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Reconceptualizing Political Socialization in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Political socialization is a lifelong process of learning about political beliefs, attitudes, and motivations. Studies that have attempted to uncover political socialization in the Philippines have associated socialization with political participation and political cynicism; such an association imposes limits on how political socialization is viewed. Thus, this paper attempts to reconceptualize political socialization in the Philippines by introducing nuances and developments in the field of political participation, political socialization, and Philippine society.

Keywords: *Political Cynicism, Political Participation, Political Socialization*

INTRODUCTION

Political socialization is not a purely political science concept. The interest in the topic originated as early as the 1950s, with scholars from the West observing recurring and repeating patterns of political behavior (Neundorf & Smets, 2017), and by the 1960s, the development of the topic was due to the contributions of American sociologists who utilized psychological theories as well as sociological theories (Marczewska-Rytko, 2020, p. 641). Neundorf and Smets (2017) then narrate that the inquiries and assumptions surrounding political socialization have developed into more scientific inquiries about political developments and viewing socialization as a process of learning. Studies would branch off in the west in various directions, with the foundational inquiry by Easton & Dennis (1965) proving to be influential by offering a definition of political socialization that would act as a cornerstone that other researchers would cite. In the Philippines, research in political socialization would prove to be scarce and conceptualized in a very specific manner: political socialization is viewed to create political participation, and a lack thereof, or improper practice thereof, is a result of cynicism. This view is highly normative and restrictive of a process that the literature suggests is rather complex and not straightforward.

This conceptual review article has two purposes. First, it seeks to review the scholarship of political socialization in the Philippines. Political socialization remains a timely topic in the field of political sociology and political science. How individuals learn, gain, and accept political beliefs and values remains a worthwhile inquiry to understand political phenomenon.

However, the study of political socialization in the Philippines is scarce. Second, this article seeks to suggest an alternative way of conceptualizing the study of political socialization in the Philippines. Surveying the limited scholarship on political socialization in the Philippines reveals that the topic has been conceptualized in a restrictive manner. This article seeks to offer an alternative to viewing political socialization in the Philippines. Specifically, this paper argues that the pioneering and dominant studies on political socialization in the Philippines produce an overly normative perspective, and that a perspective recognizing the relevance of individual agency and more holistic views on political participation should be considered. To do this, I account for this limited scholarship on political socialization in the Philippines and identify its trends, direction, and relevance; specifically, I identify that political cynicism and participation are dominant themes in this scholarship. Thus, I offer two distinct concepts that enhance our view of political agency, the first is in relation to agency, and the second is in how political participation ought to be appreciated. I conclude by asserting the empowering and enabling power of political education that which offers citizens greater capacities to reassess and reaffirm what it means to participate in politics.

Retrospective on Political Socialization Scholarship in the Philippines

The first study conducted on political socialization in the Philippines began in the 1970s. Loretta Makasiar-Sicat's article entitled *Political Socialization in the Philippines Today: An Empirical Study,* published in 1976, laid the foundation for the research on political socialization in the Philippines. In this study, political socialization has been conceptualized in two ways: first, it is derived from the work of Roberta Sigel (1965) wherein Makasiar-Sicat (1976) adopts political socialization as a "learning process by which the political norms and behavior acceptable to an ongoing political system are transmitted from generation to generation"; and second, it is derived from the work of Easton & Dennis (1965), wherein these are the ways "in which a society transmits political orientations, knowledge, attitudes or norms and values from generation to generation." Thus, Makasiar-Sicat (1976, p. 114) defines political socialization as an activity wherein people learn "politically relevant social patterns, which include certain norms, attitudes and behaviors... transmitted to him through the various agencies of society".

These transmissions are identified as the inputs coming from agents of socialization. In the literature of political sociology, agents of socialization are identified as the social structures that convey knowledge, norms, and behaviors that are deemed to be socially acceptable and unacceptable. Political socialization as a process takes place due to the interaction of individuals with these agents; in this view, agents are social institutions that hold significant influence over individuals. These agents are identified to be the following: families, schools, social groups, and the media (Dobratz et al., 2012, p. 85). Given these

agents, the process of socialization suggests a sociological component that is dependent on lifelong interaction that has multiple overlaps of what information and stimuli are transmitted to individuals.

