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Political Socialisation: Out of Purgatory?

Abstract

This paper aims to put contemporary political socialisation research in perspective. It offers a rapid overview of the crisis of the subfield after the 1970s and then shifts attention to post-crisis studies. Beginning with child political socialisation, it raises four issues: the use of theoretical frameworks derived from child psychology; the need to reconnect political socialisation to the sociology of family; the benefits of renewing methods for understanding the world of child politics; and a new account of social inequality in the process of political socialisation. It then explores lifelong political socialisation and how it has developed around four research dynamics: the study of civic and political socialisation of school-age adolescents and young adults; the generational renewal; the socialising effects of political mobilisation; and the processes and agents of the secondary political socialisation of adults. The final section raises the major question of what is political in political socialisation.

Keywords: Political socialisation; Family; Generation; Child and lifelong political socialisation.

For those interested in the history of social science, political socialisation as a research field is a particularly compelling case. It flourished in the 1960s but rapidly collapsed, struck down by major critiques that precipitated its long purgatory. There are signs now that it may emerge from this, although one should not overestimate recovery, as a genuine subfield has not yet been clearly reconstituted.

The difficulty of assessing the state of the art is compounded by the fact that political socialisation used to be "a sub-field of American politics" [Sapiro 2004: 5]. Although the ethnocentrism of political socialisation research was criticised from the very beginning on the grounds that the topic was too limited to American society and that most of its conclusions were not generalisable, ethnocentrism remains a specific feature of political socialisation 60 years later, and few studies

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incorporate a comparative dimension. Nevertheless, for reasons of language, I will not completely bridge this gap, as I will only consider literature in French and English.

Moreover, the label of "political socialisation" now refers to a much broader and less well-defined field of research than in the past, when it was used very narrowly and referred essentially to how children acquire the main schemes and values related to a political system. Progressively, topics falling under this label have been "embedded in a number of subfields, including public opinion, electoral behaviour, political culture and political movement" [Jennings 2007: 30], and this fragmentation complicates the task of accounting for all current developments.

However, this difficulty cannot lead to a return to its former, narrow, largely outdated definition. In line with the classical conception[1] espoused by Berger and Luckmann [1966], I will define political socialisation as the social process over the entire life-cycle of an objective political reality's subjective internalisation, with the caveat that the conception of what might be qualified as "political" is part of the debate in this area of research (see below).

Considering this definition, both the deep social and political transformations of contemporary societies make the study of political socialization particularly relevant. The increase of social and spatial mobility has a direct impact on the processes of political socialization in so far as they modify the objective reality being transmitted as well as the very mechanisms of the transmission. For example, occupational mobility and job insecurity are transforming socio-political class identifications while they also impact the spaces and networks where political socialization used to take place at work. In the same way, migration makes more complex the political content of what is transmitted in migrant families as well as the role of the agents of socialisation within these families, sometimes leading to a reversed mechanism in which children take part in the political socialization of their own parents.

Social changes also affect private life, which is now marked by profound changes in family structures as well as in gender relations. The classical nuclear family has lost its monopoly and can no longer provide the sole reference model for family political socialization as it is gradually being complemented by other family structures, including single-parent, blended or same-sex families. Within families, not only gender relations but also the place given to children have changed, raising questions about the role of mothers and wives as agents of political socialisation and the extent to which children act as actors while internalizing political reality.

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[1] "The ontogenetic process by which this is brought about is socialization, which may thus be defined as the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it" [Berger and Luckmann 1966: 150].

Parallel to these social changes, politics is undergoing a process of transformation. In many countries, the ideological or partisan categories that hitherto dominated the political arena have been radically disrupted. It is becoming more and more difficult to study political socialization only by focusing on the transmission of partisan or left-right identifications as it used to be done. If we agree on such an observation, it becomes necessary to study political socialization beyond these categories in order to understand how new socio-political identifications emerge and contribute to the remaking of new political affiliations. In the same vein, forms of political participation have diversified to include not only voting, social mobilisation in the street or on the Internet, but also a whole range of behaviours that do not directly target the political authorities but put pressure on the market (political consumption) or are expressed in private life. Political learning now takes place outside the political field as such and leads researchers studying political socialization processes to broaden their perspective.

There is no doubt that these profound social and political changes affecting contemporary societies make the study of political socialization particularly challenging and stimulating. For this purpose, this paper aims to put post-crisis political socialisation research in perspective. Since many scholars have already written the short history of the research's heyday, the first section simply offers a rapid overview of the rise and fall of the subfield and explains why child political socialisation has been questioned. The following sections shift attention to post-crisis studies and discuss how new research has revisited this hitherto abandoned topic, keeping in mind that these lines of development are related to initial controversies. Since early works on political socialisation were focussed on children and family, and since subsequent research has shifted focus to lifelong political socialisation, the paper is fairly simply structured: the second section concentrates on new developments and debates on child political socialisation, and the third section reviews the work on political socialisation that falls within the scope of lifelong socialisation. Finally, the fourth section will close the overview by raising the major question of what is *political* in political socialisation.

The rise and fall of political socialisation

The early story[2] of the rise and fall of political socialisation is not complicated to reconstruct, as it flourished very briefly and its fall has been widely analysed [Dennis 1968; Marsh 1971; Merelman 1972; Connell 1987; Percheron 1981; Sapiro 2004; McDevitt 2018]. Indeed, the emergence of this "breaking [of] new ground" [Connell 1987: 215] lasted no more than 10 years, between 1959 and 1969. It began as a "growth stock" Greenstein 1970: 969], and a burgeoning literature emerged [Percheron 1981; Cook 1985]. But critics rapidly weakened and finally halted this dynamic. Subsequently, many papers have been published to address the major problems faced by this research field [Dennis 1968], question its paradigm [Marsh 1971] and finally ponder how to replace it [Connell 1987].

But can the fate of research in political socialisation be analysed as a genuine paradigm shift? Some scholars have pointed to the fact that, in reality, there has never been a dominant paradigm, due to highly fragmented theoretical frameworks [Wasburn and Adkins Covert 2017: 7-8]. But it can also be argued that political socialisation research was directly based on one of the dominant paradigms of political science at the time: behaviouralism. Indeed, political socialisation developed in the late 1950s, along with the shift toward behaviouralism, and its misfortunes were partly due to the questioning of this paradigm. In fact, Easton's famous address [1969] appealing for a "new post-behaviouralist revolution" criticised political science for being lost in methodological technique at the expense of substantive questions and at the risk of losing "touch with reality" [*ibid.*: 1052]. This discourse applied perfectly to political socialisation. Furthermore, "reality" had just vividly interrupted the course of research with the outbreak of the 1968 protest movement, experienced as an exogenous shock.

