

THE POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION OF ST.  
JOHN'S SCHOOL CHILDREN IN GRADES FOUR  
TO EIGHT

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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THE POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION OF ST. JOHN'S  
SCHOOL CHILDREN IN GRADES FOUR TO EIGHT



by  
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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements For the Degree of  
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#### ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the political socialization of St. John's school children in grades four to eight. The study was concerned with how variables such as grade level, socioeconomic status, sex, and school type (religion) affected students' knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, partisanship and perceived importance of election outcomes, and participation attitudes and behavior.

An extensive review of related literature was undertaken in order to gain a greater insight into the nature of child political socialization. Very little research has been done on child political socialization in Newfoundland. Most of the studies to date have been conducted in the United States. There are, however, a number of important Canadian studies on child political socialization. The American and Canadian studies that have been conducted proved to be a useful source of information, both theoretical and methodological, on child political socialization in St. John's, Newfoundland.

A questionnaire that included only multiple-choice items was administered by the investigator to 600 students from five schools in different geographical regions of St. John's. Three schools were selected from the St. John's Roman Catholic School System and two from the Avalon Consolidated School System.

Because of the nature of the study (a survey questionnaire), descriptive statistics were used to analyze the findings. A series of percentage tables were constructed giving student responses to various items on the questionnaire.

The findings were analyzed under four main headings: findings related to student knowledge of political leaders and institutions, find-

ings related to student evaluation of the job done by political leaders and institutions, findings related to partisanship and perceived importance of election outcomes, and finally, findings related to participation attitudes and behavior.

When analyzing the findings concerning students' knowledge of politics, evaluation of the job done by political leaders and institutions, partisanship and perceived importance of election outcomes, and participation attitudes and behavior, it was noted that many differences were not consistently large for all independent variables. For instance, students' knowledge of politics was not consistently related to grade level, socioeconomic status, sex differences, and religion (type of school). Students at all grade levels tended to be equally aware of the mayor, however, students in the higher grades (seven and eight) tended to be more aware of the premier and prime minister.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.

#### A. THE PROBLEM

When the older generation acts as if politics is wholly an adult preoccupation, too complex for the child's attention, adults have in mind a conception of politics involving partisan conflict and ideological struggle. For them, politics means electoral politics, an arena where competing parties and candidates engage in bitter arguments about issues such as unemployment, inflation, and political corruption. Politics in this sense is conflict laden. However, though adults want to keep the seamy side of politics away from children, they do want to instill the "right" political attitudes and values in their children. These values deal with less explicit partisan issues and with more widely shared notions, such as patriotism, loyalty, national identification, and national unity.

When does this political socialization process begin and develop for the youngest members of society? This question has long concerned political scientists and educators alike. As early as the 1920's social scientists showed interest in the development of individual political behavior. Charles E. Merriam in 1925 predicted that:

... the examination of the rise 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.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is only since the 1950's that the label "political

<sup>1</sup> Charles E. Merriam, New Aspects of Politics, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1925), p. 85.

socialization" has become attached to the process of initiation into politics. Since then a significant amount of research has been conducted on child political socialization, particularly in the United States.

At present there are very few studies that attempt to explore the development of child political socialization in Newfoundland. The vast majority of studies thus far have been carried out in the United States. Two of the seminal studies include that of New Haven children in the fourth to eighth grades conducted by Fred Greenstein in 1965, and a much larger sample of second to eighth grade children in two cities in each of the four American geographic regions researched by Robert Hess and Judith Torney in 1967. Greenstein dealt with knowledge of and attitudes toward specific leaders, parties, and issues.<sup>2</sup> Hess and Torney used questionnaires to investigate a slightly broader area of political socialization, the growth of interest in the nation, its government, and the rise of the desire to participate in the political process.<sup>3</sup> These studies were among the first to deal with the political socialization of the child, and were significant in providing the framework for further research in the area.

A lesser amount of research has been conducted on child political socialization in Canada. One study was conducted by George R. Robert in 1969. In his thesis, The Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, Robert reported on how grade level, sex differences, socioeconomic status, and type of school affected the political socialization of

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<sup>2</sup> Fred Greenstein, Children and Politics, (Yale University Press, 1965).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Hess and Judith Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1967).

grades four to eight students in that city. Jon Pammatt and Michael Whittington in their book, Foundations of Political Culture: Political Socialization in Canada, reported on a number of political socialization studies done in this country. In their book, Socialization and Values in Canadian Society, Volume 1, Elia Zureik and Robert Pike bring together some of the more significant studies conducted on political socialization in Canada.

The American and Canadian studies that have been conducted can be a useful source of information, both theoretical and methodological, on child political socialization in St. John's, Newfoundland. However, such studies cannot give a complete picture of child political socialization in this province. There are factors unique to Newfoundland which may affect the political socialization process of school children. For instance, an island culture could influence the way a child perceives his political world. John H. Calhoun in his thesis, The National Identity of Newfoundlanders, supports this view by stating "the physical isolation bred an insular complex which allowed Newfoundlanders to feel they were a unique community".<sup>4</sup> The island culture idea is also supported by Anthony P. Cohen in his case study on "The Political Context of Childhood: Leaders and Anti-Leaders in a Changing Newfoundland Community". In this study Cohen provides some insight into Newfoundland's political culture.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> John H. Calhoun, The National Identity of Newfoundlanders, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony P. Cohen, "The Political Context of Childhood: Leaders and Anti-Leaders in a Changing Newfoundland Community" in Socialization and Values in Canadian Society, Volume 1: Political Socialization by Elia Zureik and Robert Pike, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Limited), 1975.



The study shows that a child's political ideas are significantly influenced by the culture in which he lives.

The ideas expressed by both Calhoun and Cohen are important in helping to understand the political socialization process of St. John's elementary school children. Both authors focus on the determinate role which the cultural environment has played in shaping the political orientations of Newfoundlanders. Cohen, like Calhoun, stresses the importance of Newfoundland's isolated position. Isolated from North America and Europe for most of their history, Newfoundlanders developed over the years a feeling of being "a race apart".<sup>6</sup> This feeling tends to be reflected in all aspects of their lives including religion, economics, and politics.

This feeling of being "a race apart" could have an influence on the political socialization of Newfoundland school children. In a study on the political socialization of first-year Memorial University students, David M. Kirby found that their attitude toward politics was influenced by Newfoundland's isolated position from the mainstream of Canadian politics.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is possible that these same feelings may be prevalent among children in Newfoundland schools. With this in mind, the main problem of the present study is to investigate the development of political socialization of St. John's school children in grades four to eight. The independent variables in the present study are grade level of the student, socioeconomic status of the student's family, student sex differences, and type of school attended by the student.

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<sup>6</sup> Calhoun, The National Identity of Newfoundlanders.

<sup>7</sup> David M. Kirby, The Extend of The Political Socialization of First-Year Memorial University Students, unpublished M.Ed. thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1972.

Although the main problem is to determine the influence of the above independent variables on the political socialization process of St. John's school children in grades four to eight, the problem will be examined in its broadest perspective. In the first stage of the analysis there will be an examination of the effects of the child's grade level on his knowledge of politics, his evaluation of government (which includes both political figures and political institutions), his attitude toward political participation, and his party identification. The effects of the child's socioeconomic status on his knowledge of politics, his evaluation of government, his attitude toward political participation, and his party identification will be examined in the second stage. In the third stage the effects of sex differences on knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, attitude toward political participation, and party identification will be examined. In the final stage of the analysis there will be an examination of the effects of the type of school attended by the child on his knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, attitude toward political participation, and party identification.

More specifically, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

Does grade level, socioeconomic status, sex, and type of school affect the political socialization process of St. John's school children in grades four to eight when categorized on:

- a) knowledge of politics
- b) evaluation of government
- c) political participation
- d) party identification

#### B. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Research tends to support the contention that political social-

ization is an important part in the overall process of child development. This is especially true for children at the pre-high school level. Robert Hess and Judith Torney in their study on the development of political attitudes in children found that the major development and change in political attitudes occurs before the child enters high school.<sup>8</sup> Writing on the functions of education in a political system, David Easton states that the elementary school years are the most impressionable stage of development for the child.<sup>9</sup> In a study on the development of political orientations in Canadian school children Jon Pammett found significant changes in the political orientations of children between the fourth and eighth grades.<sup>10</sup>

These and other studies found that a variety of factors, including grade level, socioeconomic status, sex differences, and school, all played a part in the child's political socialization process. The part which each of these variables played is examined in detail in chapter two.

There are extraneous variables which may be unique to this province that may have a significant influence upon the way a child perceives his political world. One such important variable may be the island culture of Newfoundland.

It is difficult to dispute the fact that life in Newfoundland is somewhat different from the general trend found in the rest of North America.

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<sup>8</sup> Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, pp. 8-9.

<sup>9</sup> David Easton, "The Function of Education in a Political System", The School Review, Autumn, 1959, p. 314.

<sup>10</sup> Jon Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian Children", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Volume 4, No. 1, March, 1971, pp. 132-141.

Until recently, Newfoundland has been relatively isolated from the outside world. Within this environment of isolationism, the people developed a unique culture that was reflected in many aspects of their lives, including politics. As John H. Calhoun states in his study on the national identity of Newfoundlanders, the physical isolation and the feeling of being a race apart all contributed to the development of a Newfoundland national identity.<sup>11</sup>

The harsh realities of Newfoundland's past significantly shaped its political culture. People, faced with a seemingly unsympathetic government developed a feeling of distrust toward politics. This feeling of distrust is still prevalent among many adult Newfoundlanders today. David M. Kirby in his study on the extent of the political socialization of first-year Memorial University students states that:

... political cynicism may in part be due to the general dissatisfaction that young people today express against the establishment system, or again it may be due to the political milieu which characterizes Newfoundland. Since Newfoundland, by virtue of its geographic position, remains isolated from the mainstream of Canadian politics the main political impact is at the provincial level. However, provincial politics in Newfoundland remain essentially around individuals rather than policies, and past Newfoundland political history is full of allegations of political corruption. If the existence of the feeling of political cynicism exhibited by the students is in fact due to the political milieu of Newfoundland, then it is hard to foresee any change in the immediate future.<sup>12</sup>

In their study on regional political culture in Canada, Richard Simeon and David Elkins found the degree of political trust to be among the low-

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<sup>11</sup> Calhoun, The National Identity of Newfoundlanders.

<sup>12</sup> Kirby, The Extent of the Political Socialization of First-Year Memorial University Students.

est in Newfoundland among all the Canadian provinces.<sup>13</sup> The question therefore follows: Is this feeling of distrust toward politics shared by the young people of St. John's? In order to answer this question it is necessary to conduct empirical research on child political socialization in this city. Only then can any relevant conclusions be made on a child's feeling toward government and politics in general.

Another condition of Newfoundland's culture which could influence a child's political socialization process is the importance of the family unit. The family unit is still a relatively important socialization agent in Newfoundland. Children tend to reflect the attitudes and beliefs displayed by their parents. Most research studies conducted elsewhere indicate that parents do have some influence on a child's political socialization. Fred Greenstein reached that conclusion in his New Haven Study.<sup>14</sup> Also, John Davis reached a similar conclusion in his study, Learning the Norms of Universalism: The Effect of School Attendance.<sup>15</sup> Since the family is such an important part of Newfoundland life, parents may have an even greater influence on a child's political orientations in this province. Thus, again, there is a need for research of child political socialization in St. John's.

Besides cultural implications, there are other reasons for conducting research on child political socialization in St. John's. For instance, if such a study, by analyzing certain of the many child political orientations, can reveal significant insights among school children, then

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Simeon and David Elkins, "Regional Political Cultures in Canada", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Volume VII, No. 3, September, 1974, p. 408.

<sup>14</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> John Davis, "Learning the Norm of Universalism: The Effect of School Attendance" in Socialization and Values in Canadian Society Volume I: Political Socialization, by Erik Zureik and Robert M. Pike, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1975, pp. 84-96.

suggestions regarding the curriculum content of elementary schools in the province could be considered. The school, partly through its social studies curriculum, is an agent of political socialization. In a study on the socialization effect of regime-supportive texts, David Close and Dennis Bartells found that textbooks do play a role in the political socialization of Newfoundland school children.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, any study of political socialization would have a direct bearing upon the social studies curriculum.

Research on child political socialization in St. John's should also help to answer several questions about the political ideas held by elementary school children in St. John's. Some of these questions would be concerned with the children's attitudes toward government and political authority, political participation, and party identification.

#### C. DEFINITION OF TERMS

In this section an attempt is made to define some of the terms that were used in the study.

##### Political Socialization

According to David Easton, Robert Hess, and Jack Dennis, political socialization refers to the process by which a society transmits political orientations, values, knowledge, attitudes, and norms from generation to generation.<sup>17</sup> Fred Greenstein gives another definition when he defines political socialization as:

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<sup>16</sup> David Close and Dennis Bartells, "The Socialization Effect of Regime-Supportive Texts: First Results and Second Thoughts", Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979.

<sup>17</sup> David Easton, Robert Hess, Jack Dennis, "The Child's Image of Government", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, September, 1965, p. 361.

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 which affects political behavior, such as learning of politically relevant social attitudes and the acquisition of politically relevant personality characteristics.<sup>18</sup>

In brief, political socialization is a term used to describe the process through which children acquire their political orientations. It has to do with the way children obtain knowledge and develop attitudes and values about their political world.

#### Political Knowledge

This term refers to student responses to specific items on the questionnaire concerning knowledge of mayor, premier, prime minister, city council, House of Assembly. These are questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11.

#### Evaluation of Government

Students evaluation of the mayor, premier, prime minister, city council, House of Assembly and Parliament are questions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 15 on the questionnaire.

#### Political Participation

A term used to refer to a student's participative inclination or willingness to be active and opinionated in political matters at present and in the future. This term consists of student responses to questions 16, 17, 18 and 21.

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<sup>18</sup>Fred Greenstein, "Political Socialization", in Political Socialization of American Youth by John J. Patrick (Washington: National Council for the Social Studies, 1967), p. 1.

### Party Identification

The tendency for students to identify with a particular political party, as determined in response to questions asking them which party they would vote for when old enough, and which party they would like to see win the next election. These are questions 19 and 20.

### Socioeconomic Status

The occupational position of the child's father as determined on the British Socio-Economic Index for occupations in Canada. This is determined by student responses to items in the introductory section of the questionnaire.

### D. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation of the study is that only a selected sample of grade four to eight students in St. John's was included. This means that the findings cannot be generalized statistically to school children outside St. John's, or to children in grades other than four to eight.

Another limitation of the study was that only a limited number of factors which affect child political socialization was considered. Besides grade level, socioeconomic status, sex, and school, there are other factors which may affect child political socialization. For instance, intelligence levels, urban-rural distribution of a population and others, would certainly be important factors in political socialization.

Still another limitation of the study concerns the self-completed questionnaire method of data gathering. This imposes problems beyond the control of the researcher and the study itself. The care with which the students answered the questions at hand and their interpretations of the questions are factors that cannot really be controlled. However, the



researcher insured that this problem was minimized by administering the questionnaire himself, and by reading all the items to the students.

A final limitation concerns the location of the study. Unlike other Newfoundland children, students in St. John's have a greater opportunity to observe the political system in action, since the city is both the media center and the seat of government for the province. Such proximity may influence the child's political socialization process.

#### E. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter two will present a review of the literature related to child political socialization. The review of the related literature is organized so that the factors which influence each dependent variable are examined in turn. First, literature is presented on how grade level affects a child's knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, political participation, and party identification. Second, there is a review of literature on how socioeconomic status affects a child's knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, political participation, and party identification. Third, research literature is summarized on how sex affects a child's knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, political participation, and party identification. Finally, there is a review of literature on how school affects a child's knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, political participation, and party identification.

Chapter three will present the research methods used in the study. In this chapter there is a description of the sample, the schools used in the sample, the manner in which the data was collected, and the measurement of the variables and statistical analysis that was used in the study.

Chapter Four will present the findings for the study. Findings are presented relating to grade level and child political socialization, socioeconomic status and child political socialization, sex and child political socialization, and school and child political socialization.