Conceptually, socialization can also be 'manifest' or 'latent'; the former is direct transmission of information from inputs and outputs, the latter is when socialization is transmitted through other social systems (Makasiar-Sicat, 1976), to provide clarity, an example of this is that manifest political socialization is when citizens attend political campaigns and directly interact, personally observe, and are physically present. Under manifest learning, what citizens learn about politics is raw and unfiltered. On the other hand, for latent learning, as indirect forms, these can be anything that informs and plays a role in one's political dispositions and beliefs. An example of this would be those religious organizations, even in covert messaging, can influence these beliefs and dispositions. Religious messaging can transcend specificity and invoke concepts of ideals and justice, which can subtly inform political beliefs. This suggests that political socialization is not entirely just political and that interactions run in multiple directions simultaneously. Within this context of manifest and latent, it must be explicitly stated that socialization is being interpreted from the functionalist perspective. Where the manifest and the latent find synthesis is how they are both woven into public values. In the literature of political socialization, the view has been that institutions all work in unison and tandem to espouse which values are expected of citizens. However, Niemi and Hepburn (1995) suggest that values and their transmission are not automatic, uniformed, and even complementary. With the advent of time and development, new ideas and ideals are introduced all the time, all competing for space and relevance. Even the case of national identity is not safe from this, as in new and developing democracies like the Philippines grapple with national identity, and schools, peers, and even religion might disagree on what it means to be Filipino.

Expounding further, this interaction, Makasiar-Sicat (1976) argues, if political socialization is about learning these values, norms, and behavior, then political socialization is essentially political education. Thus, Makasiar-Sicat (1976) identifies schools as the primary agents entrusted with political socialization. In her study, she focused on political attitudes among the Filipino youth and whether there were any changes in the Filipino youth, the nature and pattern of this change, as well as the factors that affect the changes in attitude. To explore this phenomenon, Makasiar-Sicat (1976) crafted scales to measure the political knowledge, political cynicism, and resistance to innovation of 752 high school students in a school in Parañaque. Political knowledge determined if the respondents were aware of what was happening in their environment; political cynicism determined if respondents approved or disapproved the integrity of people in politics and if the political process reflected public interest; resistance to innovation on the other hand measured if the respondents welcomed

the changes in the country, and if the change in the political landscape extends to respondents participating in politics.

This political cynicism can be related to Mumby's (1997, p. 9) discourse of suspicion, from the context that certain communicative processes have failed to consider inherent power dynamics between individuals engaged in discourse. It is the "assumption that surface level meanings and behavior obscure deep structure conflicts, contradictions, and neuroses that systematically limit the possibilities for the realization of a genuinely democratic society". This dynamic is similar to how cynicism is treated in the way socialization is measured above; like how a discourse of suspicion arises when the communicative process overlooks privilege that leads to the limits on democracy, so too does cynicism reflect a failure of socialization that, in this case, leads to individuals being turned off towards politics. This implication of privilege suggests that agents of socialization can potentially become sites of struggle for relevance and meaning. Mouffe (1999), in criticizing deliberative democracy's capacity to reconcile conflict and achieve consensus through rational discourse, argues that by assuming all discourse is rational, it overlooks the role of passion, identities, and even values, which are often found to be irreconcilable. Moreover, such rationality cannot be expected to transcend and solve conflict when power structures found in communication can be exploited by the powerful to marginalize and silence weaker voices and participants.

Makasiar-Sicat's (1976) findings reveal that their respondents were indeed politically cynical. Of note was that, while some of the respondents liked and even saw the value of politicians in rendering services, they did not want to be part of politics themselves. The respondents also showed the value of the family as an agent of political socialization. Specifically, respondents said that decision-making is shared by both parents, while children have less influence over this. The impact of the family is traced. Wherein the respondents also claimed that, should they have families in the future, the same protocols for decision-making will be followed. However, Makasiar-Sicat (1976) notes changes in the role of the family as a source of political information: teachers received a majority by plurality of votes as sources of political information. Lastly, the respondents generally viewed government as a necessity in the sense that, as an institution, it is the most capable in dealing with the problems and needs of society. Thus, Makasiar-Sicat (1976) ties the concept of civic consciousness to the process of political socialization.

The lack, or rather, improper forms of socialization then suggest a gap in what Boyte (2008, p. 10) identifies as civic agency, or the "skills and capacities for self-reliant public action", or more generally, it is information about government and the values that are linked to solving community problems. Agency in this context is defined as the capacity to act without prompting, to act with initiative. Like Makasiar-Sicat (1976), Boyte (2008) also points to the

primacy of schools in creating citizens who are expected to act within the social and political norms of society.