It is nevertheless necessary to understand why the questioning of behaviouralism hit political socialisation so drastically. It did not have the same devastating effect on the field of electoral studies, which have continued to develop more or less within the same paradigm. It can be assumed that the particular vulnerability of political socialisation was due to its premises and objectives, which were particularly challenged by the

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[2] With the exception of this first section which takes stock of the history, I will not quote early works, giving priority to more recent publications so as not to lengthen the already extensive bibliography.

1968 protest movement. To put it simply, political scientists of the early 1960s portrayed a well-behaved child respectful of both a "benevolent" president and good policemen. A few years later, they discovered a very different "reality" when this legitimist child had become a rebellious young man or woman protesting against the president and clashing in the street with policemen.

This harsh refutation of their research was the direct consequence of their theoretical premises and scientific objectives. By referring to the book that founded the research field, we can understand how the trap was laid by the same people who became caught in it. Hyman's pioneering book, *Political Socialization* [1959], gave the subfield not only a name, but also its general goal and basic assumptions. Political socialisation aimed to explain the stability of the US political system by focussing on child learning and familial political reproduction. At this time, scholars shared a functionalist and normative view of political socialisation and focussed on the best results for maintaining the political system, rather than on individual outcomes. A good citizen was supposed to internalise norms and transmit them to his/her children, who would become good citizens in turn. It was observed that "[t]he genetic and predictive enterprises are clearly complementary in socialisation research" [Searing, Schwartz and Lind 1973: 430]. Significantly, this literature borrowed the notion of "child development" from Piaget's genetic psychology, as well as the term "political development," attesting to the fact that "a long-run goal for socialization research is to relate childhood experience to adult behaviour" [Greenstein 1965: 50]. Asserted as a predictive social science, political socialisation studies ran the risk of being contradicted by social reality, as occurred in 1968.

Child political socialisation

Founding research on political socialisation shared two beliefs: first, that general political orientations are learned during childhood (primacy principle), and second, that they structure adult political belief systems (structuring principle). These two postulates were based on two assumptions: that what is learned first is learned best, and that what is learned during childhood is learned deeply because it is emotionally fuelled. Indeed, this basic concept was widespread, and Berger and Luckmann shared the same assumption: "It is at once evident that primary socialization is usually the most important one for an individual, and that the basic structure of all secondary socialization has to resemble that of primary socialization [...] It should hardly be necessary to add that primary socialization involves more than purely cognitive learning. It takes place under circumstances that are highly charged emotionally" [Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 151]. On the basis of these two principles, the research was mainly devoted to the study of child political socialisation within the family, in which the transmission of political orientations is supposedly more effective. A review of current work raises four main questions. The first concerns the use, the misuse or the lack of use of theoretical frameworks derived from child psychology; the second refers to the need to reconnect political socialisation to the sociology of family; the third concerns the benefits of renewing methods for understanding the world of child politics; and the fourth deals with the forms of social inequality inherent in the process of political socialisation.

Do psychological theories matter?

The primacy and structuring principles seem to be common sense, but they are not actually grounded in solid psychological theory. Hence many scholars [Peterson and Somit 1982; Somit and Peterson 1987; Cook 1985; Marsh 1971; Searing, Schwartz and Lind 1973; Searing, Wright and Rabinowitz 1976; Niemi and Hepburn 1995] challenged the thesis of early learning, considering not only its lack of consistent empirical evidence, but also its weak theoretical foundations. In this respect, they adopted different stances, challenging this assumption either by referring to Piaget's model, which they believe was misused when applied to political socialisation, or by more directly questioning the model itself.

At first, Peterson and Somit used Piaget's model to criticise the "primacy principle": the very idea of well-differentiated stages of cognitive development should predicate the strong distinctiveness of childhood, and thus call for a specific approach to the domain of children's politics. In fact, this assumption challenges the idea that child political socialisation could structure later political orientation on a decisive, not to say final, basis [Peterson and Somit 1982]. A few years later, the same authors [Somit and Peterson 1987 advanced the argument that it is necessary to distance oneself from the Piagetian model in order to eliminate the "primacy principle". To this end, they referred to Kagan's alternative theory of child development [Kagan 1984], which emphasises biological accounts[3] claiming that these different stages may not be related to one another, and also that personal experiences may dramatically change perceptions of politics from childhood to adolescence.

In the same vein, Cook argued that the main weakness of political socialisation stems from the lack of a foundation in an adequate psychological theory of child learning. More precisely, he claimed that the popularity of the Piagetian model among political scientists did not help reinforce the field's theoretical basis. He argued that Piaget's developmental model, focussed on the learning of conceptual reasoning, was "inappropriate for studying the development of political understanding" [Cook 1985: 1083] on the grounds that logical thinking does not characterise most citizens' political understanding and should not be overestimated in child political socialisation. Therefore, he proposed replacing Piaget's theory with Vygotsky's alternative, which he considered a more realistic model: it focussed on language learning embedded in social interactions and pseudo-conceptual understanding, emphasising the fact that children do not differentiate the political realm from other spheres. This line has not been followed in subsequent research, at least not explicitly, although recent research (presented below) echoes this understanding of child perceptions and judgments of political matters.

Some of the criticisms, mainly from psychologists, stressed the fact that research in political socialisation was related very loosely to psychological theories about child development. For instance, Shawn Rosenberg, himself a specialist in political psychology, called for research incorporating psychological conceptions and bemoaned an approach that was in his view "too sociological," in the sense that it overlooked "personal meaning and individual differences" [Rosenberg 1985: 722]. In the end, few sociologists or political scientists have moved in the direction he wanted. First, one could argue that his concept of the sociological approach appears to be largely outdated today, given the spread of a comprehensive sociology that is attentive to the study of the systems of meanings grasped at the individual level. In the research field of political socialisation, work carried out by psychologists and socio-psychologists coexists with that undertaken by sociologists, but the former have little interest in theoretical insight, while the latter choose to distance themselves from socio-psychology and genetic psychology.

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[3] Biological research on child perception of politics is outside the scope of this paper.

