reflective individuals capable of considering alternative approaches to problems and issues and making rational decisions in an attempt to clarify discrepancies. Regrettably, however, the indoctrination approach has been and continues to be the prevailing pattern of instructional emphasis in the American school, K-12, with respect to political education.
Political education should accept conflict and discrepancy as a normal part of the reflective process. This rationale accepts that there are issues of a controversial nature which arise continually as the individual attempts to make sense out of his political and social environment. There are those who would contend that children should be shielded from the harshness and reality of political life. The traditional approach of the school has been to avoid these kinds of issues and teach instead those values, attitudes, beliefs, and myths, which are deemed right and proper by the community. Nothing could be more inconsistent with the democratic political tradition than the latter thought. The writer rejects this paternalism as not in keeping with what should be the stated purposes of the American school regarding the development of rationally thinking citizens. This protective approach to life, as a bed of roses during the childhood years, soon has its disillusioning effect upon the maturing citizen as he finds numerous thorns among the sweetly scented petals. Conflict is all about the child. It simply cannot be dismissed or ignored.

Political education should develop patterns or strategies for coping with relevant socio-political issues, i.e., it should develop political behavior processes. This takes exception with the more traditional approach to political education, patterned largely after the Wesley definition of the social studies noted earlier in this essay. Under that
framework, children are taught certain socially approved cognitive and affective learnings. This is not the intent of this rationale. The commitment to memory of large bodies of facts, concepts, and generalizations from which no conclusions are drawn is to render the data useless. These cognitive elements are useful and worth knowing only insofar as they enable the individual to proceed further in his attempt to clarify discrepant socio-political issues confronting him. Thus, to be useful, knowledge should be reflected in behavior rather than held as worth knowing in and of itself.

Equally unacceptable is the deliberate admonition of specified values, attitudes, and beliefs upon children and youth. This indoctrination approach to political learning is not unlike the practices used by totalitarian states in attempting to ensure the preservation of the existing political, social, and economic structure. A reflective approach, on the other hand, does not advocate any particular system of values, attitudes, or beliefs other than the process commitments associated with reflection itself. Rather, reflection deals with issues of a socio-political nature regardless of their theoretical or ideological context. The individual upon defining a discrepancy, posits alternatives, gathers evidence, and makes decisions based on his examination of the data. These decisions result in tentatively held warranted values, attitudes, and beliefs, not absolutes, but temporary conclusions open
to further inquiry and reflection upon the uncovering of new evidence.

Political education should provide for individual differences by giving the child opportunities to engage in the reflective examination of socio-political issues relevant to his needs, interests, and level of maturity. Some would argue that the elementary school age child is not mature enough to engage in the reflective consideration of socio-political issues. These individuals would contend that the instructional program in political education should be largely descriptive and emphasize the acquisition of a large body of facts, concepts, and generalizations on which future considerations might be based. The key element in this controversy appears to this writer to be one of a question of relevancy. The fifth grader may very well be interested in the ABM question but the issue may be too complex for him to consider at his current level of maturation. However, given the wave of dissent sweeping the nation today concerning the war in Viet Nam, this same child may question whether citizens should have the right to criticize their government when it is in a state of armed conflict with another nation. Or, given the present state of civil unrest in the nation, should citizens have the right to disobey or disregard laws which they think are unjust? Or even more relevant in a local situation, given the fact that the proposed route of a new freeway will pass through a residential district, should the
government be permitted to violate the property rights of some citizens in order to provide for the supposed common good of many citizens? These issues are relevant to the child; these issues concern and puzzle him and are within his level of understanding. The writer would posit that the clarification of these issues is of just as much consequence to the ten-year-old as the clarification of whether there is a need for an ABM system is to scientists, political scholars, and politicians.

Further, it might be that the best way to find out if certain problems or issues are of concern to children is to ask them. One can begin the examination of an issue and revise or discard it if it is developmentally inappropriate or if insufficient data are not available to render a tenable judgment.