In the final chapter an attempt is made to summarize and conclude the study. Conclusions are drawn as to the relative importance of the variables on the political socialization of St. John's children in grades four to eight. Also, implications of the research for education in Newfoundland is given. Finally, suggestions are offered for future studies on child political socialization in Newfoundland.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter a review of the related research regarding child political socialization is presented. The method of presentation will follow the outline that was presented in the final section of the previous chapter. First, literature is presented on how grade level affects a child's knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, political participation, and party identification. Second, there is a review of the literature on how socioeconomic status affects a child's knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, political participation, and party identification. Third, research literature is summarized on how sex affects a child's knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, political participation, and party identification. Finally, there is a review of literature on how school affects a child's knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, political participation, and party identification:

A. GRADE LEVEL AND CHILD POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

In this section an attempt is made to examine the relationship between grade level and child political socialization. An extensive study regarding the civic awareness of children was carried out by Charles Andrain. He found that a positive relationship existed between grade level and knowledge of politics. It was found that for children in grades five to eight in southern California, the higher the grade level, the more the child knew about politics. Conversely, the lower the grade level, the more likely the child was to have a sometimes unrealistic knowledge of politics.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness, (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), p. 13.

Jon Pammett, in a study on the development of political orientations in Canadian school children, found a strong association between the grade level of a child and his knowledge of politics. However, Pammett also found that the development of political knowledge takes place at a much slower rate for Canadian (Kingston, Ontario) than American children. Pammett explains the differences in Canadian and American political systems may account for differences in the political knowledge of children in both countries. For instance, Canadian children's knowledge of the institutions of government is often as high as that about the personalized roles of government. Whereas in the United States, political knowledge is personalized at young ages, and it tends to form around some strong figure seen as the epitome of the political process.<sup>2</sup> Also, it may be possible that Canadian schools pay less attention to political matters than American schools.

The conclusions from these studies seem obvious. It seems logical that a child's knowledge of politics should increase at each grade level. However, not so obvious is the relationship between the child's grade level and his evaluation of government change as he advances from grade to grade. A number of studies have been reported which deal in part with this question.

Evidence has revealed that the child begins to acquire certain political orientations at a very early age. He becomes aware of such figures of political authority as government leaders and the policeman; he gradually builds a more complex conception of what government is, and the child acquires very definite and positive feelings about government author-

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<sup>2</sup>Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children".

ities. Fred Greenstein in his study of New Haven children indicates that they, unlike adults, do not have attitudes of cynicism and distrust towards politics. In response to his questionnaire, Greenstein found that only one or two of the 659 children in grades four to eight made reference to malignancy of politicians. Instead, figures of political authority were regarded with benevolence, especially in the early elementary grades. However, by the eighth grade, Greenstein found that children no longer held politicians in such high esteem.<sup>3</sup>

In a study on the child's image of the president, David Easton and Robert Hess found that sixty percent of the second grade children in their sample referred to the president as "the best person in the world", whereas only two percent of the eighth graders made a similar reference.<sup>4</sup> Their findings were in keeping with those of Greenstein.

As the child's image of government changes with movement upward in grade level, there tends to be a greater emphasis put on political institutions rather than political leaders. David Easton and Jack Dennis in their study on the child's perception of the chief lawmaker in the United States found a significant change from grades two to eight. Table 1 helps to illustrate this change.

In the second grade seventy-six percent of the children saw the president as the chief lawmaker and only five percent had a similar perception of congress. However, by the eighth grade eighty-five percent of the children in the sample of 1690 saw congress as the chief lawmaker, and only five percent saw the president as fulfilling the chief lawmaking role. Thus, by the middle grades, the child is increasingly prone to

<sup>3</sup>Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 40

<sup>4</sup>Robert Hess and David Easton, "The Child's Image of the President", Public Opinion Quarterly, Volume 24, 1960, pp. 632-644.

TABLE 1

STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO AN ITEM ASKING THEM TO EXPRESS WHO THEY BELIEVE TO BE THE CHIEF LAWMAKER IN THE UNITED STATES.<sup>5</sup>

Grade	Congress	President	Supreme Court	Don't Know	Total
2	5	76	11	8	100%
3	11	66	17	6	100%
4	28	44	21	7	100%
5	57	19	20	4	99%
6	65	13	18	3	99%
7	72	9	16	3	100%
8	85	5	8	1	99%

identify congress as both the chief source of lawmaking and as a more representative symbol of government than the president.

Terrance Carroll found changes in children's perception of government in Canada. In a study involving 3,600 students in grades two to eight, Carroll found that children in the lower elementary grades perceived government more in terms of the leader (prime minister) and children in the middle grades tended to perceive government in terms of institutions (parliament).<sup>6</sup>

The early years of political socialization are often regarded as the most important. It is not only a time for the child to gain knowledge and understanding of his political world; but also a time for the child to develop ideas about participating in the political system. And

<sup>5</sup> David Easton and Jack Dennis, Children in the Political System, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969), p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> Terrance G. Carroll, "Affection and Evaluation in Children's Perceptions of Authority", in Foundations of Political Culture, by Jon Pammett and Michael Whittington, (Toronto, The Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1976), pp. 92-110.

like all members of a modern democratic society, each will have different ideas about an acceptable level of political participation. A variety of research studies have concluded that a child develops certain ideas about political participation during his elementary school years. In his study on elementary school children's attitudes of political trust, political efficacy, and political change, Allan Glenn found in 1969 that Detroit children in grades three, five, and six had different ideas about political participation. In the early elementary school years children saw participation almost solely as voting on election day. However, by the sixth grade more and more children were able to recognize other avenues of political participation, such as writing letters to government officials, campaigning at election time, or eventually running for political office.<sup>7</sup>

In a modern democratic society, political parties provide an important means for citizens to participate in political life. Charles Andrain describes political parties in the following manner:

As concrete structures linking people with their government, parties transmit popular demands to the government. They provide an arena for education in civic concerns, acting to co-ordinate diverse interests, political parties mediate among different social groups, adjust diverse demands, and harmonize conflicting views. Through parties, citizens gain the opportunity to help select political leaders who will compete for government office. In all these ways, political parties offer an organized outlet for the playing of participant roles in the political system.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Allan Glenn, "Elementary School Children's Attitudes of Political Trust, Political Efficacy, and Political Change", Dissertation Abstract International, 1970, p. 6401-A.

<sup>8</sup>Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness, p. 141.

The last sentence of Andrain's statement is of particular importance in any study of party identification. This sentence explains the basic reason why people are orientated toward political parties --- that it gives them a chance to participate in and to identify with the political system. The question then is, do elementary school children display any party identification? Students of political socialization in both Canada and the United States have paid considerable attention to this issue.

Fred Greenstein in his study found that by the fourth grade more than six out of ten of the New Haven children were able to state whether their party preference was Republican or Democratic. Greenstein goes on to state that the prevalence of party identification among nine-year olds is especially striking when it is realized that the proportion of adult Americans who identify with parties (seventy-five percent) is not much greater.<sup>9</sup> These findings are important because they demonstrate that at least some children in the United States have developed party affiliations by the early elementary school years.

It seems to be the consensus of research conducted in this country that Canadian children do not form party loyalties or identification as early as American children. George R. Robert in his analysis of partisan motivations in Calgary school children found that when compared to Greenstein's findings in New Haven, Canadian children are slower than those in the United States in forming party loyalties.<sup>10</sup> In a study on the political orientations of children in southern Ontario, Jon Pammett found that

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<sup>9</sup>Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 71

<sup>10</sup>Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, p. 50.



only thirty percent of the lower grades expressed a party preference. By grade eight this had increased to forty percent.<sup>11</sup> This contrasts with that of the United States where Greenstein found that by the time they had reached grade four over sixty percent of the children he studied were willing to express a party preference. The fact that only half as many of the grade four children in Pammett's study picked a party preference provides evidence for the general contention that party loyalties are not as strongly felt in Canada as they are in the United States, and that the level of party competition is not felt as intensely by the electorate.

By the fourth and fifth grades many children state that they prefer one political party to another. However, research indicates that these children are not able to explain why they prefer a particular party. Most children in the elementary school are not able to deal with abstract concepts such as political ideology. Party choice for the elementary school child is based primarily upon the party choice of his or her parents, and not upon party politics. Even though Greenstein found that over sixty percent of the grade four students in his sample had a party preference, it was not until the eighth grade that as many as half of the children in his sample could offer any response to the question about party differences.<sup>12</sup> Charles Andrain in his study on civic awareness of elementary school children in southern California found that young children had little knowledge of the issue positions of the two major parties (Republicans and Democrats). For these children, Andrain claims a political party represents a symbolic label, not a cognitively-based object.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientation in Canadian School Children", p. 139.

<sup>12</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 67.

<sup>13</sup> Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness, p. 147.

In his analysis of party identification of school children in southern Ontario, Jon Pammett discovered that children in grades four to eight are not particularly aware of the differences between the political parties in Canada. He found that only 1.5 percent of the grade fours in his sample could respond to a question concerning party difference, and that had risen to 21.8 percent by grade eight.<sup>14</sup> This study indicates that children at the grade levels studied do not have, in general, very coherent views about the differences between political parties. It might be speculated that the profusion of political parties in Canada has something to do with this. Canadian children see several parties, get vague images of them in the media, as well as from the more immediate agents of socialization (school, parents, etc.), and may well find the whole world of party politics confusing for them until a much later age.

In this section of the related literature, studies have been presented on how a child's grade level may affect his knowledge of politics, image of government, political participation, and party identification. The studies presented indicate that children experience an important part of their political socialization process during the elementary school years. Their views of, and their attitudes toward, the political system undergo significant change.

#### B. SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND CHILD POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

An important variable of political socialization in many societies is based upon people's socioeconomic status. Investigators have repeatedly found social class differences in the knowledge people have of

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<sup>14</sup> Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children", p. 138.

politics, their evaluation of government, their degree of political participation, and their party identification. Robert Hess and Judith Torney stress the importance of socioeconomic status as a factor in the lives of people when they write:

Social class is a complex phenomenon. It is not a variable in the usual sense but a subtle and complex matrix of differences and experiences that combine to make certain types of personality and response patterns more likely. Social class may be usefully regarded as a statement of probability that an individual has had or will have certain kinds of experiences that shape his behavior and orientation toward the society and toward new ideas, information and concepts.<sup>15</sup>

In modern industrial societies like the ones found in Canada and the United States, there are a number of socioeconomic status classifications for people.

One way to judge a child's political knowledge is to analyze his perceptions of government and figures of political authority. Research contends that these perceptions vary according to the child's socioeconomic status. However, it must be understood that there may be a number of consistent socioeconomic differences, but again, they may not be especially large or completely consistent.

In an analysis of the meaning of government for the child, Easton and Dennis found that socioeconomic status played a significant part. The authors discovered that those not certain about what government means constitute thirty-one percent of the lower-status second graders. These perceptions decline to thirteen percent by grade eight for the lower-status children and to five percent for the upper-status group.<sup>16</sup> This means that

<sup>15</sup>Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 126.

<sup>16</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 344.

high SES students have a greater knowledge of the meaning of government than low SES students.

George R. Robert reached similar conclusions in his study of Calgary school children. He found that children in high SES districts, of Calgary tended to be more politically aware than children in low SES districts.<sup>17</sup> The Robert study seems to be the only one to date in Canada that makes reference to the role of socioeconomic status in a child's political socialization process.

There are differences based on socioeconomic status in the way a child views government and political authority. A low SES child tends to identify government in terms of a particular political leader, whereas a high SES child is more likely to view government in terms of institutions. David Easton and Jack Dennis found socioeconomic status to be an indicator of the child's awareness of who runs the country. In almost all the grades in their sample (grades two to eight) a higher percentage of low SES children see the president as the person who does most to run the country, whereas high SES children do not. The authors also found that there is a higher percentage of high SES children who perceive Congress as running the country.<sup>18</sup> This fact supports the earlier contention that high SES children tend to view government more in terms of institutions that do low SES children.

Similar findings were reported by Richard Haggart in his study on the political socialization of British children. He did an impressionistic treatment of two social class perspectives to politics in which he

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<sup>17</sup> Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, p. 34.

<sup>18</sup> Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 348

differentiates between personal and concrete values, on the one hand, and abstract values on the other. The first typifies the working class and the second in the middle class. Haggart singles out royalty as that aspect of political life which appeals to the working class because it can be easily translated into personal and concrete terms.<sup>19</sup>

In modern western societies, it is expected that people display some support for their political systems in the form of participation. The degree of participation can range from direct involvement (running for political office), to less direct involvement (voting during elections). However, not everyone participates equally in a political system. Some people, for various reasons, are more willing than others to take an active role in politics. Research reveals that the socioeconomic status of people accounts for one of these reasons.

Many research studies into political participation indicate that a child's willingness to participate is closely related to that of his parents. Therefore, if the socioeconomic status of the parents affect their political participation, it may also affect that of the child. Robert Lane suggests that child-rearing practices in the lower-status groups tend to provide a less adequate personality for appropriately self-assertive social participation.<sup>20</sup>

Fred Greenstein conducted one of the first studies on the role of socioeconomic status in determining a child's political participation. In his study of New Haven children, Greenstein found that there was not a great deal of difference in the percentages of upper and lower SES children

<sup>19</sup>Richard Haggart, The Uses of Literacy, (Hammondsworth Penguin, 1969).

<sup>20</sup>Robert Lane, Political Man, (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 92.

who said they would vote when they reached voting age. However, for other kinds of participation, such as campaigning during elections, Greenstein found that high SES children indicated that they would take a more active part than low SES children.<sup>21</sup> Hess and Torney found that participation in political discussion and concern with political issues are more frequent among children of high socioeconomic status.<sup>22</sup> They also reached the same conclusion as Greenstein concerning voting behavior based on socioeconomic status; that there is no significant difference between high and low SES groups concerning the act of voting during elections.<sup>22</sup> Both groups see voting as a duty that all citizens should perform.

In his Calgary study, George R. Robert found that the participatory inclination of Calgary school children was affected by socioeconomic status. Children from high socioeconomic backgrounds were associated with a high degree of political involvement. For them political participation involved more than voting. Instead, it included campaigning during elections, working with interest groups, and writing or speaking to government officials. However, for low SES children, political participation simply meant voting at election time.<sup>23</sup>

Socioeconomic status may be associated with the relations children have with their political environment. It has been indicated that differences in educational accomplishments and the related differences in intellectual skills make up the child's heritage of differing socioeconomic status and in this way contributes to political participation differences.

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<sup>21</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 100.

<sup>22</sup> Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 158.

<sup>23</sup> Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, p. 38.

The tendency for children from low SES homes to be retarded in their political socialization and limited in their active involvement in political matters presents a serious problem for the society and confronts the schools with a difficult task in civic education.<sup>24</sup>

Research reveals that a child's party identification is similar to that of his parents. Greenstein found that only a handful of children in his entire sample of 659 indicated that their own party preferences differed from those of the parents.<sup>25</sup> Similarly Susan G. Clark in her study on participation and partisanship in young children found that seventy-five percent of the 406 students in her sample had the same party affiliation as their parents.<sup>26</sup> In a study on party choice of black and white children in the United States, Pauline Vaillancourt and Richard Niemi found that many, but not all children of both races, inherit a partisanship identification for the rest of their lives.<sup>27</sup>

Since research shows that there is a close relationship in the party identification of children and their parents, it is important to see how the socioeconomic status of the family affects the development of partisan motivations in children. Robert Hess and Judith Torney discovered that affiliation with political parties begins to be differentiated by socioeconomic status at the fifth and sixth grades and is quite apparent by the seventh and eighth grades. Although at grades seven and eight,

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<sup>24</sup>David Pratt, "The Social Role of School Textbooks in Canada", in *Socialization and Values in Canadian Society, Volume 1*, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1975), pp. 100-123.

<sup>25</sup>Greenstein, *Children and Politics*, p. 52.

<sup>26</sup>Susan Clark, "A Study of Participation and Partisanship in Young Children", *Dissertation Abstract International*, 1966, p. 2605-A.

<sup>27</sup>Pauline Vaillancourt and Richard Niemi, "Children's Party Choices", in *Politics of Future Citizens*, by Richard Niemi and Associates, (Washington, Jasssey-Bass Publishers, 1974), p. 126.

children in the United States begin to choose party affiliation along socioeconomic lines (Democrats predominate among the working class), at this age they do not regard their party as essentially different from the other political party.<sup>28</sup>

Even though Greenstein found that over sixty percent of the grade four students in his sample had a party preference, it was not until the eighth grade that as many as half of the high SES children could offer any response to the question about party differences. For the lower SES group it was less than thirty-five percent.<sup>29</sup> In Canada, Jon Pammett discovered that socioeconomic status has a marked affect on the child's perception of issue differences between the political parties, and also upon the child's willingness to express a party preference.<sup>30</sup> However, Pammett did not further elaborate upon the issue of socioeconomic differences in child partisan motivations.