How to connect political socialisation with the sociology of the family

Early research assumed that parents were the dominant agents of political socialisation. Studies found that the more politicised the parents and the more they discussed political matters and agreed politically, the better the transmission of political preferences. But these results are still being debated. On the one hand, they have been confirmed by recent research [Jennings, Stoker and Bowers, 2009] comparing parental transmission among generations of young people socialised in the 1960s and 1990s, based on panel surveys of high school students and at least one of their parents. On the other hand, the assertion has been challenged for various reasons. First, the direct transmission model has been questioned for failing to consider children as active agents in the learning process. Ojeda and Hatemi [2015] proposed an alternative two-step model stressing that children's own perception of their parents' political orientation impacts their adoption of their parents' stances. But while researchers agree on the need to question the evidence of family political replication and focus on the agency of young people, they do not all reach the same conclusions. Relying on a panel survey of high school seniors conducted in 2006 in ten North American states, Wolak [2009] emphasises young people's agency and shows that those who pay more attention to media, as well as those who accept conflict (and are probably keen to challenge their parents), are more likely to change politically. More radically, Dinas has questioned the assumption of parental transmission, on the grounds that children who were socialised into politics at an early age by politicised parents are also the most likely to detach themselves from this primary socialisation by investing in the political world, an investment that is more likely to transform them [Dinas 2013b].

In any case, the vast majority of early research shared a socially and historically situated family model based on three elements: a gendered division of parental roles, a vision of marital configurations based on the pre-eminence of the nuclear model, and a unidirectional and vertical vision of transmission. On these three points, new research perspectives eventually emerged. In the earliest works of political socialisation, the father was the central figure, and his absence was even considered a brake on the development of children's political orientations. From the 1970s onwards, however, this result was called into question and the predominant role of mothers was established, to be consistently confirmed in further research. Comparing Germany and Great Britain, Alan S. Zuckerman emphasised the importance of mothers in the political socialisation of children [Zuckerman, Dasovic and Fitzgerald 2007]. Beyond the time that mothers invest in education, these scholars referred to greater trust, listening and closeness in the mother-child relationship, without testing these assumptions empirically [*ibid.*]. This same explanation is mainly advanced by researchers [Wernli 2007; Muxel 2008] who insist on the privileged emotional bond that mothers allegedly establish with their children and their shared closeness in daily life. At the same time, the hypothesis of a better transmission of political opinions from father to son and from mother to daughter (sex-linked transmission) has been tested. The results are conflicting, but the most recent results [Oberle and Valdovinos 2011] show that mothers may influence their children, regardless of their sex, while fathers may only influence their sons. Generally speaking, scholars are faced with a paradox, since it has been established that women have less interest in and knowledge of politics than men, but they are central agents in the political socialisation of their children (see below). Therefore, do mothers transmit a distance or "a negative relationship to politics" [Muxel, 2001: 42], or another way of understanding? In any case, politicised and committed mothers do indeed have a specific influence on their children, especially girls, as work on the legacy of feminism attests [Gidengil, O'Neill and Young 2010; Masclet 2015].

While political socialisation increasingly investigates the gendered division of roles within the family, few account for the transformations that have affected marital configurations. For example, a recent book [Urbatsch 2014] on the construction of value systems and political beliefs within the family does not consider the fact that family structures have changed, and therefore still assumes that all families are composed of a father, a mother and their common children. However, as the sociology of the family has well established, family structures no longer resemble those of the 1950s as a result of the deinstitutionalisation of marriage [Cherlin 2009]. With the increase in break-ups and divorces, the growth of single-parent families (headed mainly by women) and blended families, and the emergence of same-sex families, the process of political socialisation has necessarily changed. Exploratory work [Réguer-Petit 2012, 2016], which we will discuss further, has focussed on women's conjugal trajectories and how they may transform not only their relationship to politics, but also the way they politically socialise their children.

The final issue raised by recent work concerns the meaning of political transmission. Classically, political socialisation has been conceived as unidirectional, proceeding vertically from parents to children. However, one may hypothesise that children's influence on their parents has increased as a result of transformations in the forms of communication within families [McDevitt and Chaffee 2002], the acceleration of socio-cultural transformations, and the importance of migratory trajectories. In fact, this form of bi-directional socialisation is particularly relevant to immigrant families [Wong and Tseng 2008] where children, for linguistic reasons as well as their greater familiarity with the political system of the host country, find themselves in the role of agents of the political socialisation of their parents. But this "trickle-up" socialisation is also likely to play a specific role in the dissemination of post-materialist or ecological values, for which it can be hypothesised that parents are, in part, socialised by their children, who train them to respect new norms of behaviour.

Advocates of greater mobilisation of the analytical tools of psychology have implemented another method of reconnecting the work of political socialisation with research on the family. Some good examples of this type of attempt are studies on the effects of birth order on political behaviours. In one, psychologists tested the hypothesis that first-born children are more successful in political careers and invalidated it for both men [Somit, Arwine and Peterson 1996] and women [Somit, Arwine and Peterson 1997]. In another, among a group of US college students who were arrested for participation in uncivil disobedience movements, researchers tested and validated the hypothesis that later-born children are more likely than first-born to challenge the status quo [Zweigenhaft and Von Ammon, 2000].

How methodological renewal gives way to a better understanding of the world of children

In the 1980s, it could be said that "childhood has disappeared in political science" [Cook 1985: 1080]. Today, this statement can no longer be asserted so boldly. In fact, the few recent works devoted to the study of child perceptions generally aim to analyse them as such, without imposing an adult vision, and seek to establish methods to this end. Early political socialisation research adhered to classical survey research based on pencil-and-paper, forced-choice questionnaires. However, increasing numbers of scholars believed that, in situations reproducing a school setting, children likely perceived the surveys as school tests and tried to provide socially correct answers.

Henceforth, survey methods were improved through the addition of other ways of interviewing children by introducing the practice of semi-structured interviews, focus groups or projective tests and games [Connell 1971]. In line with Percheron [1974], who asked children to tell her which words and photos they liked or disliked, new studies ask them to rank cards depicting various jobs [Lignier and Pagis 2012], countries [Barrett and Oppenheimer 2011] or political hierarchies and symbols. They also collect drawings [Haug 2013] or the children's opinions after reading a children's book on issues of belonging, exclusion and invasion [Throssell 2018], and so on.

In addition, they have favoured ethnographic fieldwork, or at least research that is careful to contextualise data collection within the family or school. All manner of innovative techniques have been introduced to prioritise children's production by distancing them as far as possible from scholastic and adult demands, in order to analyse the children's own understanding and judgments. According to the same rationale, conducting interviews in pairs or in larger groups, and letting children form these groups according to their friendships [Lignier and Pagis 2012], makes it possible to facilitate more spontaneous expression and to grasp it in a less artificial environment than an individual interview.