For Makasiar-Sicat (1976, p. 128), since political socialization is about learning, it gives direction and instruction to the formation of norms and values, and these norms and values demand not only an awareness, but action towards civic duty: "only then can we apply that other test of the effectiveness of political socialization - on the voluntary, behavioral level".

In this view, since political socialization is conceptualized as political education (Makasiar-Sikat, 1976), a form of learning and internalization, then it is essentially politico-ideological education, or the formation of political ideologies. Political ideologies are defined as the "set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved" (Erikson & Tedin, 2003, p. 64). Political ideologies are significant for they act as how political attitudes are structured, articulated, and pave the way for affiliations and even connections between citizens (Jost et al., 2009, p. 200). And learning and gaining information about these norms about the proper order of society is done through socialization. It can be said then that political socialization plays a larger role in society as it equips citizens with the necessary tools to engage with the political milieu of a society.

About 20 years later, Grace Gorospe-Jamon would add to the literature of political socialization by examining the phenomenon in a religious context. In 1999, analyzing political socialization under such a context was still unexplored. Gorospe-Jamon's article utilized the definition of political socialization provided by Dawson et al. (1977), which expands upon the definition utilized by Makasiar-Sikat (1976), by suggesting that the learning involved in political socialization also includes internalization (Dawson et al., 1977). Gorospe-Jamon argues that socialization also has a deeper and personal component, suggesting that there are also personal factors that affect these interactions, which transcend agencies, societies, or even individuals, but are ultimately impacted by them. In this view, Gorospe-Jamon's article looks at the role of religion in political socialization, particularly the El Shaddai prayer movement. El Shaddai is of particular interest as they have been sought out for political endorsements in Philippine politics since the late 1990s. Specifically, they are involved in politics in two forms: elections and issue-based political mobilizations.

Gorospe-Jamon's findings on the El Shaddai prayer movement reveal that, for the case of religion as an agent of socialization, the process tends to be dependent on the church leader, wherein leaders can inculcate political values among their members; this is particularly true of charismatic church leaders. Religious practices, while not entirely political in nature, can shape the political orientations and attitudes of members. Regarding the content of this socialization, like the family that Makasiar-Sicat (1976) highlights in her

findings Gorospe-Jamon (1999) notes that the church also imparts values and knowledge about obedience (stemming from parents and God, respectively) to the government. Thus, authoritarian teachings are learned both in the church and the family, two very important agents of socialization for Filipinos. For the El Shaddai, Gorospe-Jamon notes, members are taught that "all authority is inspired by God". This links the religious and the political, wherein the former legitimizes government and the leader's inciting obedience and support. However, the findings also note that this is not absolute: religion comes before the state. This dynamic of learned obedience in relation to authoritarianism is related to the concept of paternalism. Dworkin (2000, p. 343) defines paternalism as "... roughly the interference with a person's liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of the person being coerced." In this view, restrictions are imposed on liberties if they are for the benefit of citizens. Thus, this definition of paternalism is anchored on a coercive nature. Dworkin (2000) suggests that conflict arises when there is disagreement on what liberties are limited in relation to the supposed benefit being espoused. On the other hand, Clarke (2002) argues for a view of paternalism that is not necessarily coercive nor restrictive on freedoms. In certain cases, there is agreement that paternalistic interventions are justified and good: thus, people agree to limit their liberties because they recognize that it is to their benefit. Relating paternalism to political socialization, both religion and family, as agents of socialization, exhibit similarities in the forms of authoritarian logic in different capacities. In families, as protectors of children, freedoms are regulated as adults deem certain liberties are not appropriate. In the case of religious orders, liberties and freedoms are limited in the name of a religious-moral imperative.

Like the article of Makasiar-Sicat (1976), Gorospe-Jamon (1999) operationalizes political socialization in terms of political knowledge. They differ in the test surveys they administered to their respective respondents. Within this parameter, political cynicism and political efficacy were measured to determine political knowledge. The respondents were also deemed to have cynical sentiments towards some element of government and the process involved.

Highlighting Gorospe-Jamon's focus on religion in the context of political socialization, political socialization can be thought of as a form of political communication. In the context of a public's information-seeking behavior, information and values in the church have political content and thus, religious teachings, as they are communicated in the pulpit by church leaders, can lead and impact public opinion and behavior. Given the structure that is defined by the prominence of church leaders, in a religious setting, both social interactions and political communication make up the socialization process.