This section of the related literature has been concerned with how socioeconomic status affects a child's knowledge of politics, image of government, political participation, and party identification. The various studies that have been presented show that socioeconomic status is a significant factor in shaping a child's political socialization process. Children from high SES backgrounds seem to have a greater knowledge and understanding of their political world than do children from low SES backgrounds.

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<sup>28</sup> Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 159.

<sup>29</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 67.

<sup>30</sup> Jon Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientation in Canadian School Children", p. 139.



### C. SEX AND CHILD POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Like socioeconomic status, sex has long occupied a prominent place in political analysis. Students of political socialization have reflected this concern in attempting to describe the differences that appear in childhood and adolescence. Just as for socioeconomic status, one of the major sources for stimulating an interest in sex differences has been studies conducted on adult political behavior. This has led perhaps to an overconcentration upon areas of political learning most related to voting behavior, particularly upon the rate of participating and direction of partisanship. These and other differences, including varying levels of political information, have been widely noted in this chapter. Using the same format as was used for socioeconomic status, an attempt will be made in this section to consider whether sex differences appear in a child's political socialization process.

Research has shown that sex is associated with the level of a child's political knowledge. Again, as with socioeconomic status, it must be understood that while there may be a number of sex differences, these differences may not be especially large or completely consistent.

In studying the political knowledge of boys and girls in southern California, Charles Andrain found that boys tended to be more familiar with national politics than girls. However, he also found girls to be equal to boys in the knowledge of local politics.<sup>31</sup> Greenstein found that whenever the responses to his questionnaire differed between boys and girls, the former were invariably "more political". This was found to be so in the case of both statistically significant sex differences and of

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<sup>31</sup>Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness, pp. 122-139.

nonsignificant differences which exceed two or three percent.<sup>32</sup>

In their analysis of sex in child political socialization in grades two through eight, Easton and Dennis found that boys and girls have different perceptions of what government means. In response to a question concerning the meaning of government, the authors found that there were more girls than boys who said that they were uncertain what the word government means at every grade level. The difference is especially apparent for the youngest children, suggesting that differences in political sex-role typing are acquired as early as the second grade. The young male has a higher probability of becoming politically sensitized from the beginning of the age span.<sup>33</sup> Although by the later grades there is a lessening of the political differences of the sexes over the age span, it can be speculated that the young male is more likely to have been sensitized to government, and he is then in a position to develop deeper and more lasting orientations of other kinds toward government.

If boys are more knowledgeable about politics than girls, it may be because, as Hess and Torney point out, boys are more interested in political matters. They found that in all grade levels from two to eight, boys displayed a greater interest in all political matters.<sup>34</sup>

George R. Robert in his study of Calgary school children in grades four to eight makes some reference to sex differences and political knowledge. Like Greenstein, Easton and Dennis, and others he found that boys tended to display broader political knowledge than girls.<sup>35</sup> The Robert

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<sup>32</sup>Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 115.

<sup>33</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 338.

<sup>34</sup>Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 186.

<sup>35</sup>Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, p. 34.

study seems to be the only one to date that analyzed the role of sex differences in the political socialization of Canadian elementary school children.

Sex seems to play a more significant role on a child's image of government than it does on his or her political knowledge. In his study on childhood political socialization James Davis discovered that girls tend to see government in more personalized terms: they perceive the personal figures in the government as more nurturant, feel more attached to them, attribute more power to them, and see them as fulfilling their roles more adequately. Boys, however, see government in more institutionalized terms. They see the supreme court and other impersonal objects of government as more powerful and helpful.<sup>36</sup> These findings seem to be congruent with the belief that women and girls are oriented toward expressive roles while men and boys are oriented to the impersonal occupational roles within the social system. This may be the reason why girls are oriented to the personal expressive aspects of the political system, and why boys are oriented to the impersonal-instrumental facets.

Parts of any child's political socialization process included his interest in participating directly or indirectly in political matters. Considerable research has been conducted in the area of political participation, including the relationship of sex to participation. In many instances, it was found that sex differences were related to political participation.

Herbert Hyman in a review of political socialization research up to 1959 found that many of these studies concluded that boys were more

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<sup>36</sup> James Davis, "Political Socialization: From Womb to Childhood", in Handbook of Political Socialization, edited by Stanley Renshan, (New York: The Free Press, 1977), pp. 142-171.

likely than girls to take a more active role in political matters. Hyman points out that:

... we may regard the type of ego-ideal chosen as being a model for the child's conduct and therefore as motivating him in directions congruent with the ideal. Thus already at early ages, boys are directed toward politics and here lie the seeds of the adult differentiations everywhere found in studies of political participation.<sup>37</sup>

Besides the research reviewed by Hyman, there are other studies which deal with sex and political participation. Susan Clarke conducted a study on political participation using 406 elementary school students in Pennsylvania. One of her more important findings was that boys participate to a greater extent than girls in political matters.<sup>38</sup>

However, if political participation is analyzed in terms of boys' and girls' reaction to voting, sex differences do not play a significant part. A number of studies have concluded that there is no difference between boys' and girls' attitudes toward voting. Greenstein, for instance, found that in his total sample from grade four to eight, eighty percent of the boys said they would vote when old enough, and eighty-one percent of the girls made a similar response.<sup>39</sup> Hess and Torney found that there were no differences between boys and girls in perceiving that the good citizen's duty is to vote and in saying that the good citizen should vote for the best man and not necessarily for a particular party's candidates.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Herbert Hyman, Political Socialization, (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> Clark, "Political Participation in Young Children", p. 2605-A.

<sup>39</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 197.

<sup>40</sup> Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 191.

The party identification of boys and girls is very similar to that of their parents. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the development of party identification in boys and girls. Hess and Torhey found no differences in acceptance of norms concerning political parties. Boys and girls do not vary in their tendency to say that children should belong to the same political party as their parents, in their judgement of how important it is for adults to belong to a political party, or in their assessment of the age at which political party choice is most appropriately made.<sup>41</sup>

Research also reveals that political parties are more salient for boys than for girls. David Easton and Jack Dennis discovered that boys' perceptions show a greater tolerance for differences between parties on issues; and attributes more positive functions to differences of opinion. Boys claimed to know more about parties at an earlier age, and could identify parties with issues to a greater extent than girls. Girls more frequently said that both parties in the United States have the same stand and contribute the same amount, while boys associated the Republican and Democratic parties with different points of view on specific issues.<sup>42</sup> These results may be interpreted either as a result of girls' greater orientation to candidates rather than issues, or of their desire to minimize conflict and disagreement, whereas boys are oriented toward issues rather than candidates, or have no desire to minimize conflict and disagreement in party politics.

In this section of the related literature an attempt was made to deal with selected studies that have been conducted on the role of sex in child political socialization. Research that has been reviewed shows

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 191.

<sup>42</sup> Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System.

that sex differences do obviously influence a child's knowledge of politics, evaluation of government, political participation, and party identification. However, during any analysis of sex and political socialization in children, it must be remembered that sex roles based on traditional conceptions of roles played by males and females are changing in western societies. This could have an effect upon the ways boys and girls will perceive their political world in the future.

#### D. SCHOOL AND CHILD POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

In his analysis of the role of agents in political socialization Paul Beck states that:

In most modern nations, schools also occupy a favourable position in terms of the preconditions for successful socialization. Except for the preschool years, they often rival the parents in exposure to the children. American children, e.g., spend a substantial portion of their waking hours in schools. College attendance extends this exposure into early adulthood for many. There is, additionally, identifiable political content in communications issued by the schools, particularly where the norms of citizenship are involved. Finally, schools generally enjoy a considerable advantage in the receptivity of children to their messages.<sup>43</sup>

There have been a variety of conclusions concerning the influence of the school as an agent of political socialization. Hess and Torney claimed that in the United States the public school is the most important of all the political socialization agents.<sup>44</sup> However, this contention is questioned by D.A. Sears in his review of Hess and Torney's study on the development of political attitudes in children. Sears claims that the

<sup>43</sup> Paul Beck, "The Role of Agents in Political Socialization", in Handbook of Political Socialization, edited by Stanley Renshan, (New York: The Free Press, 1971), pp. 127-128.

<sup>44</sup> Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 101.

methodological procedure used by Hess and Torney did not justify their contention that the school was the most important political socialization agent.<sup>45</sup> Also, John Davis in his study of a sample of British Columbia children residing in a remote area of the province revealed that in this instance it is the home, and not the school, which is responsible for the political socialization of children.<sup>46</sup> David Close and Dennis Bartells in a study on the socializing effect of regime-supportive texts in Newfoundland schools found that school textbooks play a role in the political socialization of students.<sup>47</sup>

Jon Pammett's study on the development of political orientations in Canadian school children is the most extensive study to date in this country dealing with the political socialization role of schools on a religious basis. In his study, Pammett divided his sample according to Catholic schools and public schools. Dealing with the development of political knowledge and partisan orientations of elementary school children, Pammett made a number of important findings concerning the political socialization role of Catholic and public schools.

A major finding of the study revealed that Catholic school children show themselves to be generally better informed than public school children about many political roles and institutions. For instance, in response to a question concerning the role of the prime minister, Pammett

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<sup>45</sup> D.A. Sears, "Review of the Development of Political Attitudes in Children", by Robert Hess and Judith Torney, Harvard Educational Review, Volume 38, 1968, pp. 571-577.

<sup>46</sup> John Davis, "Learning the Norm of Universalism: The Effect of School Attendance", in Socialization and Values in Canadian Society, edited by Elia Zureik and Robert Pike, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1975), pp. 84-98.

<sup>47</sup> Close and Bartells, "The Socialization Effect of Regime-Supportive Texts: First Results and Second Thoughts."

found that 13.4 percent of the public school grade eight students in his sample had a reasonable understanding of the role, while 20.6 percent of the Catholic school grade eight students had a reasonable understanding of the role of the prime minister.<sup>48</sup> Pammett explains that these differences between children in the two school systems with regard to political knowledge are not easily, or probably even adequately, explicable.

Another important finding of the study revealed differences in the political participation attitude of Catholic and public school children. Table 2 helps to illustrate these differences.

TABLE 2

"WILL YOU VOTE WHEN YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH? BY GRADE AND SCHOOL"<sup>49</sup>

Grade	4	5	6	7	8
PUBLIC SCHOOLS					
Yes	60.4%	72.9%	77.1%	65.7%	75.4%
No	10.9	6.8	7.2	4.3	5.0
Don't Know	26.6	20.4	15.7	30.1	19.6
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS					
Yes	62.8%	70.6%	82.1%	78.9%	78.1%
No	10.5	2.9	2.8	5.6	4.4
Don't Know	26.7	26.4	15.1	15.5	17.6

The differences in response to the question, "Will you vote when you are old enough?" do not seem to be great between public and Catholic schools except for grade seven where the difference is larger. Pammett

<sup>48</sup>Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children", p. 138.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.



does not give a reason for this difference; however, he does suggest several hypotheses. He hypothesizes, for instance, that teachers in Catholic schools are likely to make more effort to educate children about public affairs and government than are teachers in public schools.

Concerning party identification, Pammett found that with reference to both the party difference item and the party identification item in the questionnaire, children from Catholic schools were more likely to respond to the questions, see issue differences between the parties, have a party preference, and support the Liberal party. The Catholic school children, having a more solid commitment to a particular party (the Liberals) are more likely to see differences between the parties.

#### E. SUMMARY

In this chapter an attempt has been made to review some of the studies that have been done on child political socialization. Some of the more important findings revealed that grade level, socioeconomic status, sex, and school all have a part to play in determining a child's political orientations. What was especially striking about the research was the change that occurs in a child's political socialization process during his first eight or nine years in school. For instance, at first the child has a very positive and almost benevolent image of government and political authority. However, by grade eight the child has developed a more realistic image of his political world.

On the basis of research reviewed in this chapter, a number of differences were apparent in child political socialization in Canada and the United States. These differences may in some way be accounted for by the different political cultures of the two countries, or may be more directly related to the education systems of the two countries.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research procedures that were used in the study. There are four sections. In the first section the research questions for the study are stated; in the second section there is an examination of the measuring instrument that was used to conduct the study, and a discussion of how the instrument was administered; in the third section there is a discussion of the sample of students selected for the study, as well as a description of the schools from which the students were selected; and in the final section there is a discussion of the statistical procedures that were used in the analysis of the results.

#### A. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions stated in this section are based upon the review of related literature presented in Chapter 2. Because of the nature of the study (a survey questionnaire) the investigation used a series of research questions rather than hypothesis.

##### Research Questions Related to the Grade Level of the Child

1. Is there an increase in knowledge of politics as students advance in grade level?
2. As students advance in grade level, do they tend to have a less positive evaluation of government?
3. Is there an increase in students willingness to participate in the political system as they advance in grade level?
4. Is there an increase in students willingness to express partisan identification as they advance in grade level?

Research Questions Related to the Socioeconomic Status of the Child

5. Do high SES students have a greater knowledge of politics than low SES students?

6. Do high SES students give a more positive evaluation of government than low SES students?

7. Do high SES students show a greater willingness to participate in the political system than low SES students?

8. Do high SES students show a greater willingness to express partisan identification than low SES students?

Research Questions Related to Child Sex Difference

9. Do boys have a greater knowledge of politics than girls?

10. Do boys give a more positive evaluation of government than girls?

11. Do boys show a greater willingness to participate in the political system than girls?

12. Do boys show a greater willingness to express partisan identification than girls?

Research Questions Related to the School Attended by the Child

13. Do students attending schools belonging to the Avalon Consolidated School Board have a greater knowledge of politics than students attending schools belonging to the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board?

14. Do students attending schools belonging to the Avalon Consolidated School Board give a more positive evaluation of government than students attending schools belonging to the St. John's Roman Catholic Board.

15. Do students attending schools belonging to the Avalon Consolidated School Board show a greater willingness to participate in the

political system than students attending schools belonging to the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board?

16. Do students attending schools belonging to the Avalon Consolidated School Board show a greater willingness to express partisan identification than students belonging to the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board.

#### B. THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

Each subject in the investigation was required to record his or her responses to a paper and pencil questionnaire, the basic design for which had originally been developed by Fred Greenstein of Yale University and used in his New Haven political socialization study of 1958.<sup>1</sup> However, this investigator used a Canadian version of the Greenstein questionnaire, which was developed by George R. Robert in his study on the political orientations of Calgary school children in 1968.<sup>2</sup> The investigator undertook a modification of Robert's survey instrument to meet Newfoundland and St. John's circumstances. The changes included substituting the names of Newfoundland and St. John's political figures and institutions for Alberta and Calgary ones, and the deletion of a number of items from the questionnaire. Also, the general format of the questionnaire was changed to include only multiple-choice items. The questionnaire was administered in May, 1978.

The introductory section of the questionnaire asking for personal information was expended so as to provide more descriptive data about the student, including the socioeconomic status of his parents. Here, the student was required to give as accurate a description as possible of his

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<sup>1</sup>Greenstein, Children and Politics, pp. 173-179.

<sup>2</sup>Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children.

father's job.

In order to judge the validity of the questionnaire the investigator consulted with professors from the Faculty of Education and from the Department of Political Science at Memorial University. These people carefully analyzed each item of the questionnaire before it was administered to the students involved in the study.

The investigator undertook the administration of the questionnaire in order to avoid any misunderstandings students may have had with any of the items. In each of the twenty-five classes involved in the study the investigator read the questionnaire to the students and explained each item in detail. This administrative procedure also helped to overcome any problem of reading differences between students since they did not have to read the questionnaire themselves. Also, during the administration of the questionnaire there was a teacher in each class and they provided much valuable assistance in helping to identify the kind of work done by the students' fathers.

Concerning the socioeconomic aspect of the questionnaire, it should be noted that in the case where a student's father was deceased, or where the father was not living with the family, the student had an opportunity to identify the kind of work done by his mother.

#### C. THE SAMPLE

The questionnaire in this investigation was administered to a sample of grades four to eight students in St. John's. In all a total of 606 questionnaires were administered to students from five schools in the city that included some or all of the proposed grade levels. The investigator tried to obtain a representative sample of the grade four to eight

population in the city. Schools were selected from five different regions of the city in order to cover all classifications of people's socioeconomic status. Table 3 will help to give an overall breakdown of the sample according to school, grade, sex, and SES.

TABLE 3  
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS ACCORDING TO SCHOOL, GRADE, SEX, AND SES.

School	A	B	C	D	E	N
	149	120	117	111	108	605
Grade	4	5	6	7	8	N
	117	130	111	117	128	605
Sex	Boys		Girls		N	
	303		297		605	
SES	High		Middle		Low	N
	107		230		268	605

Table 3 illustrates the actual breakdown of the sample in the study. Schools A and B are part of the Avalon Consolidated System and comprise 269 students or approximately forty-four percent of the total sample. The remaining three schools are part of the Roman Catholic School System and comprise 336 students or fifty-six percent of the total sample. The numbers in the Table for grade and sex certainly indicate the representativeness of the total sample. The numbers for socioeconomic status were tabulated on the basis of Blishen's socioeconomic index for occupations in Canada.