Thanks to this methodological innovation, new studies have attested to how children deal specifically with political matters. For instance, Lignier and Pagis conducted a field study in two primary schools in Paris [Lignier and Pagis 2017a, 2017b]. They interviewed 336 children between 7 and 10 years of age, using both questionnaires and peer collective interviews, and asking them how they dealt with the social and political order. Their quantitative results raised a puzzling question, especially since the fieldwork took place in rather leftist neighbourhoods: Why do younger children like the "right" more than the older children? Their explanation, grounded in evidence from open-ended questions, is that responses do not refer to politics but to left- and right-handedness: most of the children prefer "the right" because they are right-handed, and such a misunderstanding appears to be widespread at the age of seven before disappearing. What is at stake is a transposition from one practical domain (the use of the body) to another (politics). Lignier and Pagis [2017a], in line with Bourdieu's theoretical framework, argue that children's perception of the social and political order is embedded in a symbolic order shaped by adults' daily injunctions (write correctly, be calm, clean, etc.). Children recycle these symbolic schemas in their perception of politics, judging that Sarkozy is too agitated or Marine Le Pen too angry. But even though this recycling process attests that child perceive politics in a specific fashion, their perception is hardly independent of the adults who provide symbolic schema to make sense of the political world. Therefore, this recycling is deeply rooted in the social logic that differentiates their parents. The general symbolic logic of politics is related to the social logic of gender and class.

Research on the construction of national identification in children is still usually carried out by psychologists [Barrets 2004; *European of Journal Developmental Psychology* 2011] who attest to children's precocious distinction between in-groups and out-groups, and who study knowledge, feelings and beliefs about people from other countries, as well as the identification with one's own country. Finally, a few recent works on children's national identification have adopted a political socialisation approach. This is the case for two studies comparing how national identities and models of citizenship are shaped during childhood in France and the United Kingdom.

Based on interviews of a sample of about 40 8-year old children in primary school in these two countries, supplemented by participant observations in classrooms and interviews with teachers and parents, Throssell [2015] demonstrates the children's precocious feelings of national identification. Echoing the notion of "banal nationalism" [Billig 1995], she underlines the very strong link between this feeling and the idea of one's origin (one cannot change the place where one was born), and therefore its potentially exclusive character. She also shows how the idea of nation is related to that of home and the sense of security (physical, economic and ontological) attached to it.

Based on participant observations in 12 kindergarten and primary classes in France and the United Kingdom, Raveaud [2006] highlights the differences between the two countries in terms of educational practices, rites and routines. In the French case, she emphasises the separation between the school space and the outside world, teachers' stress on national belonging and school marks. Symmetrically, in the English case, she underlines the interweaving of family, local and school communities, the emphasis placed on civility and, beyond that, all the practices of self-government and discipline of the body.

Even if today's French textbooks for primary school children have eliminated their most patriotic and heroic postures, French children still learn an emotional representation of the nation. National belonging appears to be less present, less formalised and vaguer in UK schools, and its political dimension is only one element among others. In fact, school does not appear to be the main vector for children's construction of a national identification in the United Kingdom, which is probably shaped more by popular youth culture and, for example, by fantasy literature [Cecire 2009].

How unequal types of political socialisation are reproduced

All studies on childhood political socialisation agree on the early establishment of strong social inequalities among children. Early research was heavily criticised for considering only white, urban middle-class children. Following this criticism, scholars filled the gap and highlighted disadvantaged children's distance from, and even cynicism toward politics, regardless of their racial origin. The strong social inequalities in the relationship between children and politics stem from profound differences in family educational models and contrasting relationships at school depending on social background [Laureau 2011].

Recently, research was conducted in Germany among 700 primary school pupils in a single town [Van Deth, Abendschön and Vollmar 2011; Abendschön and Tausendpfund 2017]. The results underline young children's ability to deal with questions about politics in consistent and meaningful ways, but they also indicate that social inequalities remain very high in comparisons of children's political knowledge, social issues awareness and normative expectations. They suggest that even if this knowledge increases throughout the primary school cycle, education is not in a position to bridge the gap.

Among these inequalities established from childhood, those relating to gender are particularly puzzling. The first studies conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom in the 1960s highlighted the gap in political learning between boys and girls. In the 1980s, Owen and Dennis confirmed the existence of these persistent gender inequalities [1988]. Based on a panel survey in Wisconsin of 10 to 17 year olds, they showed that the gender gap did not narrow as adolescents grew older. From a sample of French children aged 9 to 11, Alice Simon demonstrated that the gender gap in political knowledge takes root in childhood and results from the socialisation of gender roles. She confirmed the results established by Owen and Dennis: as they grow older, girls and boys develop different perceptions of their gender roles, which in turn affect their knowledge gap, although the latter varies depending on the issue [Simon 2017]. While the gender gap appears to be deeply rooted in the process of learning about gender roles, the same is more difficult to establish when questioning political behaviour. For instance, Hooghe and Stolle [2004] have examined gender differences in the anticipation of political participation among 14-year old North American adolescents. Their results show that girls at this age mention more actions they intend to engage in than do boys, but girls mention social movement-related forms of participation while boys favour radical and confrontational action.

In terms of voter turnout, we have long been aware of how social inequalities are reproduced, since the chances that an adult will vote are greater for those raised by highly educated parents. Two main mechanisms lie behind this process of reproduction. First, educated parents, who are generally more politicised, expose their children to politics, especially in discussions; second, children from educated families are more likely to succeed at school, to be interested in politics and, consequently, to vote: this is what is known as the "status transmission theory". However, another theory—that of social learning—can also be tested. It posits that transmission takes place through the observation and imitation of the electoral practice of parents, who are considered as models. Recently, researchers [Gigendil, Wass and Valaste 2016] have tested these two theories in Finland, which they consider particularly interesting because the reproduction of educational inequalities is low in that country. They show that the status transmission theory is less important than the social learning theory, since the parental model has a very profound influence on children's behaviour, even in adulthood, and proves even stronger when both parents vote. Moreover, they confirm that the mother is a more prominent role model than the father.