Almost 20 years later, Maria Cecilia Gastardo-Conaco (2016) published her work on political socialization in the Philippines with a focus on individuals in a democratic system, specifically how individuals are socialized into the political system. While the previous works on political socialization have conducted their inquiry with the implication that the phenomena exist in a democratic society, Gastardo-Conaco's work is unique in the premise that democracy is treated as a normative position that demands an active and engaged citizenry; people in a democratic society have a role to play, and that this action is directed and influenced by political socialization. By way of definition, Gastardo-Canaco (2016, p. 231) defines political socialization as which individuals acquire their views on democracy within a specific culture. The work of Gastardo-Canaco is also unique in that it is the first attempt at conceptualizing the role of socialization agents and even identifying the order in which they are relevant. Specifically, family remains the primary agent, followed by the school, peer groups, the church, memberships to associations, and lastly, the media. This view is held in terms of the development of children into adults, wherein children are limited in terms of where they gain their political knowledge; it is later, when children become adults, do they become exposed to other agents of socialization.

Gastardo-Canaco (2016) adopts Makasiar-Sicat's (1976) conceptualization of analyzing agents of socialization as either manifest or latent, and in this regard, the family is viewed to be the primary agent. Gastardo-Canaco (2016) reiterates the claim of Makasiar-Sicat (1976) that the family imparts knowledge and values about obedience. In this light, children learn from the words and ideas of their parents; children also learn about hierarchy from their families and how to follow rules without question. This suggests a propensity towards authoritarianism.

The next agent is the school, Gastardo-Canaco (2016) expands upon the work of Makasiar-Sicat by citing more nuances about the education system in the Philippines. Gastard-Canaco (2016) notes that sometimes parents would leave imparting political knowledge to the school and that it is an avenue for the government to influence which schools socialize children. The government can enact basic education curricula by policy as well as alter the content of certain subjects by providing specific resources. As far as the nuances are concerned, it is recognized that, as far as socialization is concerned, the type of knowledge and values individuals can learn follows a socio-civic nature. There can be discrepancies regarding the type of schooling as well (private or public), and on top of that, schools and individual educators have their own respective philosophies and pedagogy that they employ in the classroom. However, in this agent, teachers are viewed as authority figures to be followed, so, like the family, some element of the value and instruction for obedience is also imparted. In the meta-physical dimension of education, the covert or hidden curricula also contribute to political socialization. These are unofficial expectations, unintended learning

outcomes, and implicit messages and are co-created by students and educators (Portelli, 1993, 345). In essence, the hidden curriculum suggests that students learn beyond what is codified in the curricula they hold with their hands, that there is more to the dynamic process of education that they experience. Rønholt (2002) suggests that the hidden curricula are embedded within the day-to-day interactions found within educational institutions, between students and teachers. Specifically, the hidden curricula impose a structure of interactions between actors, and it becomes yet another arena in which acceptable and correct behavior are learned and regulated (Casey, 2016; Gofton and Regehr, 2006). Gofton and Regehr (2006, p. 25) also suggest that it is through this hidden curriculum that students are guided to correct behavior that they should replicate.

The next agents identified are the media, the internet, and social networking sites. These agents are the primary agents of socialization for university students, as individuals become more exposed to the world around them and the media, internet, and social networking become the arena for interaction with strangers, as well as a source of information. Gastardo-Canaco (2016) notes that what individuals learn from the media in general is the framing of news and issues as well as propaganda. The media and the internet are gaining more prominence today, and their relevance in political socialization cannot be discounted. Mass media is seen to be a source of information about political events, and they can also manipulate political symbols, narratives, and thus the framing of all these elements can influence how information is presented (Dobratz et al., 2012, p. 97). Beyond this information brokerage role of mass media, McQuail's (2013) problematizes the media's role in politics and vis-à-vis political socialization. In particular, the transmissions that affect socialization are heavily influenced by the media as they possess the capacity to 'control the gates of communication. This takes place in a public sphere wherein other forces, agents, and actors compete for relevance and space.

The peer group and the church are also viewed to be agents of socialization, but they take more of an intermediary role. The peer group acts as a moderator for individuals, wherein they either enforce change or affirm beliefs gained through other agents of socialization. The church, on the other hand, is viewed to be the agent of socialization in charge of moral and ethical values. Echoing the work of Gorospe-Jamon (1999), the church can be a source of learning aimed at authoritarianism, wherein individuals learn about hierarchy and obedience.