In addition to the above factors, the investigator ensured that there was a cross-section of students according to academic ability. In a majority of the schools students were not grouped according to academic

ability and in any case where this existed, the investigator tried to acquire a sample of all groupings.

In the remaining part of this section there is a description of the schools used in the study. The purpose of this description is to provide some insight into the context of the findings that are discussed in Chapter 4. As was mentioned above, five schools were used in the study, two belonging to the Avalon Consolidated System and three belonging to the St. John's Roman Catholic School System. The investigator believed this to be a fair representation of the total school population of St. John's.

#### SCHOOL A

This school, which includes grades K-6 is part of the Avalon Consolidated School System. It has an enrollment of approximately 350 students. There are twenty classrooms and a teaching staff of eighteen. The school is situated near Memorial University and serves the population in the surrounding area. However, a small number of students are bused to the school from areas such as St. Philips. School A is in an economically well-off area of the city.

As was mentioned in Table 3, the sample included 149 students from School A. The questionnaire was administered to two classrooms of students from grades four to six which included the total student population of these particular grade levels. There was no formal civics or citizenship education course offered at the school. However, two teachers did mention that they provided some time for study of current events.

#### SCHOOL B

This school is also part of the Avalon Consolidated School Board. The school has an enrollment of 450 students ranging from grades seven to

nine. There are twenty-one classrooms in the school, and a staff of twenty teachers. The school is situated in the center of the city and serves the surrounding area.

One hundred and twenty students were selected from the school for use in the sample. These included two classrooms of each grades seven and eight. The school population represented some of the economically depressed areas of the city. There was no formal civic or citizenship education course offered at the school. However, some civic education was integrated into the social studies curriculum.

#### SCHOOL C

This school is part of the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board. School C is a relatively new structure that was recently opened. It has an approximate enrollment of 540 students. There are twenty-two classrooms in the school and a teaching staff of twenty-three. The school is situated in the eastern area of the city, and serves a population of relatively high socioeconomic status.

The sample used in this study included 117 students from School C. The questionnaire was administered to one classroom in each grade from four to eight. The classrooms were not picked according to any academic level. In fact the school did not group their students according to academic ability. The investigator was informed that there was no formal civics program offered at the school, but a number of teachers try to bring civics into the regular social studies curriculum.

#### SCHOOL D

School D is also part of the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board. This school has an enrollment of 630 students; There are twenty-



four classrooms in the school, and a teaching staff of twenty-six. School D, an all-girl school, is situated in the center of the city and serves a population of relatively high socioeconomic status.

One hundred and ten students were selected from this school for use in the study. These included one classroom in each grade from four to eight. The students were not selected according to academic ability. The investigator was told that the school does not group their students according to a particular academic standing. Like other schools involved in the study, School D does not offer any formal civics program. However, one teacher did inform the investigator that she does integrate civics in the regular social studies program.

#### SCHOOL E

This school is also part of the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board. School E has an enrollment of 600 students. There are twenty-three classrooms in the school, and a teaching staff of twenty-four. School E, an all-boy school, is situated near the Fort Townshed area of the city and serves both high and low socioeconomic areas of the city.

The sample used in the study included 108 students from School E. The questionnaire was administered to one classroom of students from grades four to eight. The classrooms were not picked according to any academic level. The school, in fact, did not group its students according to academic ability. The only civics or citizenship education that was offered in the school was by one or two teachers in the regular social studies classes.

CHAPTER 4  
ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter the investigator will examine the relationships between the variables. In the first part of the analysis there will be an examination of how student knowledge of politics is linked to grade level, socioeconomic status, sex, and type of school (religion) attended. The second part of the analysis will be concerned with how student evaluation of government is linked to grade level, socioeconomic status, sex, and type of school. In the third part of the analysis there will be an examination of the findings on how student political participation is linked to grade level, socioeconomic status, sex, and type of school. Finally, there will be an examination of the findings on how student party identification is linked to grade level, socioeconomic status, sex, and type of school.

A. FINDINGS RELATED TO STUDENT KNOWLEDGE OF POLITICAL LEADERS AND INSTITUTIONS

Research has revealed that as the student advances through the various grade levels his knowledge of politics increases. Fred Greenstein, in his study of New Haven school children, found that there was a significant increase in certain aspects of a student's political knowledge over the grade levels.<sup>1</sup>

Table 4 shows how aware St. John's school children were of political leaders and institutions at the municipal, provincial, and national levels.

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<sup>1</sup>Greenstein, Children and Politics.

TABLE 4

STUDENTS WHO COULD NAME THE MAYOR, PREMIER AND PRIME MINISTER, AND WHO HAVE HEARD OF CITY COUNCIL, THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENT BY GRADE (SEE QUESTIONS 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 IN QUESTIONNAIRE).

Grade	4	5	6	7	8
Mayor	96.6%	93.1%	98.2%	98.3%	99.2%
City Council	90.6	90.7	97.3	94.0	90.6
Premier	67.5	81.3	88.3	88.9	96.1
House of Assembly	89.6	92.2	89.2	94.9	96.0
Prime Minister	68.4	72.3	90.0	92.2	97.2
Parliament	70.4	83.3	93.9	91.5	97.6
N	117	130	111	117	128

Reference to Table 4 seems to show that there is little difference in the percentage of students who are aware of the mayor. For instance, 96.6 percent of the grade four students knew the mayor of St. John's, while 99.2 percent of the grade eight students correctly identified the mayor. However, a slightly lower percentage of students at the various grade levels were aware of city council. On the other hand there seems to be a greater difference in the percentage of students over the various grade levels who are aware of provincial and national political leaders and institutions. Only 67.5 percent of the fourth grade students knew the premier of Newfoundland, while 96.1 percent of the grade eight students correctly responded to this item on the questionnaire. Similar difference can also be seen for student awareness of the prime minister.

An interesting finding presented in Table 4 concerns students' awareness of provincial and national political institutions. Student awareness of this area of government was as high or higher than the more personalized roles of government. This concurs with Jon Pannett's findings in

his study on the development of political orientations in Canadian school children. He reported that by the sixth grade, children were describing the institution of parliament in more reasonable accurate terms than the role of the prime minister.<sup>2</sup> Fred Greenstein, however, found that American children were more aware of political leaders than they were of political institutions. Also, American children are more aware of national political leaders and institutions than they are of municipal and state ones.<sup>3</sup> This does not seem to be true in Canada. It may be that in this country, where the provinces are constitutionally more important than the American states, Canadian children would identify more with their provincial governments than American children do with state governments.

An important variable of political socialization in our society is people's socioeconomic status. Investigators have found class differences in the amount of knowledge people have of politics. Robert Hess and Judith Torney in their study on the development of political attitudes in children said that social class may provide the child with the experiences that could shape his behavior and orientations toward the society and toward new ideas, information and concepts.<sup>4</sup> Table 5 illustrates how socioeconomic status (father's occupation) affects St. John's school children's awareness of municipal, provincial, and national political leaders and institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children", p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 126.

TABLE 5.

STUDENTS WHO COULD NAME THE MAYOR, PREMIER, AND PRIME MINISTER, AND WHO HAVE HEARD OF CITY COUNCIL, THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENT BY SES.

SES	High	Middle	Low
Mayor	95.2%	98.5%	96.1%
City Council	91.1	92.1	93.2
Premier	85.1	86.9	81.6 <sub>a</sub>
House of Assembly	89.1	96.4	91.8
Prime Minister	85.1	84.5	82.4
Parliament	86.1	89.6	86.1
N	167	163	266

As illustrated in Table 5 there is no substantial differences between the percentage of students at the various SES levels in their awareness of political leaders and institutions; although middle and high SES children were slightly more aware of the premier and prime minister. For instance, 81.6 percent of low SES students were aware of the premier, while 85.1 percent of high SES students showed a similar awareness. While at the same time 91.8 percent of low SES students express an awareness of the house of assembly, and 89.1 percent of high SES students were similarly aware.

These findings are different from those reported by Jon Pammatt in his study on the political orientations of Canadian school children. Pammatt found that knowledge of political leaders and institutions declines as we move from upper to lower social class.<sup>5</sup> However, Fred Greenstein in his study of New Haven school children found very little difference between high SES students and low SES students in their awareness of political leaders and institutions.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Pammatt, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children", p. 136.

<sup>6</sup>Greenstein, Children and Politics, pp. 87-88.

One important finding presented in Table 5 shows that St. John's school children regardless of SES were more aware of provincial and national political institutions than they were of provincial and national political leaders. This, in part, is in keeping with Pammett's findings. He found that children from the sixth grade on were more aware of political institutions than political leaders.<sup>7</sup>

Like socioeconomic status, sex has long occupied an important place in political analysis. Researchers into political socialization have reflected this concern in attempting to describe the differences that appear in childhood and adolescence. Research has shown that sex can be used as an indicator of child political socialization. Again, as with socioeconomic status, it must be understood that there may be a number of consistent sex differences, but these differences may not be especially large or completely consistent.

Do boys and girls differ in their awareness of political leaders and institutions? Research from various parts of North America indicates that there are differences. The findings presented in Table 6 attempt to answer this question concerning St. John's school children.

TABLE 6

STUDENTS WHO COULD NAME THE MAYOR, PREMIER AND PRIME MINISTER, AND WHO HAVE HEARD OF CITY COUNCIL, THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENT BY SEX.

Sex	Boys	Girls
Mayor	96.7%	97.6%
City Council	93.4	91.6
Premier	86.4	83.1
House of Assembly	91.7	93.9
Prime Minister	84.1	84.5
Parliament	90.0	84.6
N	302	297

<sup>7</sup>Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children", p. 133.

As indicated in Table 6, boys and girls tend to be equally aware of all three political leaders. However, it is also indicated that boys are slightly more aware than girls of the Canadian Parliament. These findings are in keeping with those reported by Charles Andrain in his study of civic awareness in California school children. He found boys more aware of national politics, but both sexes were equally aware of local politics.<sup>8</sup> Also, George R. Robert in his study on the political orientations of Calgary school children found no significant differences between boys' and girls' awareness of local and provincial political leaders and institutions. However, he did find that boys were more aware than girls of national political institutions.<sup>9</sup>

Besides grade level, socioeconomic status and sex differences, the religious denomination of students may affect their awareness of political leaders and institutions. Table 7 shows student awareness of municipal, provincial, and national political leaders and institutions according to religious differences in St. John's schools. Schools A and B as presented in the Table belong to the Avalon Consolidated School System (Protestant), and schools C, D and E, belong to the St. John's Roman Catholic School System. It should be noted that schools A, C and D serve a population of relatively high socioeconomic status, while schools B and E serve a population of low socioeconomic status.

School systems do not seem to be an important variable in the knowledge which St. John's school children have of political leaders and institutions. The differences that do occur are not along denominational lines. Students from all schools seem to be equally aware of the mayor.

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<sup>8</sup>Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness, p. 138.

<sup>9</sup>Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, p. 62.

TABLE 7

STUDENTS WHO COULD NAME THE MAYOR, PREMIER AND PRIME MINISTER, AND WHO HAVE HEARD OF CITY COUNCIL, THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENT BY RELIGION (SCHOOL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD).

School	Consolidated		C	Catholic	
	A	B		D	E
Mayor	95.3%	100%	96.6%	95.5%	97.2%
City Council	94.0	96.6	89.7	90.0	90.7
Premier	78.2	89.9	75.0	89.2	90.2
House of Assembly	91.9	97.5	93.1	87.4	92.4
Prime Minister	78.5	92.4	76.1	90.1	83.1
Parliament	84.0	94.1	82.8	85.5	90.6
N	149	120	117	111	108

However, students from schools A and C do not seem to be as aware of the premier and prime minister as students in the remaining schools. Students in school A only include grades four, five and six, while in the remaining schools it went as far as grade eight. Therefore, students from school A may not have gained as much knowledge of provincial and national political leaders as students in other schools. It is difficult to explain why students in school C were not as aware of the premier and prime minister. Students involved in the study from this school, like students from schools D and E, included grades four to eight. It may be that this school serves a relatively high percentage of new Canadians --- associated with offshore activities. A probable reason why 100 percent of the students in school B could name the mayor is the fact that this school included only grades seven and eight, while the other schools also included grades four, five and six.

Findings also presented in Table 7 indicate that school systems do not have a bearing on students' awareness of municipal, provincial and



national political institutions. The percentages of all schools are similar. These findings are not in keeping with those reported by Jon Pammett in his study on the political orientations of Kingston school children: Pammett found that Catholic school children showed themselves to be generally better informed than public school children about many political roles and institutions.<sup>10</sup> It would seem that unlike Kingston, students in St. John's Roman Catholic schools are no more aware of political leaders and institutions than their peers in the Consolidated schools.

B. FINDINGS RELATED TO STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE JOB DONE BY POLITICAL LEADERS AND INSTITUTIONS

Research has revealed that the child begins to acquire certain political orientations at a very early age. He becomes aware of such figures of political authority as government leaders and the policeman, and he gradually builds a more complex conception of government. But even before he develops a more elaborate notion of what government is, the child acquires very definite and positive feelings about governmental authorities. Research literature on child political socialization has also indicated that as the child advances through his school years his image of government changes. Robert Hess and Judith Torney found that children in the first four years of school tend to associate government with the leader. As a result the leader is held in high esteem. However, from the fourth to eighth grades, children identify government more in terms of institutions and, therefore, government leaders are no longer held in such high esteem.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children", p. 137.

<sup>11</sup> Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children.

In this section of the chapter there will be an analysis of findings related to St. John's school children's evaluation of political leaders and institutions and their perceived importance of roles both political and non-political. This analysis will be based on grade level, socioeconomic status, sex and religion (school and neighbourhood).

Table 8 indicates how St. John's school children evaluate the kind of job their municipal, provincial and national political leaders have been doing.

TABLE 8

STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE KIND OF JOB DONE BY MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS BY-GRADE (REFER TO QUESTIONS 2, 6 AND 10 IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE).

Grade	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Mayor</b>					
very good	25.6%	20.8%	17.1%	13.7%	10.2%
fairly good	56.4	53.8	65.8	60.7	70.3
not very good	7.7	11.5	11.7	12.8	14.1
bad	5.1	1.5	2.7	9.4	2.3
don't know	5.1	12.3	2.7	3.4	3.1
N	117	130	111	117	128
<b>Premier</b>					
very good	29.9	33.8	38.7	14.5	10.9
fairly good	40.2	40.0	41.4	47.9	50.8
not very good	9.4	8.5	9.0	21.4	21.1
bad	3.4	2.3	2.7	6.8	9.4
don't know	17.1	15.4	8.1	10.3	7.8
N	117	130	111	117	128
<b>Prime Minister</b>					
very good	32.5	36.7	32.7	23.1	24.2
fairly good	45.3	36.2	40.9	45.3	49.2
not very good	6.0	8.5	16.4	15.4	10.0
bad	4.3	5.4	1.8	5.1	7.0
don't know	12.0	13.1	8.2	11.1	7.8
N	117	129	110	117	127

One finding in Table 8 indicates that children in the lower

elementary grades tend to give a more positive evaluation of the kind of job done by municipal, provincial and national political leaders than do upper elementary grade children. For instance, when responding to a question on the kind of job the mayor has been doing 25.6 percent of the fourth grade children made a "very good" response whereas only 10.2 percent of the grade eight students made a similar response. Similar findings are also indicated for the premier and prime minister. Also, there is a higher percentage of students in the higher grades (seven and eight) who are willing to say that the various political leaders are not doing a very good job. In responding to a question on what kind of job the premier has been doing, 21.1 percent of the grade eight students said "not very good" while only 9.4 percent of the fourth grade students made a similar response.

These findings are similar to those of other researchers in political socialization. In the United States, David Easton and Robert Hess in their study on the child's image of the president found that the president as "the best person in the world" whereas only 2 percent of the eighth graders made a similar reference.<sup>12</sup> In Canada, Terrance Carroll in a study involving 3,600 students from all regions of the country found that children in the lower elementary grades perceived government more in terms of the leader and by the middle grades they tended to perceive government in terms of institutions (Parliament).<sup>13</sup>

Table 9 indicates how St. John's school children evaluate their municipal, provincial and national political institutions. These findings are similar to those presented in Table 8. We see that children in the

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<sup>12</sup> Easton and Hess, in Public Opinion Quarterly, pp. 632-644.