Lifelong political socialisation

In the development of research on political socialisation, the idea that everything plays out in childhood has been challenged, and attention has focussed on the changes that occur after primary political socialisation [Searing, Schwartz, and Lind 1973; Searing, Wright, and Rabinowitz 1976]. In the beginning, three models were in competition with each other: the original childhood learning model, the adolescent model (according to which adolescence is the critical time), and the life-cycle model (postulating that political orientations are labile over time) [Somit and Peterson 1987]. After the first model was radically challenged, research shifted to the other two models. Changes were seen not as a sign that the socialisation process programmed in childhood had failed, but as evidence that this process did not stop in adulthood, instead continuing throughout life. Hence, academic attention moved to high school students, then to socialisation over the course of adult life [Sapiro 1994]. However, the idea that the youthful years are decisive still structures many works, whether they are concerned with generational renewal or with the composition of political generations. Furthermore, analysis of the long-term effects of political socialisation in youth is now fuelling work in the fields of values studies, electoral participation and social movements. These new research dynamics have developed around four main subfields. The first results from a shift in attention from children to young people and from family socialisation to civic and political socialisation of school-age adolescents and young adults. The second is concerned with generational renewal and the way in which socialisation conjunctures modify the politicisation of different cohorts. The third deals with the socialising effects of social mobilisations. Alongside these three rather well-structured subfields, more scattered work has emerged on the processes and agents of the secondary political socialisation of adults.

How citizenship comes to youth

For some scholars [Niemi and Hepburn 1995], the revival of political socialisation has involved shifting attention from children to young people (15 to 25 years of age). In fact, a book [Abendschön 2013] that brought together recent work on political socialisation conducted primarily in Europe confirms the idea that research is still much more focussed on adolescents than on children. Proponents of this change of perspective have contended that adolescence is the period of greatest change and therefore the most interesting to study. To this argument, they have added that young adulthood is also the period wherein schools and universities invest the most in civic and political socialisation and attempt to formally educate young people about the socialisation of their societies. Finally, the political disengagement of young citizens has also strengthened interest in this age group.

The specific literature on the socialising effects of civic education most often favours large comparative surveys. Early work conducted in the United States shared a rather sceptical view of the effects of civic education courses on young middle and high school students. Subsequently, this scepticism has been challenged [Niemi and Junn 1998] and it has been accepted that civic education has an influence on students' level of knowledge—especially with regard to institutional policy. Above all, more so than lesson content, studies have placed emphasis on pedagogical practices and classroom atmosphere: openness to students' free expression is now considered one of the aspects of education with the greatest influence on students' civic knowledge and attitudes [Campbell 2006, 2008; Hann 1998; Torney-Purta 2002; Geboers *et al*. 2013]. The more the teaching approach is based on student participation and the promotion of a spirit of tolerance that respects different opinions and possible conflicts, the stronger the socialising effects of civic education are likely to be. From this perspective, labelled as "deliberative learning" [McDevitt and Kiousis 2006], discussion within the classroom [Hess 2009], as well as with peers and family members, has emerged as a central driver of civic and political socialisation.

The hypothesis of a compensatory mechanism was formulated in early work showing that civic socialisation at school is more likely to have an effect if it is directed at socially disadvantaged children raised in low-politicised families. This result has been validated by more recent work based on student surveys in the US [Campbell 2008], panel surveys in the United States and Belgium [Neundorf, Niemi and Smets 2016] and studies based on the evaluation of devices introduced in educational institutions [McDevitt and Chaffee 2000; Feldam *et al*. 2007]. For example, the quasi-experimental research conducted by Feldman *et al*. [2007] demonstrates that the "Student Voices" educational programme introduced in high schools in the city of Philadelphia in the United States has benefited ethnic minority students (especially Black students) as much as other students.

However, it has also been shown that this knowledge transmitted in the school setting does not automatically translate into a strong disposition to political participation, with the exception of voting. This is demonstrated by the latest IEA survey of students aged around 14 years [Schulz *et al*. 2010]. For example, in Latin American countries, the students surveyed show a lower level of civic knowledge than the international average, but have high scores in terms of interest in political and social issues, civic participation and intention to participate in elections and political activities in the future (petitions, demonstrations, etc.). Conversely, in the Scandinavian countries, particularly Norway [Fjeldstad and Mikkelsen 2003], students' level of civic knowledge (as well as trust in institutions) is high; however, they have lower levels of interest in political and social issues, as well as lower scores on future political participation (apart from voting).

However, there is an interest in the role of the school in political socialisation, and the subject needs to be approached more broadly, without focussing exclusively on those teachings that are explicitly dedicated to citizenship education, but also examining the way in which the school institution shapes national identities and transmits narratives from the past. The case study [Oeser 2010] on the teaching of the history of Nazism, based on a field survey conducted in four schools located in bourgeois and working-class districts of Hamburg in the west and Leipzig in the east, shows, for example, the gendered appropriation of the “pedagogy of emotional upheaval” (*Betroffenheitspädagogik*) and highlights the importance of peer interaction and jokes that circulate outside the classroom.

Indeed, research in secondary and higher education has also emphasised that political socialisation extends well beyond the classroom and is forged in all extra-curricular activities, particularly in the associations that structure high school and especially student life. This is the argument that Binder and Wood [2013] made when they stressed how the university environment moulds political styles: they used interviews with right-wing campus activists and group leaders to understand how these two institutions produce distinct styles of conservatism. The Western conservative style is more confrontational and provocative, while the Eastern style is more intellectual and deliberative. Klofstad’s book [2011] was based on a longitudinal survey of 4,358 college students at the University of Wisconsin, supplemented by focus groups that also emphasised the university environment. He shows that civic talk, that is to say, discussions focussed on political and current events, influences involvement in voluntary civic organisations. He argues, however, that it actually increases the social participation gap. He also stresses the role of discussions with peers, especially roommates and friends, although he affirms that students are more likely to talk with peers who are similar to them. Finally, in line with the contextual analysis of voting, Gimpel, Lay and Schuknecht [2003] conducted a survey of 3,060 adolescents attending various high schools. Their results attest to the importance of the local environment and emphasise the fact that civic socialisation is not primarily based on the acquisition of knowledge, but is also nourished by immersion in socially and politically diverse local contexts that are more conducive to discussion and political engagement.

Youth political socialisation obviously goes beyond educational institutions and involves peers and media [Thorson, McKinney and Shah 2016]. Comparing the influence of various political agents (family, school, peers, medias, voluntary association) among a large sample of young Belgians (from 16 to 21 years of age), Quintelier [2015] shows the peripheral influence of school, the importance of peers and associations, and the positive effect of the Internet (much more than television) on political participation.