Political education should prepare individuals to evaluate synthesized data and to subsequently make rational decisions as to the most tenable of several proposed alternatives. The process may be described as follows. The individual is faced with a discrepant event, something that does not seem to fit his cognitive or affective structure. Due to his inquiring nature, he seeks to clarify or resolve the issue. He must first define specifically the nature of the conflict in terms he can understand so as to be able to posit alternatives to the present framework of the issue. This is the next step—developing hypotheses in an "If . . . then . . ." fashion. The inquirer then begins a rigorous and extensive search for all relevant
data which might in some way impinge upon the clarification of the issue. He must review all evidence regardless of whether it will support or refute his hypotheses. On the basis of his thorough examination of the data he must then make decisions as to which alternative is the most plausible. Decision-making then is the careful consideration of several alternatives from among which one is chosen for implementation, or, in this instance, accepted as a tentative conclusion.

The decisions made by the inquiring child will be affected by his presently held system of attitudes, values, and beliefs. Seldom are the issues which the child will confront simple cut-and-dried affairs. The individual, having considered all of the relevant data, still has to contend with his own affective orientations toward the situation. Value-laden issues should not be ignored but rather carefully considered in an attempt to clarify a position. Given the same factual data, three individuals could conceivably arrive at three different tentative conclusions just because their various systems of values, attitudes, and beliefs cause them to perceive the issue from divergent points of view.

For example, using the freeway location issue cited in the previous assertion, Child A, who lives in a house in the proposed route of the freeway as determined by the highway department, values the right of the individual to keep and protect his home. He would assert that another route should be
chosen which does not interfere with his homesite or further
that the project should be abandoned altogether. Child B, on
the other hand, does not live in the proposed route but sees
the highway as a faster way to get across town to his uncle's
house where he goes fishing. He values the most direct route
to his uncle's house whether it means passing through some
residential properties or not. Finally, Child C's grandfather
is buried in a cemetery which is in line with the proposed
alternative route to the one now favored by the highway depart-
ment. He values the sanctity of his grandfather's gravesite
and, therefore, would support any other route. Thus, the
presently held values of each of these individuals would affect
his decision in examining the issue: Should the government be
allowed to route a freeway anywhere they choose even if it
violates the rights of individual citizens?

Political education should prepare the individual to
live in a world of change as an active, effective, fully-
functioning citizen who is able to cope with his socio-political
environment. The pluralistic, urbanized, industrialized,
technological society that is the United States is in a constant
state of change. This might be one reason why America has been
able to maintain its high standard of living, progress in certain
areas, and its position of world leadership. The socio-political
change is so rapid much of the time that the individual could
easily become caught up in frustrating problems, issues, and
controversy. The individual must be able to cope with these conflicts in a meaningful and rational manner or face the possibility of great discontentment. The school has a responsibility, it would seem, as an influential institution in society to play a significant role in the preparation of individuals who can participate effectively as decision-making citizens in this type of environment. Change and innovation are dependent on individuals who are capable of examining issues in a rational, reflective manner and then make responsible choices. This writer believes that the proposed rationale will accomplish this end.

These, then, are some basic assertions upon which the ensuing rationale is built. Let us now turn to the description of the rationale.

The Rationale

The following rationale will be described in terms of the following factors: (1) the kind of individual likely to emerge from the program, i.e., the purpose; (2) the content to be used in achieving that purpose; (3) the necessary classroom climate; and (4) the justification.

Purpose

The purpose of political education for responsible citizenship in a democratic society is as follows:

To provide for the optimum development of each individual—the development of the capacities and abilities which
will enable each individual to know who he is and, if he so desires, to become the most effective person he can possibly become.