<sup>13</sup> Terrance Carroll in Foundations of Political Culture, pp. 92-

lower elementary grades tend to be more supportive of the kind of job done by their political institutions than students in higher grades.

TABLE 9

STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE KIND OF JOB DONE BY MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS BY GRADE (REFER TO QUESTIONS 4, 8 AND 12 IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE).

Grade	4	5	6	7	8
City Council					
very good	22.2%	19.2%	18.0%	11.3%	15.3%
fairly good	44.4	51.5	53.2	42.6	46.1
not very good	7.7	10.0	12.6	25.2	22.7
bad	4.3	1.5	.9	6.1	8.6
don't know	21.4	17.1	15.3	14.8	16.4
N	117	130	111	115	128
House of Assembly					
very good	29.1	19.2	14.5	12.8	5.5
fairly good	36.8	48.5	41.8	36.8	28.1
not very good	11.1	11.5	10.9	21.4	23.4
bad	1.7	.8	2.7	3.4	10.2
don't know	21.4	19.2	30.0	25.6	32.8
N	117	129	110	117	128
Parliament					
very good	12.0	16.9	15.5	8.5	9.4
fairly good	35.9	35.4	46.4	39.3	53.5
not very good	6.0	8.5	10.9	12.0	11.8
bad	6.0	1.5	1.8	6.8	4.7
don't know	40.2	37.7	25.5	33.3	20.5
N	117	130	110	117	127

One important finding indicated in Table 9 is the relatively large number of "don't know" responses. This would seem to suggest that many students cannot identify or understand the kind of jobs done by our political institutions. Students in the elementary grades tend to see government more in terms of personalities rather than institutions which seem vague to them. The number of "don't know" responses decreases, however, over the various grade levels. As indicated in Table 9, for instance,

40.2 percent of the grade four students made a "don't know" response on the kind of job parliament was doing, while 20.5 percent of the eighth grade students made a similar response. By grade eight more students are better able to understand the job of political institutions, and therefore, can more readily evaluate that job. The percentage of "don't know" responses, however, concerning the kind of job done by the house of assembly does increase from grade four to eight.

These findings are consistent with those of George R. Robert in his study on the political orientations of Calgary school children from grades four to eight. Robert reported that children in the lower elementary grades were less aware of the kind of jobs done by political institutions, than were students in the middle grades (seven and eight).<sup>14</sup>

Related to students' evaluation of the kind of job done by political leaders and institutions is their perception of the government's ability to do that job, and to do it correctly. Table 10 indicates how St. John's students respond to how well government is doing its job. One finding in the Table deals with the percentage of students at the various grade levels who made an "often" response. When asked the question, "How often does government make mistakes?" 23.7 percent of grade four students made an "often" response, while this had increased to 31.4 percent by grade eight.

Additional studies in other nations show tendencies which parallel the findings presented in Table 10. Studies in Chile, Japan and Australia, indicate that young children in the lower elementary grades tend to see government as making fewer mistakes than children in the higher elementary grades.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, p. 58.

<sup>15</sup>Hyman, Political Socialization.

TABLE 10

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HOW OFTEN DOES GOVERNMENT MAKE MISTAKES?" BY GRADE (REFER TO QUESTION 15).

Grade	4	5	6	7	8
never	4.4%	6.5%	2.7%	8.0%	5.6%
sometimes	63.2	67.5	65.5	50.4	50.8
often	23.7	22.0	28.2	31.9	34.1
all the time	5.3	0.8	1.8	8.8	4.8
don't know	3.5	3.3	1.8	0.9	4.8
N	114	123	110	113	126

When considering students' evaluation of the kind of job done by political leaders and institutions. It is also important to see how they evaluate the importance of roles performed by certain people in our society. Table 11 indicates how St. John's students evaluate these roles. For instance, when evaluating the role of the mayor, 6.8 percent of the grade four students said that this role was very important, while 11.3 percent of the grade eight students made a similar response. However, 73.7 percent of the fourth grade students who responded to the choice of the Queen said the role was very important, and 50 percent of the grade eight students responded in a similar manner.

It would seem that a high percentage of students at all the grade levels see the role of the Queen as very important, while a low percentage see the role played by the mayor as very important. One possible explanation for this finding could be the high profile given to the role of the Queen as compared to that of the mayor. The Queen, when she visits Canada, for instance, is given a great deal of coverage in the press. Also, thousands of people try to see the Queen on these visits. Such developments do not take place for the mayor of a city. Students, seeing this activity taking place for the Queen, could conclude that the role is very important.

TABLE 11.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE ROLES PERFORMED BY CERTAIN PEOPLE IN OUR SOCIETY BY GRADE (REFER TO QUESTION 11).

Grade	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Mayor of a City</b>					
very important	6.0%	12.9%	7.6%	10.6%	11.3%
important	24.7	28.2	19.7	14.1	26.3
less important	32.9	28.2	33.3	31.8	27.5
not very important	34.2	29.4	39.4	42.4	35.0
N	72	84	66	84	80
<b>Prime Minister</b>					
very important	14.3	13.0	27.6	29.1	45.9
important	47.1	42.9	31.0	17.2	28.6
less important	30.0	32.5	28.7	25.6	20.4
not very important	7.1	11.7	12.6	7.0	5.1
N	69	77	87	85	98
<b>Governor General</b>					
very important	5.0	5.4	11.6	11.7	10.3
important	35.0	41.1	33.3	41.7	48.3
less important	35.0	32.1	30.4	35.0	29.3
not very important	25.0	21.4	24.6	11.7	12.1
N	60	56	69	60	58
<b>Queen</b>					
very important	73.7	79.8	70.8	67.5	50.0
important	15.8	9.6	15.3	14.3	9.4
less important	5.3	5.3	6.9	9.1	18.8
not very important	5.3	5.3	6.9	9.1	21.9
N	99	94	72	77	64
<b>Lawyer</b>					
very important	0.0	11.1	20.0	11.1	3.8
important	5.6	11.1	6.7	11.1	19.2
less important	38.9	22.2	31.3	11.1	23.1
not very important	55.6	55.6	40.0	55.6	53.8
N	18	18	15	8	26
<b>Judge</b>					
very important	15.4	12.9	0.0	4.3	2.6
important	15.4	19.4	31.3	17.4	21.1
less important	15.4	22.6	25.0	34.8	36.8
not very important	53.8	45.2	43.8	39.1	39.5
N	26	31	18	22	38
<b>Police Chief</b>					
very important	0.0	8.0	4.2	5.9	7.0
important	13.0	12.0	25.0	14.7	20.9
less important	52.2	40.0	37.5	38.2	32.6
not very important	34.8	40.0	31.3	38.2	39.5
N	23	25	24	33	43
<b>Doctor</b>					
very important	21.6	15.6	31.3	15.2	48.1
important	37.8	33.3	29.3	30.4	11.5
less important	18.9	26.9	20.8	17.4	25.0
not very important	21.6	24.4	14.6	34.8	15.4
N	37	45	48	45	52
<b>School Principal</b>					
very important	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0
important	20.0	16.0	8.3	12.5	27.3
less important	25.0	24.0	16.7	16.7	18.2
not very important	55.0	60.0	75.0	45.8	54.5
N	20	25	12	24	11
<b>Religious Leader</b>					
very important	30.0	35.3	6.3	28.6	13.0
important	3.3	14.7	6.3	42.9	30.4
less important	26.7	26.5	37.5	7.1	17.4
not very important	40.0	23.5	50.0	21.4	39.1
N	30	34	16	14	23

Also, there was a planned visit of the Queen to St. John's during the summer of 1978. Students were probably very much aware of this visit.

Responding to the role of the prime minister, only 13 percent of the grade five students said that the role was very important, while 45.9 percent of the eighth grade students responded in a similar manner. This clearly indicates that by grade eight, students get a more realistic picture of where the real power lies in our political system.

These findings are similar to those of George R. Robert in his Calgary study. He found that students had a high ranking for the role of the Queen in the lower elementary grades, but declined substantially by grade eight --- from 67 percent in grade four to 34 percent in grade eight. Concerning the role of prime minister, Robert reported that nine percent of the grade four students gave this role a "very important" ranking, while the ranking increased to 42 percent by grade eight.<sup>16</sup>

Research has found that socioeconomic status affects students' evaluation of the job done by political leaders and institutions, and their perceived importance of roles both political and non-political, in our society. Tables 12 and 13 indicate how socioeconomic status affects the way St. John's school children evaluate the kind of job done by political leaders and institutions.

In both tables there does not seem to be any real differences based on socioeconomic status in St. John's students' evaluation of provincial and national political leaders and institutions. In Table 12, for instance, twenty-five percent of high SES students said the premier did a very good job, while 25.6 percent of low SES students made a similar response. Similar findings are reported for the prime minister. There tends

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<sup>16</sup>Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, p. 54.



STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE KIND OF JOB DONE BY THE MAYOR, PREMIER AND PRIME MINISTER BY SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS.

Socioeconomic Status	High	Middle	Low
<b>Mayor</b>			
very good	15.2%	16.4%	21.1%
fairly good	63.6	61.3	59.9
not very good	10.9	13.5	10.3
bad	5.2	5.6	1.9
don't know	5.0	3.4	6.6
N	169	168	268
<b>Premier</b>			
very good	25.0	25.9	25.6
fairly good	39.9	44.2	46.2
not very good	14.4	17.2	11.7
bad	6.0	3.4	5.0
don't know	14.6	9.2	11.4
N	169	168	268
<b>Prime Minister</b>			
very good	31.1	25.3	31.0
fairly good	42.8	46.3	43.4
not very good	11.0	9.9	11.4
bad	5.6	6.6	3.0
don't know	9.5	10.4	11.1
N	168	166	268

to be some difference in the evaluation of the mayor's job. The mayor's job was given a "very good" response by 15.2 percent of the high SES students, while 21.1 percent of the low SES students made a similar response.

In Table 13 there seems to be a major difference between high and low SES students who gave a "very good" response to the kind of job done by the St. John's City Council. Only 9.6 percent of the high SES students were willing to say that the city council was doing a very good job, while 21.1 percent of the low SES students were willing to evaluate the job done by city council in such a way. This finding supports Green-

stein's assertion that low SES students are more willing to hold political leaders and institutions in high esteem.<sup>17</sup>

TABLE 13

STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE KIND OF JOB DONE BY MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL, AND NATIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS BY SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS.

Socioeconomic Status	High	Middle	Low
City Council			
very good	9.6%	13.1%	20.1%
fairly good	52.7	44.6	46.6
not very good	16.8	19.0	12.7
bad	4.2	6.5	3.0
don't know	16.8	16.7	17.5
N	167	168	268
House of Assembly			
very good	16.1	13.2	17.9
fairly good	44.6	39.5	34.0
not very good	14.3	16.8	16.0
bad	3.6	6.0	3.0
don't know	21.4	24.6	29.1
N	168	167	268
Parliament			
very good	11.9	10.8	13.8
fairly good	44.0	41.9	41.0
not very good	11.9	9.0	9.3
bad	3.6	7.2	2.6
don't know	28.6	31.1	33.2
N	168	167	268

It should be noted in Table 13 that the percentage of "don't know" responses is somewhat higher for low SES students. This could indicate that low SES students are not as aware of political institutions as middle and high SES students. We also saw in Tables 8 and 9 that the highest percentage of support for municipal political leaders and institutions came during the lower elementary school years, and this support decreases

<sup>17</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 101.

significantly by grades seven and eight. It would appear that socioeconomic status does not play as important a role in the higher grades (seven and eight) as it does for students in the early elementary grades in determining their support for municipal leaders and institutions.

In analyzing the effects of socioeconomic status on students' evaluation of political leaders and institutions, we must also consider how this factor affects their perception of government's ability to do its job properly. Table 14 indicates how St. John's school children respond to a question concerning how often government makes mistakes.

TABLE 14

STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HOW OFTEN DOES GOVERNMENT MAKE MISTAKES?" BY SES.

SES	High	Middle	Low
never	7.3%	6.2%	4.2%
sometimes	55.5	62.3	59.9
often	31.7	25.3	27.1
all the time	4.9	4.9	3.4
don't know	0.6	1.2	5.3
N	164	162	262

From the Table we can see that socioeconomic status does not play an important role in St. John's students' perception of government's ability to do its job properly. There are differences, however, which are noteworthy. For instance, 31.7 percent of high SES students made an "often" response to the question concerning how often government makes mistakes, while 25.3 percent of middle-SES students responded in a similar manner. It should also be noted that the percentage of "don't know" responses is somewhat higher for low SES students than for the two other socioeconomic groups.

The findings presented in Table 14 are supported by other research studies. Researchers in these studies stated that there may be a number of consistent socioeconomic differences, but again, these differences may not be especially large or completely consistent. George R. Robert in his Calgary study found minor differences between high and low SES students' perceptions of government's ability to do its job.<sup>18</sup>

Table 15 indicates how St. John's students assess the importance of roles performed by certain people in our society. It would seem that socioeconomic status does play a part in students' perceptions of some of these roles. There was a relationship between socioeconomic status and students' perceptions of the role of the mayor, prime minister, governor general, lawyer, and religious leader. In evaluation the role of the mayor, for instance, 5.3 percent of high SES students said that it was very important, while 12.7 percent of low SES students made a similar response. This finding is in keeping with Greenstein's. In his work on the political socialization of New Haven school children, Greenstein found that a higher percentage of low SES students believed the role of the mayor to be very important, than high SES students.<sup>19</sup>

It should be noted, as Table 15 indicates, the Queen's role is considered to be very important by a high percentage of students in all socioeconomic categories; 65.2 percent for high SES students, 69.4 percent for middle SES students, and 70.7 percent for low SES students.

Child development literature reveals many indications that at least in the past, adult sex differences in political behavior had roots

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<sup>18</sup>Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup>Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 101.

TABLE 15

STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE ROLES PERFORMED BY CERTAIN PEOPLE IN OUR SOCIETY BY SES.

SES	High	Middle	Low
Mayor of a City			
very important	5.3%	10.0%	12.7%
important	19.1	20.4	26.7
less important	36.7	23.2	33.2
not very important	39.9	43.9	28.3
N	99	101	188
Prime Minister			
very important	30.0	27.1	25.4
important	32.1	38.6	40.4
less important	26.9	29.2	24.3
not very important	10.3	5.0	9.9
N	121	123	172
Governor General			
very important	9.3	15.0	4.4
important	38.4	44.7	36.7
less important	34.7	27.6	34.1
not very important	17.2	12.6	24.7
N	100	86	118
Queen			
very important	65.2	69.4	70.7
important	20.2	8.3	10.8
less important	6.1	11.8	8.0
not very important	6.3	10.3	10.5
N	118	107	177
Lawyer			
very important	13.1	11.1	0.0
important	10.2	20.8	3.8
less important	24.8	8.3	36.6
not very important	39.1	59.7	59.5
N	23	26	36
Judge			
very important	7.1	8.7	6.3
important	19.4	20.7	23.5
less important	22.5	32.3	26.3
not very important	49.0	33.1	43.6
N	40	36	59
Police Chief			
very important	10.6	4.5	3.0
important	12.9	20.4	18.1
less important	33.3	38.6	35.6
not very important	40.9	36.3	43.3
N	33	44	72
Doctor			
very important	23.3	27.9	32.8
important	28.7	27.9	25.8
less important	19.0	31.5	20.3
not very important	27.7	12.6	20.9
N	64	65	98
School Principal			
very important	13.8	10.7	0.0
important	10.0	7.1	23.2
less important	31.4	14.3	23.2
not very important	44.6	67.8	53.5
N	22	28	43
Religious Leader			
very important	19.1	16.3	31.9
important	16.6	6.2	15.4
less important	20.8	27.5	13.6
not very important	38.3	50.0	25.0
N	35	28	54

in rather early pre-adult differences. One question arising from this statement concerns the relationship between boys and girls in their evaluation of the job done by political leaders and institutions, and their perception of certain roles both political and non-political in our society. Do boys and girls get a different perception of the kind of job done by political leaders and institutions in our society? Findings presented in Tables 16 and 17 answer this question concerning St. John's school children.

In Table 16 we see no important difference in the percentage of boys and girls who were willing to give a "very good" response when questioned on the kind of job various political leaders were doing. However, there are differences between boys and girls who gave a "bad" response to this question. Even though the percentage of "bad" responses is low for both sexes; it tended to be lower for girls than for boys over the three political levels. This finding supports the contention of other studies on child political socialization which found that boys were more willing than girls to criticize political leaders. Greenstein, in his study found that boys would more readily criticize political leaders than girls. Greenstein went on to explain that this difference in part resulted from the fact that females saw government in terms of the leader, while males saw government more in terms of institutions.<sup>20</sup> Table 16 indicates that girls are supportive of the premier and prime minister, while boys are critical.