Actually, after studying the role of television and especially TV news [Buckingham 1999], a number of studies are now exploring the role of social media, which are massively used by teenagers. Most of this work falls within the educational sciences or the study of communication and journalism, and links the use of media to the civic participation of young people. Even if they claim to be in the field of political socialization, not all of them focus on processes and mechanisms: on the basis of quantitative surveys, they measure the correlation between media use, interest or knowledge in politics and various forms of political participation. Based on a sample of young Europeans extracted from the European Social Survey (which unfortunately does not include questions on social media) a comparative analysis confirms the positive role of media consumption on the conventional political participation of young people [Moeller and De Vreese 2013]. A complementary study based on an online survey among young Dutch people in 2006 tackles the relationships between various types of media use and various forms of political participation. It shows that the Internet is a stronger predictor for newer forms of political participation than for traditional forms. However, the limitation of these results lies in the somewhat tautological nature of the explanation due to the fact that the new forms of participation include exclusively various forms of digital activities. Still in the European context, but this time in a Swedish locality, a longitudinal survey has been conducted among young people aged between 13 and 17 years. The authors distinguish between different "Internet spaces" such as "news spaces," "spaces of social interaction," "game spaces," "creative spaces". They confirm the central place of "news space" in the process of youth political socialization. But addressing the question "whether a frequent engagement in interactional and creative Internet spaces in general promotes a development of public orientations in adolescence. (Their) answer is no. Such engagement has negative longitudinal effects on self-transcendent values, political interest and talk about politics and social questions" [Ekström Mats, Olsson Tobias and Shehata Adam 2014: 179-180].

In the US context, the positive effect of the Internet on political participation has been confirmed in a panel survey on North American adolescent-parent pairs during the 2008 presidential election [Lee, Shah and McLeod 2012]. But this effect is related to the practice of discussion (see below), especially offline. News and opinions gathered on the Internet are good sources of information for discussions within the family, at school or with peers. Swedish research focusing on how social media contribute to youth engagement in pro-environmental behaviours makes the same point and provides evidence of the role of interpersonal talk in environmental awareness [Östman 2014].

Generational renewal and the imprint of conjunctures of socialisation

The idea originally formulated by Mannheim—for whom young adulthood resembles the "impressionable years" because it corresponds to a sequence of maximum receptivity and therefore potential change—still structures many works. As Mannheim [(1928) 1952: 304 put it, "Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation". The analysis of generational renewal, which considers the cumulative effects of the period and the cohort's age, is a stimulating area of research that uses sophisticated quantitative methods and significantly aids in understanding the dynamics of political socialisation [Neundorf and Smets 2017]. Recent studies argue that the formative or impressionable years start at a much younger (ending in the mid-teens) or older (beginning in the early thirties) age than previously assumed [Bartels and Jackmann 2014]. They also raise the question of the nature of these common historical and socio-political experiences that generate political generations.

The question of the political effects of generational renewal has been central to the study of values since the work of Inglehart [1979], who associated the rise of post-materialist values with generational effects linked to differences in political socialisation based on various economic and socio-political conjunctures. According to this analysis, socio-economic prosperity would, in fact, have led to the erasing of materialist expectations of new cohorts, who would turn instead to post-materialist demands, whether cultural or identity-related. The most recent work has shown, first, that with the new change in the socio-economic context—the emergence of the crisis years—the new cohorts could not be described simply as "post-materialist". In the French case, Tiberj [2017] confirmed the spread of anti-authoritarian values brought about by generational renewal, but also established that socio-economic values (redistribution of wealth, state intervention) were nevertheless far from disappearing and had remained stable. In other words, while the cultural dimension has indeed become a structuring factor in the explanation of voting in France, it has complicated, not replaced, the socio-economic dimension. To a great extent, this can be explained by the socio-economic profile of the new cohorts. Tiberj shows that they are certainly better educated, but marked by a discrepancy between their degrees and employment and the experience of unemployment and job insecurity. Along with others [Hooghe 2004; Grasso 2014; Grasso *et al*. 2019], he also highlights generational differences in political participation, as the post-baby boomer generation is more distant and less politically deferential than older cohorts, and therefore would be more inclined to participate in protest activities (e.g. participate in a boycott demonstration) than to vote or join a political organisation. This difference in terms of political participation may be better explained by the effects of the political situation than by effects linked to the economic and social conditions of socialisation.

In the British case, similar research has been carried out focussing on the political context per se. Studies show how generational movement was disrupted by Thatcherism, which introduced values that were economically liberal and culturally authoritarian. The effects of these values continued during the Blair period, prompting the authors to write that they "[had] not just found more evidence of 'Thatcher's Children'; [they had] also discovered Thatcher 'Grandchildren' in 'Blair's Babies'" [Grasso *et al*. 2017: 17]. They also challenge the "substitution thesis," which posits that the younger generations were participating not less but differently through non-conventional actions. They argue that Thatcher's children and Blair's babies participate less than the generations that came of age during the highly politicised 1960s and 1970s. From their perspective, the notion of political context refers to the extent of political contestation of key ideas. The theoretical hypothesis of the "impressionable years" has been empirically validated by attributing a different meaning to the notion of political context [Dinas 2013a] on the basis of a political event, the Watergate scandal in the United States. Young people—including the most politicised—showed a greater sensitivity and seemed less structured than older people by the opinion they had about Nixon before the scandal; they were therefore more likely to change their opinion for the long-term.

In the field of electoral participation, there is also a growing interest in the different forms of electoral socialisation, understood as the internalisation of voting as a habit. A number of studies followed Franklin [2004], who stressed the fact that voting is a habit acquired during youth. A whole range of electoral studies therefore deals with the socialising effect of first electoral experiences, showing, for example, that this effect requires a certain length of time, since it must develop over at least two consecutive elections [Smets and Neundorf 2014], and that it also concerns the local context [Pacheco 2008]. For these studies, the key factor in characterising a political context is the degree of competitiveness of the first elections in which young voters are called upon to participate. More generally, the paradigm that analyses the electoral act as a habit rather than a decision has recently generated a great deal of work that we cannot address in this article, although this analytical framework is part of the re-evaluation of the importance of socialisation processes.

The socialising effects of political mobilisation

This same interest in the long-term socialising effects of political events experienced in youth appears in the field of social movements. Most of the literature has been devoted to the personal consequences of activists' involvement in the protest movements of the 1960s in the US and, more recently, to the activists of the late 1960s in Europe. This body of literature has called attention to the consequences of social movements for the life-course of individuals who have participated in movement activities. It shows that activism has a strong effect on both their political and personal lives. These 1960s activists maintained their ideological commitments over a lifetime, and many remained active in movements. Concerning personal life, many types of research accord on the effects of youth engagement on professional and affective trajectories. Youth activists have lower incomes than their age peers, are more likely to work in the sector of education or social care, and are more likely than their age peers to have divorced, married later in life, or remained single.