This purpose is by no means new but would seem to the writer to be the ultimate end which a democratic society must continually strive to achieve if it is to renew itself from generation to generation as John Gardner has proposed:

Every individual, organization or society must mature, but much depends on how this maturing takes place. A society whose maturing consists simply of acquiring more firmly established ways of doing things is headed for the graveyard—even if it learns to do these things with greater and greater skill. In the ever-renewing society what matures is a system or framework within which continuous innovation, renewal and rebirth can occur.\(^1\)

A society is made up of individual citizens. Thus, if the society as a whole is to renew itself continually, then the individual must also. The writer would propose that the reflective examination of relevant socio-political issues by the maturing citizen is a primary means to the attainment of the purposes stated above.

The nature and method of reflective thinking has been discussed in detail in Chapter IV and will not be reviewed in depth again here. However, it should be noted that the reflective method does not always follow the several steps described

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previously in lock-step fashion. Rather, the learner often jumps about from step to step, eliminating some, combining others, and using short cuts in arriving at his conclusion, but always verifying his data analytically through reflective inquiry. Let us then move on to consider the sources of content used in the process, the classroom climate necessary for reflection to take place, and finally the justification for the rationale.

Content

The process of reflection just described uses as its content problems and issues from the socio-political environment of the child. Facts, concepts, and generalizations from relevant social science disciplines are used as tools in the process, the means to an end and not the end itself. The inquirer draws upon this knowledge to either support or refute proposed alternatives in the examination of the issue. This is in contrast to the more traditional social studies instructional approach in which the content is seen of value in and of itself and is in essence to the end to be achieved. In the reflective process the means and the end are one and the same. The process is the means of approaching problems and issues and the end is the continual refinement of the process.
Classroom Climate

The conditions necessary for reflection to take place include open-mindedness on the part of the inquirer; a classroom setting which is an open forum for the discussion of ideas; a teacher who is a fellow inquirer and a facilitator of learning rather than a purveyor of factual knowledge to be memorized, played back on an exam, and then for all practical purposes forgotten; a teacher who listens to her students and asks heuristic questions designed to stimulate further inquiry; and a community which is committed to the development of reflective thinking individuals through the vehicle of public education.

The teacher is a crucial variable throughout the entire process. She must convey to her students an atmosphere of openness so that they do not hesitate to engage in inquiry. She must be skilled in recognizing when students are puzzled and need assistance. She must have a wealth of knowledge and information at her fingertips. She needs to be skilled pointing out discrepancies in children's thinking and turn them into issues to be clarified or resolved by the student. In order to provide a certain degree of continuity in the social studies program, the teacher will have to develop possible problems or issues to be examined by all. These should be organized around current or recurring issues of concern to the children and, of course, in accord with their level of maturity.
Another area where the teacher has a prime responsibility to her students concerns the question of the consequences of adopting the reflective approach. Unless students are afforded the opportunity to consider the consequences of their acceptance of the method at some point in the social studies program, then the teacher is promoting indoctrination just as if she were forcing certain values, attitudes, and beliefs upon her students.

Still another important task faces the teacher using reflection. The evaluation of reflective inquiry is based not alone on the tentative conclusion reached but rather primarily on the thoroughness of the examination conducted to arrive at that particular conclusion. If the child has adequately defined the issue, proposed logical alternatives, gathered and verified all relevant data available to him, and, thus, arrived at a tentative explanation based on his inquiry, then he has achieved the primary goal of the method. To further test his ability the teacher might propose a problem or issue for him to work through to measure his ability to transfer the process from one situation to another.

Finally, the process of reflective inquiry necessitates the development of a number of skills if it is to be carried out in proper fashion. Skills such as outlining, learning to use a table of contents and an index, learning to consult more than one source in order to verify information, learning to distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion,
learning where to acquire information, learning to read and interpret graphs and charts, learning to draw inferences, learning to recognize an author's biased statements, and learning how to develop and ask good questions are but several of the necessary techniques which will probably be needed by the inquirer. These skills are to be developed within the context of the inquiry as the need arises. Over a period of time they will be refined considerably. The teacher must be skilled in recognizing the need for teaching these techniques if inquiry is to be meaningful.