Beyond these examples, there are other agents of political socialization Since political socialization suggests that learning can happen in a variety of ways and through different levels and sites of interactions, we can also consider the workplace as an agent wherein individuals learn about obedience, competence, and even, in some cases, virtues. Cultural practices also act as agents as they invoke norms, mores, and ideals. One's neighborhood or

place of residence can also provide interactions with people that inform one's political beliefs and norms.

Gastardo-Canaco (2016) redirects the importance of culture for the socialization process. The socialization process depends on the culture that these agents and individuals find themselves in. If political socialization is indeed learning (as first stated by Makasiar-Sicat in 1976), then values play a significant role, and these values are dictated by culture. As individuals receive information from agents, this information, as it is accepted and internalized, is compared against the culture that exists before it. In this context, individuals are viewed as recipients of stimuli from a society that is not consistent in its adherence to democratic values, as Gastardo-Canaco (2016, p. 241) poetically puts it, "Filipino political socialization is, at best, haphazard, a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth, some of them confused or downright incompetent."

Much more recently, Bautista (2020) took into account the political socialization taking place within the context of the *Sangguniang Kabataan* (or the Youth Council; from now on will be referred to as SK). Utilizing qualitative methods, this article attempts to explain how socialization in young Filipinos determines their political knowledge, which ultimately forms their cynicism towards the SK; this cynicism discourages the youth from participating in SK elections and even in other activities related to the SK. Building upon the work of Makasiar-Sicat (1976), Bautista (2020) notes that there have been significant changes over the past 40 years of changes in Philippine society, specifically, the political participation available to the youth has been substantially expanded at the local level, as well as the avenues for expression and dynamics. Some of these developments are accounted for by Cornelio (2016), wherein he states that there is a resurgence of Catholicism in Filipino youth; however, this resurgence revolves around a more liberal and individual take on Catholicism, wherein the youth are empowered to define and redefine the terms of this religion. Thus, the church matters beyond political socialization due to the Catholic church's capacity to frame societal issues (Cornelio & Medina, 2019). On the other hand, the works of Lanuza (2004; 2015;) do affirm that the youth are in flux of influence by other agents of socialization, significantly so, that the youth are in a critical time of their lives.

The findings reveal that the family and the media, as agents of socialization, impact the knowledge participants had on the SK. The difference between these two agents was that for the family, some of the family members, particularly the parents, had encouraged participation in the SK, even in running for the SK elections. For the media, the advent of the internet SK campaigns have been observed to be more impactful than traditional media. It is noted that campaigning for the SK was observed on social media sites. The school, of interest, was not observed to directly impart knowledge or awareness about the SK.

Contentions

Taking account of these studies so far, the scholarship of political socialization in the Philippines is aimed at a specific direction of observation and conception. In particular, the scholarship of political socialization thus far has exhibited two interesting directions: a penchant towards political participation and political action and measuring that using cynicism and tying them to other concepts. The studies so far have employed some form of benchmark aimed at qualifying action and participation of socialization.

Makasiar-Sicat (1976) measured the political cynicism and political knowledge of their respondents, wherein cynicism was conceptualized to include actual participation in politics as well as whether the respondents had a positive or negative view of politics. In this line of inquiry, Makasiar-Sicat (1976, pp. 127-128) concludes that the learnings gained through political socialization also demand a "faithful discharge of our civic duties".

Gorospe-Jamon (1999), in describing socialization that takes place in a religious sense, measured political efficacy and political cynicism while using political knowledge as a baseline. In this context, cynicism was conceived as the negative view of individuals towards politics, including institutions and the processes. The members of El Shaddai in the study aimed their cynicism towards the concept of 'palakasan' (and in relation is the spoils system, which is the act of political actors giving public office to their supporters) or preferential treatment found in Philippine politics. On the other hand, efficacy was defined in terms of the capacity of individuals or groups to influence the political process, making the performance of one's civic duties a worthwhile endeavor.