For the most part, recent works [Corrigall-Brown 2012; Bosi, Giugni and Uba 2016; Pagis 2018; Fillieule and Neveu 2019] have not undermined these main results. In France, Pagis [2018] conducted a survey among post-1968 people by constructing a sample of parents who enrolled their children in alternative education schools. Thus, she was able to compare the biographical consequences of their involvement in the May 1968 movement and confirm many of the results established by McAdam [1988]. The combination of a questionnaire survey and the collection of life stories allowed her to articulate political socialisation prior to the event, the modes of participation in it and its long-term effects. It shows that, obviously, the biographical effects depend on the degree of participation in the movement (mere attendance at demonstrations or more intense and lasting involvement in organisations) and confirm the existence of micro-cohorts [Whittier 1997]: older activists who had been involved in the anti-war movement in Algeria a few years before May 1968 do not share the same profile as those who joined the mobilisation in 1968. Generally speaking, the study substantiates the socialising effects of the mobilisation, which transformed political, occupational and private lives. The social movement of May 1968 thus constituted a large-scale socialising event. It produced activists over the long term, oriented them towards specific job sectors (in particular, social work) and had effects on their private and emotional lives (community life, marital breakdowns, etc.). However, different forms of socialisation occurred: reinforcement or maintenance socialisation for people educated in politicised or politically engaged families or whose commitment preceded the "events" of May 1968, and conversion for first-time activists. Notably, the destabilising effect was stronger for the latter, and in particular for women whose participation in the movement was a genuine conversion in relation to their political family socialisation. Women appear more deeply transformed, affectively and sometimes psychologically, as evidenced by more frequent depressive episodes.

For the most part, work on the socialising effects of social mobilisations has concerned left-wing movements and organisations. Corrigall-Brown's innovation was to conduct a comparative survey in left-wing and right-wing organisations in the United States. Her survey was not, strictly speaking, interested in a specific social movement (the civil rights movement or the 1968 movement), but rather in involvement in four organisations—two of them left-leaning (Catholic Workers and the Farm Workers Union) and two right-leaning (Concerned Women for America and the Homeowners' Association). She combined a quantitative analysis based on the broad longitudinal panel study conducted by M. Kent Jennings and colleagues, which surveyed a sample of high school seniors in 1965, with a qualitative component based on interviews of 60 self-identified activists in these four organisations. She showed that whether on the left or the right, those who had been politically engaged remained true to their ideological commitment. However, the forms of this engagement were very different for those on the left and the right, with the leftists being active in protest and those on the right maintaining loose affiliations with groups.

Two edited books have recently re-examined the analysis of the personal effects of social mobilisation in an attempt to renew this perspective, in particular by broadening the examples from the traditional North American and European mobilisations of the 1960s, which now appear to be over-studied. The book on *The Consequences of Social Movements* [Bosi, Giugni and Uba 2016] deals with the consequences in terms of socialisation—that is, on people—but also considers those that affect policies and institutions. *Activist Forever?* [Fillieule and Neveu 2019] focusses exclusively on the effects of mobilisations on the political and personal trajectories of activists, on the assumption that movements produce activists who will remain active. This book is interesting in that it focusses on the consequences of mobilisation in contexts that have been studied little thus far (the Czech Republic, Poland, India, Brazil, Morocco). These two books share a focus on institutional activists and the sometimes difficult transition from the role of activist to that of leader. This type of transition generates discontinuities in terms of political socialisation. For instance, in the case of Czech dissidence, a "community of insubordination" [Hadjiisky 2019: 227] emerged within the Civic Forum, which was repressed under the Communist regime, but this community of activists were reluctant to become true politicians.

How adults are politically transformed

The studies on civic socialisation, generational renewal and the personal effects of individual engagement reviewed above start from the hypothesis of the impressionable years of youth[4]. But other research surmises that political socialisation takes place openly throughout the lifespan, through interactions with a number of agents that modify or maintain the political structuring of the world shaped during childhood and youth (the lifetime openness perspective), or in a way that is marked by different stages over a lifetime (the life-cycle perspective)[5]. However, the lack of general reflection on what is usually called secondary political socialisation is striking. Wasburn and Adkins Covert [2017] attempted to fill this gap by proposing a broad synthesis of the different stages and agents of political socialisation over the lifespan. They advocated a life-cycle model based on the assumption that, at all life stages, there are complex relations among various agents of political socialisation. Focussing exclusively on the US, they systematically reviewed the role of the family, school, religion, media, workplace and so on.

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[4] I will not deal in this article with research on socialisation within political organisations or other political institutions, such as socialisation to activism or to political professions.

[5] See WASBURN and ADKINS COVERT 2017: chapter 1.

For a long time, studies have highlighted the importance of couple formation and marriage in political socialisation. More specifically, electoral studies have agreed on the positive effects of marriage or conjugal cohabitation on voter turnout. As part of a necessary reconnection with the field of sociology of the family mentioned above, more recent work based on the Swiss Household Panel [Voorspostel and Coffe 2012] has revealed gender differences. In general, partnered women are more likely to vote and to participate in voluntary work, and marital separations have a negative effect on women's political participation, whereas they have little influence on men. These gender differences are also reflected in parenthood, since women are always more affected than men: their political participation decreases somewhat with the arrival of children, but increases somewhat when the latter go to school. The same panel survey also makes it possible to measure the influence of marital trajectories on partisan orientation [Voorspostel, Coffe and Kuhn 2018]. It confirms the link between separation and party choice: those who are separated are more likely to support left-wing parties, but this preference pre-dates the event of separation. Therefore, the effect of the life event is highly tempered, since the separation has no political effect as such, but leftism and the sharing of more liberal moral values makes this break in marital ties more likely. Other works attest to the effect of family breakdowns on women. A survey on the effects of marital breakdowns and remarriages [Réguer-Petit 2016] shows that the social experience of separation, because it usually involves contact with the legal system, a drop in income and consequently an appeal to the welfare state, changes women's relationships with the state, public policies and the principle of justice, and is likely to modify their political views.

Whether one is interested in the process of the political socialisation of children in the family setting[6], pre-adults in school and university institutions or in peer groups, or people involved in a voluntary association or living as a couple, the impact of discussion practices is always emphasised. Indeed, any attempt to understand political socialisation in practice raises specific questions about discussion practices and their effects. Yet research on the frequency of discussion concurs that one discusses mainly with people with whom one agrees. This need to gather to talk politics is stronger where people are farther removed from institutional and legitimate politics. Whether we evoke the forms of resistance emerging from the churches or hair salons of the North American Black community [Harris-Lacewell 2004], coffee shops where Wisconsin old-timers meet [Cramer Walsh 2004] or the cooperative structures known as the "Maisons du Peuple" ("Houses of the People"), which provided the working classes with affordable goods for consumption all around Europe [Cossart and Talpin 2012], these socially homogenous spaces constitute privileged places for political socialisation. In fact, the gathering of people who look alike is at the heart of debates on the role of associations as channels of political socialisation. The "avoidance of politics" [Eliasoph 1998 and Hamidi 2010] is indexed to various parameters, including the degree of social and political heterogeneity of the associative group.