**Justification**

In preparing a justification for the proposed rationale cited above, the writer is obligated to consider the possible alternatives for political education in the elementary school social studies program. Attitudes are learned through a variety of means, such as imitation, emotionally charged experiences, identification, idiosyncratic sensations, planned cultivation, and informative experiences. However, with relation to the social studies program two primary strategies seem to stand out and will be discussed below.

One possible alternative is the antithesis of the rationale proposed in this dissertation. This would be, of course, the deliberate indoctrination of values, attitudes, and beliefs. This is accomplished through a number of means, including the
idolizing of national heroes, present and past; the picturing of the United States as always being right, "the good guys with the white hats," if you will; the misrepresentation or omission of factual evidence from textbooks and other instructional materials; and the instilling of "right" values, attitudes, and beliefs which are traditional and widely accepted within the society. This approach would have children accept these orientations at face value as absolutes to be learned (memorized) and revered.

A second possible alternative is to ignore formal instruction in the formation of values, attitudes, and beliefs altogether and leave their development to take place in an incidental fashion. Research in political socialization indicates that much political and civic learning already occurs in this manner. Children imitate and identify with the actions and opinions of adult authority figures, especially parents, and accept what they see and hear unquestioningly without further verification or clarification. An example of this approach might be found in a highly structured discipline approach where specified concepts and generalizations, the underlying ideas of a field, are to be learned for their own value. It is highly probably that value learning in this situation would be left to chance.

Neither of these alternatives offers the individual the opportunity to examine and clarify his system of values, attitudes,
and beliefs. Chances are good that he will become a docile, accepting citizen existing apathetically within the established social and political structure rather than playing an active and effective role in improving the system. This is the antithesis of what this nation should designate as the central purpose of its schools and in essence the society as a whole.

Individual freedom and effectiveness and the progress of society require the development of every citizen's rational powers. Among the many purposes of American schools the fostering of that development must be central.²

The social studies is especially suited to the attainment of this purpose as it is that part of the school program which deals with, or at least should, the issues which face society and, consequently, the individuals who are the society. The social studies have failed in this task. They have been busy force-feeding students with facts, concepts, and generalizations at the expense of teaching them how to think for themselves and in doing so engage in an examination of the many social and political problems facing the nation, not to mention themselves.

In order to more fully comprehend the differences between the traditional and the reflective approaches to political education, the writer will now attempt to diagram the two methods in model form.

²Educational Policies Commission, op. cit., p. 21.
The traditional approach to political education may be described in a linear fashion. The society, A, prescribes certain learnings, both cognitive and affective, as desirable and necessary in the preservation of the existing socio-political structure. These learnings are mediated through the school, B, as one of several socializing institutions to the student, C, who is expected to accept and internalize them unquestioningly without further verification or clarification. The student, in turn, matures into an adult citizen, D, firmly committed to the existing societal values, attitudes, and beliefs and begins the process all over again. Thus, the socio-political system is passed on from generation to generation, ad infinitum, relatively intact. Conformity is, of course, encouraged while diversity and change are discouraged. The output, thus, becomes synonymous with the input. There is no provision for feedback in the system that calls for a critical examination of the manner in which the system is functioning or for recommendation for its improvement.
The system is a closed one in which meaningful change is not likely to occur.

On the other hand, the reflective approach to political education may be described in a more cyclical fashion. Events occurring in the socio-political environment sometimes come into conflict with the presently held system of values, attitudes, and beliefs of the individual, A. The resulting discrepancy creates a condition of doubt in the mind of the individual which he seeks to clarify or resolve, B. In order to do this, he proposes logical alternatives, C, to the issue being considered. Next, the individual collects and examines all data relevant to the issue, D. Then, on the basis of this thorough examination, the individual decides upon or renders a judgment concerning the
most tenable of the proposed alternatives, E. This decision results in a tentatively held warranted value, attitude, or belief, F, which the individual may or may not choose to implement in reacting to his environment. This tenative position is always open to further examination upon the securing of new evidence. But possibly most important, the process has helped the individual to better understand who he is. This new insight will, of course, be reflected in the further clarification of this issue or new ones.