Table 17 shows essentially the same pattern as Table 16. Girls tend to be more supportive than boys of the House of Assembly and Parlia-

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<sup>20</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 108.

TABLE 16

STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE KIND OF JOB DONE BY THE MAYOR, PREMIER, AND PRIME MINISTER BY SEX. (REFER TO QUESTIONS 2, 6 and 10.)

Sex	Boys	Girls
Mayor		
very good	18.2%	16.5%
fairly good	62.0	60.6
not very good	11.2	12.1
bad	5.9	2.4
don't know	2.6	8.4
N	303	297
Premier		
very good	25.4	25.6
fairly good	38.0	50.2
not very good	16.5	10.8
bad	8.3	1.7
don't know	11.9	11.8
N	303	297
Prime Minister		
very good	28.5	31.2
fairly good	40.7	46.1
not very good	13.6	9.6
bad	7.0	2.7
don't know	10.3	10.8
N	302	295

ment. The percentage of "don't know" responses, however, seem to be an important factor in Table 17. "Don't know" responses tend to be much higher for girls than for boys when evaluating the kind of job done by the various political institutions. When evaluating the kind of job done by Parliament, for instance, 26.6 percent of the boys made a "don't know" response, while 36.7 percent of the girls made a similar response. Charles Andrain, as mentioned previously, reported similar findings in his study --- that boys tend to be more aware than girls of national politics.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness.

TABLE 17

STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE KIND OF JOB DONE BY CITY COUNCIL, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, AND PARLIAMENT BY SEX. (REFER TO QUESTIONS 4, 8, 12.)

Sex	Boys	Girls
City Council		
very good	17.2%	13.6%
fairly good	44.9	50.2
not very good	17.8	13.2
bad	5.6	3.1
don't know	14.5	20.6
N	303	295
House of Assembly		
very good	14.2	17.9
fairly good	34.4	42.9
not very good	20.5	10.8
bad	6.3	1.4
don't know	24.5	27.0
N	303	296
Parliament		
very good	14.6	10.4
fairly good	40.5	43.4
not very good	12.0	7.4
bad	6.3	2.0
don't know	26.6	36.7
N	301	297

When analyzing the responses of boys and girls concerning the kind of job done by political leaders and institutions, we must also consider their perceptions of government's ability to do its job properly. It has been stated by some writers of political socialization theory, that females tend to hold government in higher esteem than males. Robert Hess and Judith Torney theorize that girls take a less punitive and aggressive stand against societal norms.<sup>22</sup> Table 18 illustrates how boys and girls in St. John's schools respond when questioned on how often they believe

<sup>22</sup> Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 186.



government makes mistakes. These data are important in fully analyzing how sex could influence a child's perception of government.

TABLE 18

STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HOW OFTEN DO YOU THINK GOVERNMENT MAKES MISTAKES?", BY SEX.

Sex	Boys	Girls
never	5.1%	5.6%
sometimes	53.5	65.4
often	31.3	24.8
all the time	5.7	2.8
don't know	4.4	1.4
N	256	240

Based on the findings presented in Table 18, it would seem that girls tend to hold government in higher esteem than boys. If we take the first two responses as being the most positive toward government, we find an important difference between boys and girls. For instance, 58.6 percent of the boys gave a positive response about government, while 71 percent of the girls gave a positive response. These findings are certainly supportive of Hess' and Torney's statement that girls seem to be more approving of government than boys.

The findings presented in Table 19 show how boys and girls in St. John's schools assess the importance of roles performed by certain people in our society. For each role described, we can take the first two responses (very important, important) as being high while the last two responses (less important, not very important) can be classified as low responses.

There is no overall pattern of relationship in the perception which boys and girls have of most roles described in Table 19. The roles

TABLE 19

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CERTAIN ROLES BOTH POLITICAL AND NONPOLITICAL PERFORMED BY CERTAIN PEOPLE IN OUR SOCIETY BY SEX.

SEX	Boys	Girls
Mayor of a City		
very important	10.35	9.55
important	22.1	23.8
less important	32.3	29.6
not very important	35.4	37.0
	N 195	198
Prime Minister		
very important	26.8	28.2
important	40.2	33.0
less important	24.9	29.6
not very important	8.1	9.2
	N 209	206
Governor General		
very important	7.9	10.1
important	35.8	44.3
less important	35.8	27.5
not very important	20.5	18.1
	N 151	149
Queen		
very important	68.5	70.6
important	12.8	13.2
less important	9.9	7.1
not very important	8.9	9.1
	N 203	197
Lawyer		
very important	2.3	14.6
important	13.6	9.8
less important	34.1	19.5
not very important	50.0	56.1
	N 44	41
Judge		
very important	5.0	9.9
important	23.3	15.5
less important	26.7	29.6
not very important	45.0	45.1
	N 60	71
Police Chief		
very important	6.1	4.5
important	17.1	18.2
less important	32.9	47.0
not very important	43.9	30.3
	N 82	66
Doctor		
very important	32.7	21.9
important	29.7	30.7
less important	17.7	26.3
not very important	23.9	21.1
	N 113	113
School Principal		
very important	7.5	5.9
important	17.5	15.7
less important	22.5	19.6
not very important	52.5	58.8
	N 40	51
Religious Leader		
very important	29.0	18.5
important	16.0	18.5
less important	22.6	25.9
not very important	32.3	37.0
	N 62	54

of the mayor, judge, and school principal, for instance, are given a low response by a majority of boys and girls, whereas the role of the Queen is given a high response by both sexes. There are differences, however, in boys' and girls' perceptions of roles performed by the governor general, doctor, religious leader, and lawyer. Girls seem to have a higher perception of the governor general, and lawyers, while boys have a higher perception of the roles performed by doctors and religious leaders.

There does not seem to be any differences in student evaluation of political leaders in schools across religious denominations. The differences that occur are within religious denominations. In Table 20 we see that there are no differences between students attending public schools and Catholic schools. A majority of students in all schools tend to give political leaders a positive evaluation. There are some overall differences between schools A and B, both belonging to the Avalon Consolidated School System. Students from school A give the job done by the premier a much higher rating than students from school B. Similar findings are also reported in the St. John's Roman Catholic School System. Students from school C, for instance, gave the premier a higher rating than students from school E. These differences that occur within the denominations are caused by factors other than school systems. School A is situated in an economically advanced area of the city while school B is situated in an economically depressed area of the city. As we have seen, socioeconomic backgrounds play a part in student evaluation of political leaders and institutions.

Findings presented in Table 21 indicate school systems do influence St. John's students' evaluation of municipal, provincial, and national political institutions. The differences that occur are within the school systems. It should be noted that students from schools B and E give a

TABLE 20

STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE KIND OF JOB DONE BY THE MAYOR, PREMIER, AND PRIME MINISTER BY RELIGION (SCHOOL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD).

School	Public			Catholic	E
	A	B	C	D	
Mayor					
very good	17.4%	10.9%	18.8%	18.0%	23.1%
fairly good	63.1	63.9	62.4	53.2	63.0
not very good	10.7	12.6	9.4	17.1	8.3
bad	4.7	10.1	1.7	1.8	1.9
don't know	4.0	2.5	7.7	9.9	3.7
N	149	119	117	111	108
Premier					
very good	36.9	12.6	29.1	26.1	19.4
fairly good	43.0	48.7	42.7	45.9	39.8
not very good	5.4	18.5	12.0	16.2	20.4
bad	2.7	9.2	5.1	2.7	5.6
don't know	12.1	10.9	11.1	9.0	14.8
N	149	119	117	111	108
Prime Minister					
very good	31.1	23.5	34.2	33.6	28.0
fairly good	42.6	44.5	38.5	46.4	45.8
not very good	12.2	10.9	12.0	7.3	13.1
bad	4.1	7.6	3.4	1.8	7.5
don't know	10.1	13.4	12.0	10.9	5.6
N	148	119	117	110	107

high percentage of "not very good" responses when commenting on the kind of job done by city council and the House of Assembly in particular.

Both schools are in economically backward areas of the city. Therefore, students from these schools may be willing to blame the municipal and provincial governments for their economic conditions.

Findings presented in Table 22 indicate that school systems (Roman Catholic or public) do not influence students' responses to a question asking them how often they think government makes mistakes. There are some differences between schools within the Consolidated system.

TABLE 21

STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE KIND OF JOB DONE BY MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL, AND NATIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS BY RELIGION (SCHOOL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD).

School	Public		C	Catholic	
	A	B		D	E
City Council					
very good	19.5%	10.2%	14.5%	14.5%	16.7%
fairly good	49.7	42.4	45.3	53.6	47.2
not very good	12.8	22.9	12.8	11.8	18.5
bad	2.0	11.0	4.3	2.7	1.9
don't know	16.1	13.6	23.1	17.3	15.7
N	149	118	117	110	108
House of Assembly					
very good	15.5	7.6	17.9	21.6	18.7
fairly good	46.6	37.0	40.2	39.6	25.2
not very good	12.2	16.0	16.2	12.6	23.4
bad	1.4	6.7	0.0	1.8	11.2
don't know	24.3	32.8	25.6	24.3	21.5
N	148	119	117	111	107
Parliament					
very good	16.8	9.2	11.1	9.9	13.2
fairly good	41.6	41.2	41.9	42.3	44.3
not very good	8.1	12.6	8.5	9.9	11.3
bad	5.4	6.7	2.6	0.9	4.7
don't know	28.2	30.3	35.9	36.9	26.4
N	149	119	117	111	106

TABLE 22

STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HOW OFTEN DO YOU THINK GOVERNMENT MAKES MISTAKES?", BY RELIGION (SCHOOL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD).

School	Public		C	Catholic	
	A	B		D	E
never	1.4%	1.7%	8.0%	11.4%	7.5%
sometimes	61.8	34.2	64.5	55.2	51.9
often	24.7	28.8	33.2	29.5	34.9
all the time	4.1	10.2	9.9	2.9	2.8
don't know	2.1	5.1	3.6	1.0	2.8
N	124	94	86	96	100

A number of interesting findings are presented in Table 23. The denomination of the school does not have a bearing on students' evaluation of the role performed by the mayor of a city. The perceived importance of this role seems to be consistent for all schools. However, when evaluating the role of a school principal, students from school A tend to be much more negative in their evaluation than students from remaining schools. It must be remembered that students in school A only include grades four, five, and six, while the other schools include students to grade eight.

An important finding in Table 23 concerns students' perceived importance of the role of the religious leader. This is the only case thus far in the study where differences between denominational type schools are consistent. Students from schools C, D, and E (Roman Catholic School System) place a higher importance on the religious leader's role than do students from schools A and B (Public School System). Students from school E placed the highest stress on the role of the religious leader. Since this school is administered by a religious order, students might be more willing to respond to the perceived importance of the religious leader in our society.

#### C. FINDINGS RELATED TO PARTISANSHIP AND PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF ELECTION OUTCOMES

Political parties provide citizens with an important means for participating in the political system. This is the basic reason why people are motivated toward a particular political party. At what stage in his political socialization process does a child begin to develop an identification with a particular political party. The findings presented in Table 24 help to answer this question as it applies to St. John's school children in grades four to eight.

TABLE 23

STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF THE ROLES PERFORMED BY CERTAIN PEOPLE IN OUR SOCIETY BY RELIGION (SCHOOL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD).

School	Public		Catholic		
	A	B	C	D	E
Mayor of a City					
very important	13.2%	9.8%	10.1%	10.4%	5.9%
important	25.3	18.3	20.3	19.5	30.9
less important	25.3	34.1	43.5	26.0	27.9
not very important	36.3	37.1	26.1	44.2	35.3
N	91	82	69	77	68
Prime Minister					
very important	13.7	31.3	26.6	36.1	31.6
important	38.9	32.5	39.2	33.7	39.5
less important	33.7	27.5	25.3	24.1	23.7
not very important	13.7	8.4	8.9	6.0	5.3
N	95	83	79	83	76
Governor General					
very important	6.4	10.7	5.0	12.1	13.6
important	34.6	55.4	36.7	43.9	25.0
less important	42.3	23.3	25.0	33.3	34.1
not very important	16.7	10.7	33.3	10.6	27.3
N	78	56	60	66	44
Queen					
very important	77.7	65.8	70.3	65.1	64.2
important	14.9	14.5	12.2	9.5	11.9
less important	4.1	11.8	9.6	7.9	10.4
not very important	3.3	7.9	8.1	17.5	13.4
N	121	76	74	63	67
Lawyer					
very important	11.8	14.3	5.6	12.5	0.0
important	11.8	0.0	22.2	18.8	5.3
less important	23.5	14.3	33.3	12.5	47.4
not very important	52.9	71.4	38.9	56.3	47.4
N	17	14	18	16	19
Judge					
very important	10.7	0.0	3.2	17.2	5.0
important	25.0	22.2	19.4	10.3	30.0
less important	10.7	40.7	29.0	37.9	15.0
not very important	53.6	37.0	48.4	34.5	50.6
N	28	27	31	29	20
Police Chief					
very important	4.2	4.9	8.0	4.0	5.9
important	20.8	22.0	12.0	16.0	14.7
less important	45.8	34.1	40.0	40.0	38.2
not very important	29.2	39.0	40.0	40.0	41.2
N	24	41	25	25	34
Doctor					
very important	20.0	30.6	33.3	18.4	37.1
important	35.0	22.4	22.2	34.2	25.7
less important	25.0	22.4	15.6	23.7	22.9
not very important	20.0	24.5	28.9	23.7	14.3
N	59	49	45	38	35
School Principal					
very important	0.0	20.0	5.0	13.3	0.0
important	3.7	6.7	25.0	20.0	31.5
less important	22.2	13.3	25.0	26.7	18.3
not very important	74.1	60.0	45.0	40.0	50.0
N	27	15	20	15	16
Religious Leader					
very important	11.1	15.4	32.1	25.0	39.3
important	5.6	23.1	25.0	25.0	17.9
less important	33.3	7.7	14.3	33.3	25.0
not very important	50.0	53.8	28.6	16.7	17.9
N	36	13	28	12	28

TABLE 24

STUDENTS WHO SAID THAT "IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE WHICH SIDE WINS AN ELECTION" BY GRADE (REFER TO QUESTION 19).

Grade	4	5	6	7	8
Yes	54.7%	62.0%	74.8%	71.6%	70.3%
No	28.2	23.3	21.6	16.4	22.7
Don't Know	16.2	12.4	2.7	8.6	7.0
N	117	130	111	117	128

As indicated in Table 24, a majority of students at all five grade levels believe that it is important which political party wins an election. However, the percentage is significantly lower for grades four and five students than it is for grades six, seven and eight students. This finding could mean that students in the lower elementary grades do not understand the meaning of, or the role played by, political parties in our political system.

TABLE 25

STUDENTS INDICATING THEIR PREFERENCE FOR A PARTICULAR POLITICAL PARTY BY GRADE (REFER TO QUESTION 20).

Grade	4	5	6	7	8
Liberals	20.5%	27.9%	29.1%	27.4%	28.9%
Conservatives (PC)	29.1	31.0	30.9	35.9	32.0
New Democrats (NDP)	14.5	10.1	5.5	14.5	8.6
Don't Know	35.9	31.0	34.5	31.4	28.1
N	117	129	110	116	125

Findings presented in Table 25 further indicate by grade the partisan identification of St. John's school children. As indicated, a large percentage of students expressed a party preference at the various grade levels. For instance, 64.1 percent of the grade four students



expressed a party preference, while 77.8 percent of the seventh grade students expressed a party preference. These findings differ from the findings of other Canadian studies. In a study on the political orientations of Canadian school children, Jon Pammett found that only 30 percent of the grade four students in his study expressed a party preference, and this had only risen to 40 percent by grade eight.<sup>23</sup> Also, George R. Robert in his study on the political orientations of Calgary school children reported that Canadian children were slower than American children in forming party loyalties.<sup>24</sup> Robert compared his findings to those of Fred Greenstein, who found that 60 percent of the fourth grade students in his New Haven study had expressed a party preference.<sup>25</sup>

The findings reported in Table 25 suggest that a much higher percentage of St. John's school children are more willing to express a party preference than school children from other parts of the country. In fact, children in this study showed a greater willingness to show party preference than students in similar studies conducted in the United States.