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[6] Based on data from a three-wave national survey collected among parents and youth during the 2008 US presidential election, experts on political communication and political scientists have published a book that emphasises the importance of family and-peer discussions in political socialisation [Thorson, McKinney and Shah 2016].

Studies on discussion networks have shown that people are most likely to speak with those who disagree with them politically in the work environment [Mutz and Mondak 2006], yet little research has been conducted on the role of this environment in secondary socialisation. People avoid talking politics at work precisely because of the risk of finding themselves in disagreement with colleagues; for the same reason, it is difficult to carry out surveys or fieldwork in this context. Nevertheless, the absence of explicitly political positions does not imply the absence of forms of symbolic categorisation or infra-political exchanges that nourish political socialisation in the professional world [Sainsaulieu and Surdez 2012]. Indeed, the little research that has explored how careers and work environments shape political socialisation, far from focussing on the heterogeneity of political views at work, emphasises common professional patterns. For instance, research on Swiss engineers [Sainsaulieu, Surdez and Zuffrey 2019] shows how they acquire a "technoscientific" worldview during their professional training, which gradually influences their understanding of politics. The careers of technological professionals can take either a collective or individualistic turn, whether they orient themselves towards greater technical professionalism or aim for more managerial goals. These two career paths may subsequently nudge the political leanings of engineers to the left or to the right. In general, it is striking that political socialisation within the professional world is largely under-investigated.

What is "political" in political socialisation?

Initially, political socialisation research was concerned with formal and institutional politics. It focussed on the family transmission of party identification and children's perceptions of political authorities. Thus, when he reviewed Hyman's seminal book, Gusfield pointed out that "the theory of politics is unstated" [Gusfield 1960: 258]. However, if we consider that political socialisation corresponds to the subjective internalisation of objective political reality, as Berger and Luckmann expressed it, the political reality cannot be reduced to the institutional political system, although of course this constitutes a central part. Initially, political socialisation research focussed mainly on the transmission of partisan orientations and children's perceptions of political authorities (the president, the police, the law, etc.) or on the acquisition of political knowledge and civic culture during young adulthood. Put another way, initial research adopted a legitimist perspective focussing on the integration of the existing institutional political system and norms.

But, actually, political reality can be conceived much more broadly, encompassing all forms of claims and conflict-solving. It emerges from not only plural but also stratified and unequal societies [Duchesne and Haegel 2007], in which the allocation of material, legal and symbolic resources is a key issue for political activity, and its contestation is equally crucial to democratic functioning. As McDevitt argues, "Contemporary theory in political socialization is struggling with how to accommodate conflict seeking and its expression in political identity" [McDevitt 2018: 797. Political socialisation is then not only a matter of knowledge or opinion, but also of social identification; it does not only involve what one thinks but also what one is. If considered less narrowly than originally, political socialisation must focus on the formation of social identification, also called "group consciousness," whether on a class, gender, age, racial or religious basis. Moreover, it should not only be concerned with the formation of collective identification and consciousness, but also with their conflictualisation, either for addressing demands to political representatives and authorities, or by political actors that designate groups or impose categories of public action that are then internalised by individuals. If political socialisation involves an opposition between in-group and out-group, between "us" and "them," in line with Hoggart [1957], we must not forget that the game is not played by two (we/them) but by three (we/them/they) where "they" designate the representatives of political-administrative power. Such a concept should lead us to shift attention to the construction of social identifications and their conflicting effects, and to consider public action through the allocation of resources, the resulting social categorisations and contacts with public actors as key drivers of the political socialisation process. For instance, in her latest book, Cramer Walsh [2016] applies this analytical grid to the Wisconsin field. She shows how identification with the rural world, as opposed to the urban world, shapes politicisation through resentment based on the idea that public fiscal and educational resources supply urban areas first. Such a concept encourages us to anchor the analysis of political socialisation processes more strongly in political sociology, by focussing on individuals' internalisation of social identifications and the latter's production of conflicting visions in the political arena. Going further, we connect socialisation of class, race and gender to political socialisation, examining how group consciousness is shaped by different socialising experiences in everyday life, including the implementation of public policies. For example, there is a growing body of work on the political socialisation role of experiences with racialisation and discrimination. In the same perspective, research on gay and lesbian socialisation examines how gender identities influence relationships with politics.

After the crisis of the 1970s, the field of political socialisation research developed by gradually broadening its scope. In fact, this movement has been twofold. On the one hand, the very notion of socialisation has extended beyond childhood and youth to concern the entire lifespan. On the other hand, the concept of politics has also broadened beyond the mere internalisation of the political system. This twofold widening has led to a fragmentation of research, but not to a loss of interest in the process of political socialisation as such. On the contrary, one is struck by the introduction of a political socialisation perspective in many subfields of political science and sociology.

For example, the debate concerning the analysis of voting as a habit acquired in youth is particularly lively in electoral studies. It puts the question of the mechanisms of electoral socialisation at the heart of the discussion. Similarly, research on generational renewal and its transformation of value systems and forms of political participation, by postulating that these new generations are being formed through the sharing of common socio-political experiences, also points to the relevance of an approach in terms of political socialisation. Finally, all the work on the construction of collective identifications—the emergence of conscious groups and the way in which these identity claims, in particular racial, sexual or gender-based, are mobilised in the public space and internalised at the individual level—also provide evidence of political socialisation's topicality.

The exit from purgatory is well under way, but it has tended to be too dispersed. Furthermore, we have the impression of a disconnection between two recent dynamics. On the one hand, some researchers remain centred on the analysis of the internalisation of institutional forms, focussing on the legitimate forms of political socialisation analysed as a learning process. Other researchers prefer to grasp the way in which collective identifications and group consciousness are formed; they are interested in alternative forms of political socialisation conceived as a process of categorisation and conflictualisation. One of the main challenges is, therefore, to further connect these two research dynamics while keeping in mind that the approach to political socialisation implies examining not only what the process produces (the outputs) but also how the process is achieved (the mechanisms). This entails, first, investigating the different agents (including restoring the individual agency of the socialised individual), taking into account the ways in which each of them has been transformed (the family first and foremost). It also demands an attention to be paid to the mechanisms (discussion, role modelling, social pressures, etc.) and to all settings and contexts.

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