This process, in contrast to the former, is open-ended and provides for a continual renewal of attitudes, values, and beliefs that are warranted as a result of reflective examination.

The following brief listing of contrasting statements should help to further clarify the traditional and reflective approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Traditional Approach</th>
<th>The Reflective Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A socially prescribed set of &quot;right&quot; values, attitudes, beliefs, and myths which are committed to the preservation of the existing system are to be learned and revered.</td>
<td>Prepares the child to live in a world of change through the examination of discrepant socio-political issues which are to be clarified and tentatively held as warranted values, attitudes, and beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages dogmatism and conformity.</td>
<td>Cultivates open-mindedness; helps build a self-identity; develops autonomous, self-directed, inquiring individuals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Views the textbook, the teacher, the school in general as unquestioned sources of authority.

Primary method used is memorization of factual data to be used in future considerations.

Skills are learned for their own sake.

Intent is to cover much material in an uncritical, superficial manner.

Avoids dealing with issues of a controversial nature.

Evaluations based on the memorization of factual material to be played back to the teacher on exams.

Draws upon many resources or sources of authority in verifying data.

Any method appropriate for the examination of issues is acceptable.

Skills are learned as needed within the context of the inquiry taking place.

Probes fewer issues in much greater depth; critical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are necessary.

Utilized issues of a controversial nature as a focal point for inquiry.

Uses factual data from the environment to reach a tentative conclusion about some intellectual concern; enables the individual to inquire further and with added insight.

These, then, represent several of the major points distinguishing the approaches to political education as traditionally conceived and as conceptualized by the writer.

The rationale proposed in this dissertation is justified, then, on one basic premise— it frees the mind of the individual and, thus, paves the way for him to achieve self-fulfillment. To live and function under the rigor of the reflective process is not an easy task. It will cause the child to give up the security of fixed beliefs for the uncertainty of tentatives ones always open to further examination— it creates doubt where there
once was certainty. The child may discover problems that
previously he never even knew existed. He may question
time-honored values and beliefs of American society and, thus,
raise the possibility of incurring the wrath of some adults, his
parents, for example. And in the final analysis he may discover
that, although he is able to reflect and make decisions for
himself concerning basic issues, he is, in fact, rendered power­
less to do anything concrete with his conclusions given the
nearly impregnable bureaucratic power structure surrounding
him. He may become frustrated.

But, on the other hand, the writer would posit that the
chances are just as good, if not better, that the individual
would find great satisfaction in realizing his autonomy and
ability to cope with himself and his socio-political environ­
ment rather than be overwhelmed by issues and events or even
worse apathetic toward them. The curious, probing, reflective
child, capable of making decisions for himself, may be an even
better adult citizen. He will be aware of the alternatives
offered him and possibly even more important, he will under­
stand the consequences of the decisions which he makes. He
will be self-directed; he will be his own man. He will enjoy
an asset sought by many but achieved by far too few individuals—
personal freedom of the mind.

In closing, perhaps a short passage from John Steinbeck's
East of Eden expresses this writer's thoughts and what he has
tried to convey throughout the course of this dissertation much more eloquently than all he has said or could say. Although not written to be such, this passage is a profound statement of what should be the primary purpose of American education.

And this I believe: that the free, exploring mind of the individual human is the most valuable thing in the world. And this I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take any direction it wishes, undirected. And this I must fight against: any idea, religion, or government which limits or destroys the individual. This is what I am and what I am about. I can understand why a system built on a pattern must try to destroy the free mind, for this is one thing which can by inspection destroy such a system. Surely I can understand this and I hate it and I will fight against it to preserve the one thing that separates us from the uncreative beasts. If the glory can be killed, we are lost.3

Books


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**Periodicals**


Reports


**Unpublished Materials**