Why, then would St. John's school children be more willing to express a party preference than children from other parts of Canada? One possible explanation for this finding could be the public's attitude toward political parties in Newfoundland. People in this province tend to take a high interest in politics, and this interest is expressed through the various political parties. John H. Calhoun, in his thesis, The National

<sup>23</sup> Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children," p. 139.

<sup>24</sup> Robert, Political Orientations of Calgary School Children, p. 56.

<sup>25</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 71.

Identity of Newfoundlanders, stated that Newfoundlanders have developed the feeling of being "a race apart".<sup>26</sup> Surveys of the adult electorate, however, conducted by the Whalen Royal Commission on Municipal Government in Newfoundland and Labrador have found that people in this province do not express a greater interest in politics than people from other parts of Canada.<sup>27</sup>

Research has found that socioeconomic status does affect a child's perception of party politics. In his Kingston study, Jon Pammatt found that socioeconomic status had a marked affect on the child's perception of issue differences between the political parties, and also upon the child's willingness to express a party preference.<sup>28</sup> The findings presented in Table 26 indicate how socioeconomic status affects St. John's school children's perception of which side wins an election.

TABLE 26

STUDENTS WHO SAID THAT IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE WHICH SIDE WINS AN ELECTION BY SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS.

SES	High	Middle	Low
Yes	67.0%	68.8%	64.5%
No	20.9	20.9	25.1
Don't Know	11.6	9.7	8.1
N	169	168	268

It would seem from Table 26 that a high percentage of students in each of the socioeconomic categories believe that it makes a difference

<sup>26</sup> Calhoun, The National Identity of Newfoundlanders.

<sup>27</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on Municipal Government in Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's, 1975, p. 103.

<sup>28</sup> Pammatt, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children", p. 139.

which side wins an election. When we look at the "no" responses, however, there is a higher percentage of low SES students who said that it makes no difference which side wins an election. Low SES students may be more likely to conclude that their socioeconomic conditions will probably remain the same regardless of which side wins an election.

Findings presented in Table 27 indicate the extent of influence which socioeconomic status has on the partisan identification of St. John's school children. As indicated, socioeconomic status does not appear to be an important factor in determining a child's preference for one political party or another.

TABLE 27

STUDENTS INDICATING THEIR PREFERENCE FOR A PARTICULAR POLITICAL PARTY BY SES.

SES	High	Middle	Low
Liberals	28.4%	28.3%	25.1%
Conservatives (PC)	29.0	31.9	33.8
New Democrats (NDP)	13.6	6.0	11.8
Don't Know	29.0	33.7	29.3
N	169	166	263

Like socioeconomic status, researchers have found that sex can affect a child's perception of political parties. David Easton and Jack Dennis discovered that boys' perceptions show a greater tolerance for differences between political parties on issues ... Girls more frequently said that parties have the same stand and contribute the same amount.<sup>29</sup> Table 28 indicates the perceptions of boys and girls in St. John's schools

<sup>29</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System.

on the importance of which political party wins an election. As we can see, there is no difference between boys and girls in expressing the opinion that it is important which side wins an election. These findings are consistent with those presented by Hess and Torney, who found no difference in acceptance of norms concerning political parties.<sup>30</sup>

TABLE 28

STUDENTS WHO SAID THAT IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE WHICH SIDE WINS AN ELECTION BY SEX

Sex	Boys	Girls
Yes	66.9%	66.2%
No	21.2	23.6
Don't Know	10.4	8.4
N	303	297

The findings presented in Table 29 further indicate the partisan identification of boys and girls in St. John's schools. It seems that boys are more willing than girls to express a party preference. For instance, 74.5 percent of the boys involved in the study give a party preference, while 64.6 percent of the girls express a party preference. It could be, as Jack Dennis and David Easton point out in their study on children in the political system that political parties are more salient for boys than for girls.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, boys are more likely to see political parties as the means by which they can participate in the political system.

As we have already seen in this chapter, a number of factors (grade level, SES, and sex) could influence St. John's students' partisan

<sup>30</sup> Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

TABLE 29

STUDENTS INDICATING THEIR PREFERENCE FOR A PARTICULAR POLITICAL PARTY BY SEX.

Sex	Boys	Girls
Liberals	29.2%	24.7%
Conservatives (PC)	33.6	30.4
New Democrats (NDP)	11.7	9.5
Don't Know	25.5	35.5
N	298	296

orientations. Table 30 reveals in part the influence which religion (school and neighbourhood) has on these orientations. Responses to a question asking if it makes any difference which side wins an election indicate that students from all schools believe that it does.

TABLE 30

STUDENTS WHO SAID THAT IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE WHICH SIDE WINS AN ELECTION BY RELIGION (SCHOOL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD).

School	Public		Catholic		
	A	B	C	D	E
Yes	65.1%	72.0%	54.3%	70.3%	73.1%
No	22.1	17.8	32.8	20.7	17.6
Don't Know	12.1	8.5	11.2	7.2	7.4
N	149	120	117	111	108

The percentage of "no" responses is somewhat higher for school C. It is difficult to explain why students from this particular school are less supportive of political parties. Economically, the school is one of the more advanced areas of the city.

Table 31 further indicates the influence of school systems on the partisan identification of St. John's school children. School systems

is not a key factor in determining student support for the Liberals and Conservatives. However, students in schools belonging to the Roman Catholic School System tend to be more supportive of the New Democratic Party than students from public schools. The NDP support is highest in school C. The fact that the party leader at the time was a teacher at the school may have influenced student responses.

TABLE 31

STUDENTS INDICATING THEIR PREFERENCE FOR A PARTICULAR POLITICAL PARTY BY RELIGION (SCHOOL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD).

School	Public		Catholic		
	A	B	C	D	E
Liberals	24.8%	35.3%	19.8%	30.9%	24.3%
Conservatives (PC)	24.8	34.5	30.2	31.8	41.7
New Democrats (NDP)	6.0	6.7	18.1	10.9	13.6
Don't Know	44.3	23.5	31.9	26.4	20.4
N	149	119	116	110	103

Another interesting finding shown in Table 31 concerns the high percentage of "don't know" responses from school A. Students involved in the study from this school, however, included only grades four to six. Research has shown that it is not until usually after the sixth grade that students begin to fully develop political party preferences. Jon Pammett found in his Kingston study that students in the lower elementary grades were less likely to express a party preference than students in the middle grades (seven and eight).<sup>32</sup>

#### D. FINDINGS RELATED TO PARTICIPATION: ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

Participating in the political system to some degree or another

<sup>32</sup> Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children", p. 139.

is considered the duty of every citizen in a democracy. This sense of citizen duty seems to develop during the elementary school years. Table 32 shows the attitude of St. John's school children in grades four to eight toward participating in the political system. The first question in the Table deals with a sense of duty (voting), while the last two questions deal with students' present political behavior and anticipated future political behavior.

TABLE 32

STUDENT INTEREST IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY GRADE (REFER TO QUESTIONS 16, 17, 18)

Grade	4	5	6	7	8
Will you vote when you are old enough?					
Yes	71.8%	66.4%	81.1%	72.4%	70.9%
No	10.9	14.8	6.3	12.1	10.2
Don't Know	16.2	17.2	11.7	15.5	17.3
N	117	130	111	117	128
Do you talk about politics with friends?					
Yes	17.9	26.4	31.5	23.0	26.8
No	82.2	73.6	68.5	75.2	72.4
N	117	130	111	117	128
Will you run for political office when you are old enough?					
Yes	9.4	7.0	4.5	12.9	8.6
Maybe	11.1	9.3	9.1	12.1	10.1
No	46.2	49.6	47.7	20.7	26.6
Don't Know	33.3	34.1	38.7	54.3	54.7
N	117	130	111	117	128

There is no great difference in the percentage of students at the various grade levels who see voting as a duty to be performed by everyone who is old enough. For instance, 71.8 percent of the fourth grade students said they would vote when old enough, while 70.9 percent of the grade eight

students responded in a similar manner.

As indicated in Table 32, a low percentage of students said they talk about politics with their friends. However, this percentage does rise from 17.9 percent in grade four to 26.8 percent in grade eight. An interesting finding suggested in Table 32 came from student responses to a question concerning their intentions of running for political office when they are old enough. The percentage of students who responded "yes" to this question is low at all grade levels. The percentage of "no" responses, however, does change over the grade levels. There is a significant decrease in the percentage of students who gave a "no" response to this question in grades seven and eight as compared to the other three grades. For instance, the drop was from 47.7 percent in grade six to 20.7 percent in grade seven.

The findings presented in Table 32 are supported by other studies on political socialization. In his study, "Elementary School Children's Attitudes of Political Trust, Political Efficacy, and Political Change in Detroit School Children", Allan Glenn found children in the various elementary grades had different ideas about political participation. In the early elementary grades children saw political participation almost solely as voting on election day. By the seventh grade, however, children were able to recognize other avenues of political participation, such as writing letters to government officials, campaigning at election time, and eventually running for political office.<sup>33</sup>

Research has revealed that socioeconomic status is a factor in determining the degree to which people are willing to participate in the political system. Robert Hess and Judith Torney in their study on the

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<sup>33</sup> Glenn, "Elementary School Children's Attitudes of Political Trust", (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, in Dissertation Abstract International), 1970, p. 6401-A.



development of political attitudes in children found that participation in political discussion and concern with political issues are more frequent among children of high socioeconomic status.<sup>34</sup> Table 33 illustrates the

TABLE 33  
STUDENTS' POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS.

SES	High	Middle	Low
Will you vote when you are old enough?			
Yes	77.5%	66.8%	72.8%
No	8.3	12.1	11.5
Don't know	13.7	18.1	15.7
N	169	168	268
Do you talk about politics with friends?			
Yes	29.1	27.4	21.2
No	70.9	72.6	78.8
N	169	168	268
Will you run for political office when you are old enough?			
Yes	9.9	7.5	8.7
Maybe	15.0	11.1	14.4
No	30.1	37.1	32.4
Don't know	36.0	45.3	44.5
N	169	168	268

influence that socioeconomic status has on St. John's school children's attitudes and behavior toward political participation. The first part of the table deals with socioeconomic status and students' sense of duty (voting), while the last two parts of the Table deal with socioeconomic status and students' present political behavior and anticipated future political behavior.

<sup>34</sup>Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 158.

There does not appear to be any important relationship between St. John's students' sense of voting when they are old enough and socioeconomic status. Voting when old enough seems to be an accepted sense of duty by a high percentage of students from all socioeconomic categories. There is a predictable relationship for talking about politics with friends and socioeconomic status. Students from high socioeconomic backgrounds are more willing to talk about politics with friends than students from middle and low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Another finding indicated in Table 33 deals with students' responses to the question concerning their intentions of running for political office when they are old enough. The most interesting part of this finding is the percentage of "don't know" responses. This means that students are undecided about their political involvement in the future, and this response is high for all socioeconomic categories. However, in Table 32 we saw that most of the "don't know" responses occurred in grades seven and eight, which means that students at these grade levels are more willing to express an interest for participating in politics, regardless of their socioeconomic status. It would seem that socioeconomic status by grades seven and eight has become a less important factor in determining a child's interest in political participation. Students at these grade levels may by this time have been made more aware of their role in the political world through the school curriculum, or some other agent.

In studying a child's sense of political participation, consideration must be given to sex differences. Herbert Hyman, in his book, Political Socialization, reviewed a number of studies, all concluding that boys are more likely than girls to take a more active role in political matters.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Hyman, Political Socialization, p. 22

Table 34 indicates the political participation motives of boys and girls in St. John's schools.

TABLE 34  
STUDENT INTEREST IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY SEX

Sex	Boys	Girls
Will you vote when you are old enough?		
Yes	73.7%	71.3%
No	11.7	9.8
Don't Know	13.7	17.6
N	303	297
Do you talk about politics with friends?		
Yes	19.8	29.9
No	79.5	69.8
N	303	297
Will you run for political office when you are old enough?		
Yes	7.6	9.1
Maybe	10.0	10.7
No	39.9	36.4
Don't Know	42.5	43.8
N	303	297

Findings presented in Table 34 indicate in terms of boys' and girls' reactions to voting, sex differences do not play an important part. This finding is supported by Hess and Torney who found that there were no differences between boys and girls in perceiving that the good citizen's duty is to vote.<sup>36</sup>

An interesting finding presented in Table 34 illustrates that St.

<sup>36</sup>Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 191.

John's girls tend to display a higher interest in political participation than boys. For instance, 29.9 percent of the girls responded that they talk about politics with their friends, while 19.8 percent of the boys made a similar response. This finding is different from those reported by other researchers. Susan Clark in her study on political participation involving 406 students found that boys showed a higher degree of willingness to discuss political matters than girls.<sup>37</sup> Similar findings were also reported by Greenstein in his New Haven study.<sup>38</sup>

It is difficult to explain why girls in St. John's schools are more likely than boys to express a willingness to participate in the political system. The present mayor, who is a woman could provide a model of political participation for female students in the city. It is also possible that since women generally are taking a more active role in society, school girls may be patterning themselves after this role. When other researchers, such as Greenstein and Clark did their studies in the 1960's, women took a more passive role in society. Female students today in these same cities could possibly display a higher degree of interest in participating in the political system.

In his Kingston study, Jon Pammett found that type of school (religion) does influence students' interest in political participation. He found that Catholic school children expressed a greater interest in political participation than public school children.<sup>39</sup> Findings presented in Table 35 indicate how religion (school and neighbourhood) affects St. John's school children's interest in political participation.

<sup>37</sup> Clark, "Political Participation in Young Children", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Dissertation Abstract International, 1966, p. 2605-A.

<sup>38</sup> Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 197.

<sup>39</sup> Pammett, "The Development of Political Orientations in Canadian School Children", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 4, No. 1, March, 1971, p. 137.

TABLE 35

## STUDENT INTEREST IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY RELIGION (SCHOOL AND NEIGHBORHOOD).

School	Public		Catholic		
	A	B	C	D	E
Will you vote when you are old enough?					
Yes	75.8%	70.6%	61.7%	71.6%	81.3%
No	7.4	8.4	13.0	15.5	12.1
Don't Know	15.4	21.0	20.9	12.7	6.5
N	149	120	117	111	108
Do you talk about politics with friends?					
Yes	21.2	17.1	28.9	46.7	14.3
No	78.8	82.9	71.1	53.3	85.7
N	149	120	117	111	108
Will you run for political office when you are old enough?					
Yes	4.0	2.5	11.3	18.0	9.3
Maybe	9.4	9.3	4.4	12.7	15.7
No	49.0	21.8	44.3	33.3	39.8
Don't Know	37.6	66.4	40.0	36.0	35.2
N	149	120	117	111	108

School systems do not influence students' intentions of voting when they are old enough. For some reason the percentage of "yes" responses for the first question in the Table is somewhat lower for school C. The investigator, however, cannot offer any particular explanation for this development. Since the school is in an economically advanced area of the city, socioeconomic status is not a determining factor in the low percentage of "yes" responses.

Also, findings in Table 35 show that school systems do not influence students in talking about politics with their friends. The percentage of "yes" responses, however, is particularly high for students

from school D. A characteristic of school D, such as a civic education program, may account for the high degree of interest in talking about politics with friends.

A final finding in Table 35 indicates that school systems do influence students' intentions of running for political office when old enough. Students in schools C, D, and E, belonging to the Roman Catholic School System, consistently gave a higher percentage of "yes" responses than students belonging to public schools when asked about their intentions of running for political office. This finding is in keeping with Pammett, who found that religion (school) does affect students' interest in political participation.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Pammett, Canadian Journal of Political Science, Volume 4, No. 1, March, 1971, p. 137.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the results of the study, and the conclusions and implications. In the summary a brief review will be given of the problem, and procedure, as well as a summary of the results. In the conclusion, the significance of the findings will be discussed. Based on these findings, implications for the Newfoundland social studies curriculum will be presented, along with suggestions for further research.

SUMMARY

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate some of the factors which influence the political socialization of St. John's school children in grades four to eight. It was hoped that some insight could be gained into students' understanding of their political world.

Four dependent variables were investigated. Considerable attention has been given to each of these variables in political socialization literature. These variables included: Knowledge of political leaders and institutions, evaluation of the kind of job done by political leaders and institutions and perceived importance of political and non-political roles, partisanship and perceived importance of election outcomes, and participation (attitudes and behavior).

These four dependent variables were hypothesized to be related to students' grade level, socioeconomic status, sex differences, and religion (school and neighborhood). In order to measure the variables a questionnaire was administered to a selected sample of 600 St. John's students in grades four to eight. Five schools were selected from different

geographical areas of the city in order to get a cross-section of the population. The investigator administered the questionnaire in order to overcome any problems caused by reading deficiencies. Once the data was collected and tabulated, a series of percentage tables were constructed for the purpose of analysis.

The findings for this study were categorized into four separate categories: (A.) Findings related to knowledge of political leaders and institutions; (B.) Findings related to evaluation of job done by political leaders and institutions and perceived importance of political and non-political roles; (C.) Findings related to partisanship and perceived importance of election outcomes; and (D.) Findings related to participation attitudes and behavior.

A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS RELATED TO KNOWLEDGE OF POLITICAL LEADERS AND INSTITUTIONS

It was found that grade level did not influence students' ability to name the mayor of St. John's. However, students' grade level did affect their ability to name the premier, and prime minister. A higher percentage of students in grades seven and eight could name the premier and prime minister than students in grades four, five and six.

When responding to a question concerning awareness of political institutions, it was found that St. John's students were more aware of city council and the House of Assembly than they were of Parliament. Students by grade eight, however, seemed to be equally aware of all three political institutions.

Socioeconomic status was not an important factor in students' ability to name the mayor, premier, and prime minister. Also, it was not important in students' awareness of municipal, provincial, and national



political institutions. Like socioeconomic status, sex does not seem to play any role in the ability of St. John's students to name the mayor, premier, and prime minister. Boys and girls tended to be equally aware of all three political leaders. Also, boys and girls tended to be equally aware of city council and the House of Assembly. However, boys were more aware of Parliament than girls.

School systems (Catholic or public) did not influence St. John's students' ability to name the mayor, premier, or prime minister. Also, school systems did not influence students' awareness of city council, the House of Assembly or Parliament.

B. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS RELATED TO EVALUATION OF JOB DONE BY POLITICAL LEADERS AND INSTITUTIONS AND PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL AND NON-POLITICAL ROLES

Students in the lower grades (four, five, and six) were more willing to give a positive response than students in grades seven and eight, when asked to respond to the kind of job done by municipal, provincial, and national political leaders and institutions. Also, it was found that the percentage of "don't know" responses were high at all grade levels for students' evaluation of the kind of job done by Parliament. In responding to the importance of the roles performed by certain people in society, students in all grades (four to eight) gave a very positive response to the role of the Queen. However, a low percentage (13) of grades four and five students saw the prime minister's role as important, but, this had increased to 45.9 percent by grade eight.

Socioeconomic status did influence students' responses concerning the kind of job done by the mayor. Low SES students were more willing than high SES students to say that the mayor was doing a very good job.

However, SES did not influence students' responses to the kind of job done by the premier and prime minister. When evaluating the kind of job done by city council, the House of Assembly, and Parliament, it was found that students from low SES backgrounds were more willing than high SES students to give city council a positive response. The role performed by the Queen was seen to be very important by a high percentage of students from all three socioeconomic categories. The prime minister's role was given a somewhat lower rating, with high SES students being the most positive.

There were no important differences between boys and girls who were willing to give a "very good" response when questioned on the kind of job done by the mayor, premier, and prime minister. However, boys were more apt than girls to give a "bad" response to these questions. (See Appendix A.) Girls were more willing to make positive responses to the kind of job done by municipal, provincial, and national political institutions. The percentage of "don't know" responses was high for both sexes when evaluating the kind of job done by political institutions.

No differences were found between students in schools belonging to the Avalon Consolidated School Board and students in schools belonging to the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board in their evaluation of municipal, provincial, and national political leaders and institutions. However, there were differences based on school systems in students' evaluation of the roles performed by certain people in society. A much higher percentage of students attending Roman Catholic schools responded that the role of religious leader was important.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS RELATED TO PARTISANSHIP AND PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF ELECTION OUTCOMES

It was found that party identification is important to St. John's

school children. A high percentage of students in grades four to eight said that it does make a difference which party wins an election. Also, a high percentage of students at each grade level expressed a party preference.

Party identification of St. John's school children was not associated with socioeconomic status. There were no socioeconomic differences between students who responded to a question asking them if it makes a difference which side wins an election. Furthermore, a high percentage of students from all socioeconomic categories expressed a party preference. Like socioeconomic status, sex differences were not related to students' responses to a question asking them which side wins an election. However, it was found that boys were more willing than girls to express a party preference.

No differences were found based on school systems in students' responses to a question asking them if it makes any difference which side wins an election. A high percentage of students in all schools said that it did make a difference. Also, no differences were found between students from different religions in expressing a preference for a particular political party.

#### D. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS RELATED TO PARTICIPATION: ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

Concerning interest in political participation among St. John's school children, no differences were found between students at the various grade levels who see voting as a duty to be performed by everyone who is old enough. When asked their intentions of running for political office when old enough, a low percentage gave a "yes" response. However, the percentage of "no" responses decreased significantly, and the percentage of

"don't know" responses increased at grades seven and eight.

There was no important relationship between St. John's students' attitude toward voting when they are old enough and socioeconomic status. A higher percentage of students from high socioeconomic backgrounds talk about politics with friends than students from middle and low socioeconomic backgrounds. No differences were found between students of various socioeconomic status and expressions of intentions of running for political office when they are old enough.

Findings related to St. John's students' interest in political participation indicate that sex differences were not linked with the responses of boys and girls in saying that everyone who is old enough should vote. It was found, however, that a higher percentage of girls than boys talk about politics with their friends. No differences were found between boys and girls in expressing their intentions of running for political office when old enough.

Religion was not associated with students' interest in political participation. No differences were found between students attending different denominational schools (public and Catholic) when responding to questions on: their intentions of voting when old enough, talking about politics with friends, or running for political office when old enough.

#### CONCLUSIONS

When analyzing the findings concerning students' knowledge of politics, evaluation of the job done by Teachers and institutions and perceived importance of political and non-political roles, partisanship and perceived importance of election outcomes, and participation (attitudes and behavior), it must be noted that many differences were not consistently

large for all independent variables. For instance, students' knowledge of politics was not consistently related to grade level, socioeconomic status, sex differences, and religion (type of school). Students at all grade levels tended to be equally aware of the mayor, however, students in the higher grades (seven and eight) tended to be more aware of the premier and prime minister. Like grade level, findings revealed that socioeconomic status, sex differences, and religion were not always consistent in relation to students' knowledge of political leaders and institutions.

As with students' knowledge of political leaders and institutions, a similar picture can also be drawn for evaluation of political leaders and institutions, partisanship, and participation. For each of these, the relationship with grade level, socioeconomic status, sex differences, and religion were found to be consistent in some cases and inconsistent in others. One of the more interesting findings reported in the study showed that girls tended to be more interested than boys in certain aspects of political participation. Also, another interesting finding concerned the high percentage of St. John's students who were willing to express a preference for a particular political party. In fact, the percentage was significantly higher than any reported from other studies conducted in Canada and the United States.

School systems did not have a very important influence on the four dependent variables. Findings showed greater variations within rather than across denominations, especially for public schools. The only important difference across denominations was the higher percentage of students in Catholic schools who saw the importance of the religious leader in our society.

## IMPLICATIONS

This study into the political socialization of St. John's school children has a number of important implications for the social studies curriculum in Newfoundland, with particular emphasis on civic education. The findings of the study suggest that children have acquired many political concepts and attitudes by the time they reach grade four; and these concepts and attitudes are expanded by the eighth grade. Assuming the importance of schools in the political socialization process of children, the findings reported in this study suggest that a curriculum change may be needed in these grades if basic concepts about the Canadian political system are to be developed adequately.

The data from this study indicates that children in the lower grades first develop a knowledge of political figures, and this develops to an awareness of political institutions, and finally to some understanding of the political process for students in grade eight. This would suggest that it is desirable to develop civic education programs that concentrate less on formal instruction about political institutions and more on concepts of political power and influence as found in the personalities of political leaders.

Findings in the study indicate that St. John's school children tend to be somewhat passive in expressing intentions of participating in the political system. This suggests that civic education programs might place more emphasis on the ways citizens can influence and participate in the political decision-making processes of the country. It is not enough for the school to teach students about the rights and obligations of voting. Students must also be given an understanding of the ways and means by which individuals can legitimately influence government. The school

curriculum does not adequately explain and emphasize the importance of group action to achieve desirable ends. There is too much stress on the ideal norms, and not enough on the less pleasant facts of political life. While it would probably be unwise to discuss political corruption in the early grades, the process of socialization should include a somewhat more realistic view of the operation of the political system.

It was also reported in this study that a high percentage of students at all grade levels expressed a party preference. This finding is different from those reported in other studies which found party identification to be low for students from other parts of Canada. Since party identification is high among school children in St. John's, the school curriculum should emphasize the influence of political parties on the system of government. By studying political parties, students can gain a greater insight into political ideologies. A study of political party ideology should involve the origins of political parties, the development of the ideas held by the different political parties, and why people support a particular party. Such a study into party politics will make students more aware of how they can use political parties to fully participate in the political system.

Some differences in student political socialization related to socioeconomic status and sex were reported in the study. It would appear that the school through its social studies curriculum must try to see that these differences are overcome.

If a social studies curriculum is to be devised that helps students to fully realize their political socialization process, a number of things have to be considered. First, educators must realize that students are much more aware of their political world than we give them credit.

Findings presented in this and other studies indicate that students have an awareness of the roles played by political leaders and institutions in society. It is based upon this information that a civic education program must be developed that is more in tune with students' political socialization needs. John Cogan, writing on political education in elementary schools stated that:

... 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 a major objective of civic education in our schools. The rationale rests on several assertions: political education should take place within the social studies curriculum; it should encourage open-mindedness; it should teach students how to inquire rather than to conform; it should provide for individuals to make rational decisions and arrive at tentative conclusions; and to 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.<sup>1</sup>

Second, besides creating a more effective social studies curriculum, the present state of social studies teaching ought to be considered. It will be only futile to change the curriculum content without adequately training teachers to deal with this change. A.B. Hodgetts, in his book, What Culture? What Heritage?, writes that:

... departments of education allow and universities continue to give courses that perpetuate many of the weaknesses that we have found in elementary and secondary school Canadian studies. The deficiencies in subject matter and teaching methods in the Canadian studies classroom are partly a direct product of what goes on in teacher-training institutions and universities. Teachers graduate from institutions of higher learning with many of the weaknesses in knowledge and in other

<sup>1</sup> John Cogan, "Political Education in the Elementary School: A Decision-Making Rationale", (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, in Dissertation Abstract International,) 1972, p. 4326-A.



intellectual qualities that their own future students will reflect in the Canadian studies classroom.<sup>2</sup>

Virginia Franklin also supports the idea that teachers have to be given better training in social studies education. In brief, she writes that in order for the elementary school social studies curriculum to give students a more realistic political education, teacher education institutions must prepare teachers to be aware of the problems created by a pluralistic society and to recognize the realities of the political system. Teachers who have this knowledge will be able to give their students a more appropriate political education.<sup>3</sup>

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH

This section of the chapter deals with some implications for future research in student political socialization.

1. A study should be conducted on political socialization involving students outside of St. John's. Such a study could compare the political socialization of St. John's students to those in another urban center, such as Corner Brook, or the study could be concerned with urban-rural differences.

2. A study should be conducted involving the use of other variables, such as the influence of the media and peer groups on student political socialization.

3. There needs to be more longitudinal studies of the same children over the time span. This will give a greater insight into the

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<sup>2</sup>A. B. Hodgetts, What Culture? What Heritage? A Study of Civic Education in Canada, Toronto, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1968, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup>Virginia Franklin, "The Role of the Elementary School Teacher in the Political Socialization Process", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Dissertation Abstract International, 1972, p. 1057-A.

actual political socialization process of each child.

4. Research is needed on student political socialization in Labrador. Students in this part of the province may have a different perception of the political world than do students from the island of Newfoundland.

5. Since the present study only included students in grades four to eight, research should also be conducted at the other grade levels in order to get a more complete picture of the political socialization process.

6. Findings in this study found that girls in St. John's tended to be more politically active than boys. Similar studies should be conducted in other centers, in order to see if girls are expressing greater intentions of becoming involved in politics. Also, comparisons could be made with other cities that have women mayors to see if this has an influence.

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APPENDIX A

NEWFOUNDLAND SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

GRADE 4 5 6 7 8 AGE

BOY GIRL

WHERE DOES YOUR FATHER WORK? \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT KIND OF WORK DOES YOUR FATHER USUALLY DO? \_\_\_\_\_

IF YOUR FATHER IS NOT WORKING NOW, WHAT DOES HE DO WHEN HE IS WORKING?  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. THE MAYOR OF ST. JOHN'S IS:

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| (1) Frank Moores  | (4) Shanie Duff |
| (2) Ray O'Neill   | (5) Don't Know  |
| (3) Dorothy Wyatt |                 |

2. WHAT KIND OF JOB HAS THE MAYOR BEEN DOING?

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| (1) very good     | (4) bad        |
| (2) fairly good   | (5) Don't Know |
| (3) not very good |                |

3. HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE ST. JOHN'S CITY COUNCIL?

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| (1) Yes | (2) No |
|---------|--------|

4. WHAT KIND OF JOB HAS THE ST. JOHN'S CITY COUNCIL BEEN DOING?

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| (1) very good     | (4) bad        |
| (2) fairly good   | (5) Don't Know |
| (3) not very good |                |

5. THE PREMIER OF NEWFOUNDLAND IS:

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| (1) William Rowe | (4) Pierre Trudeau |
| (2) Frank Moores | (5) Don't Know     |
| (3) John Crosbie |                    |

6. WHAT KIND OF JOB HAS THE PREMIER OF NEWFOUNDLAND BEEN DOING?

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| (1) very good     | (4) bad        |
| (2) fairly good   | (5) Don't Know |
| (3) not very good |                |

7. HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY?

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| (1) Yes | (2) No |
|---------|--------|

8. WHAT KIND OF JOB HAS THE NEWFOUNDLAND HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY BEEN DOING?

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| (1) very good     | (4) bad        |
| (2) fairly good   | (5) Don't Know |
| (3) not very good |                |

9. THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA IS:

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| (1) Joe Clark      | (4) Pierre Trudeau |
| (2) Dorothy Wyatt  | (5) Don't Know     |
| (3) Joey Smallwood |                    |

10. WHAT KIND OF JOB HAS THE PRIME MINISTER BEEN DOING?

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| (1) very good     | (4) bad        |
| (2) fairly good   | (5) Don't Know |
| (3) not very good |                |

11. HAVE YOU HEARD OF PARLIAMENT?

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| (1) Yes | (2) No |
|---------|--------|

12. WHAT KIND OF JOB HAS PARLIAMENT BEEN DOING?

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| (1) very good     | (4) bad        |
| (2) fairly good   | (5) Don't Know |
| (3) not very good |                |

13. Check the names of FOUR (4) people you think are most important in the list. Choose them in order of preference: FIRST 1 very important, SECOND 2 important, THIRD 3 less important, and FOURTH 4 not very important.

Mayor of a city _____	Judge _____
Prime Minister _____	Police Chief _____
Governor General _____	Doctor _____
Queen _____	School Principal <u>5</u> _____
Lawyer _____	Religious Leader _____

14. Think about what you would like to do when you have a job. Check FOUR (4) jobs in order of preference, (1, 2, 3, 4) you would like when you are older.

Mayor of a city _____	Judge _____
Prime Minister _____	Police Chief _____
Governor General _____	Doctor _____
Queen _____	School Principal _____
Lawyer _____	Religious Leader _____

15. HOW OFTEN DO YOU THINK GOVERNMENT MAKES MISTAKES.

(1) never	(4) all the time
(2) sometimes	(5) Don't Know
(3) often	

16. EVERYONE WHO IS OLD ENOUGH SHOULD VOTE AT ELECTION TIME. WILL YOU VOTE WHEN YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH?

(1) Yes	(2) No	(3) Don't Know
---------	--------	----------------

17. DO YOU TALK ABOUT POLITICS WITH YOUR FRIENDS?

(1) Yes	(2) No
---------	--------

18. WILL YOU RUN FOR POLITICAL OFFICE WHEN YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH?

(1) Yes	(3) No
(2) Maybe	(4) Don't Know



19. DO YOU THINK IT MAKES MUCH DIFFERENCE WHICH SIDE WINS AN ELECTION?

- (1) Yes                      (2) No                      (3) Don't Know

20. IF YOU WERE OLD ENOUGH, WHOM WOULD YOU VOTE FOR MOST OF THE TIME?  
(Check ONE only.)

- (1) Liberals                      (3) New Democrats (NDP)  
(2) Conservatives (PC)              (4) Don't Know

APPENDIX B OMITTED FROM THESIS

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ST. JOHN'S, Newfoundland  
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