Gastardo-Conaco (2016), on the other hand, focuses on the idea of an engaged citizenry in its view of democracy: particularly, that in a democracy, citizens should participate in elections. In relation to socialization, this is the process by which individuals gain their views on democracy. Thus, the charge on the various agents in society in fostering democratic ideals and action is maintained. In a democratic society like the Philippines, citizens are expected to participate in politics because citizens have a role to play. And so, we point to the relevance of political socialization on political development. Pye (1965), invoking the notion of a nation-state, argues that such development requires synthesizing varied and unorganized sentiments about nationalism and translating them into a competent notion of citizenship. In this view, the state ought to move towards modernization wherein public order is maintained, the citizenry is allowed to enjoy the fruits of democracy and participation (Huntington, 1965), and strong institutions allow for other types of development (Sen, 1999), and thus, political development is nation-building.

Bautista (2020, p. 17) employed the definition of Strama (2003), Bandura (1986), and Cappella and Jamieson (1997) in defining cynicism, which refers to the "distrust of the public toward politics and government." In this study, the primary focus was the disposition of the youth towards the SK and the socialization that took place, which affected this disposition. In doing so, Bautista (2020) considered the cynicism of the participants. Extending from cynicism, the political participation of the participants was also tied to the impact of the socialization process.

This article in no way seeks to invalidate the work that has been produced from sound research design and careful planning on the scopes of their respective work. However, there is recognition that the scholarship on political socialization in the Philippines is limited, and the foundational research produced is based on a Philippine society that has gone through significant changes, and the literature on political science, too, has seen substantial advancements. This article seeks to build upon what is available and offers alternative means by which political socialization is viewed, and offers a broader view for future research endeavors on the topic.

Political socialization has thus far been viewed in terms of an expected identified set of actions, such as the "faithful discharge of our civic duties'' (Makasiar-Sicat, 1976, pp. 127-128) and the normative practice and expectation that citizens in a democracy ought to participate in voting (Gastardo-Canaco, 2016). Such expectations about the process of socialization place significant implications that what must be expected from learning and internalization is some form of action or political participation.

The view that all learning, or at the very least, meaningful and substantial political learning, requires, of itself, a corresponding action, in this case, political participation, presents a highly normative take on political socialization. Previous works have pointed to measuring political cynicism as to people's negative disposition towards government process and even institutions; particularly, Gorospe-Jamon (1999, p. 117) identifies that respondents were against the practice of giving preferential treatment to a particular group. On the other hand, Makasiar-Sicat (1976, p. 127) looks at cynicism as a roadblock for the inculcation of values and norms that political socialization requires. Bautista (2020), on the other hand, defines cynicism as a form of distrust towards politics and government, built from the definition provided by Strama (1998), Bandura (1986), and Capella and Jamieson (1997). In this regard, the conception of socialization is defined in terms of the absence of something else when socialization should be treated as a concept on its own. It is my point here that inaction or disengagement from politics does not necessarily come from a negative view on the socialization process, or that it is even a requirement of socialization. Socialization, if it is a form of learning, does not have a reciprocal relationship with observable action, much less

political participation in a democracy. The view that the scholarship on political socialization in the Philippines has employed has overlooked the role of agency within an individual's constitution as well as the multifaceted nuances found within political participation. Thus, I suggest that political socialization should consider rational choice theory and alternative political participation (Kaim, 2021)

Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theorists generally believe that human action is a result of an individual's identified best interest, or a capacity to maximize utility. While not without its criticisms (Hindmoor, 2010), rational choice theory places a premium on the agency of an individual to define what action to take. Now, given that socialization is viewed as a process of learning and internalization, actions taken (and not taken) can be analyzed under rational choice. The debate on the validity of rational choice has been in the context of the structure, individuals are not truly free; they are limited by the structures of society (Hindmoor, 2010; Dowding, 2019). However, I present a middle ground to this in the context of socialization.

Just like any other theory, rational choice theory is not without its criticisms. A criticism of note is that much of what is left to the agency of individuals to act is a result of the structure that they find themselves in; it is suggested that it is the structure that defines agency (Hindmoor, 2010), not so much the capacity of individuals to act. However, rational choice, as a means of identifying power, places power in the hands of individuals and their capacity to act upon their own agency. Ultimately, rational choice in politics is about identifying power as belonging to individuals (Dowding, 2019) and their capacity, or agency, in the creation of their actions.

Dowding (2019, pp. 23-24) employs Davidson (2001) to explain action under rational choice theory: under a behaviorist understanding of action, a desire gives motivation for action, but it is a belief that provides reason for fulfillment of actions. In this view, political socialization fits the model of rational choice theory in the sense that belief is built upon knowledge from learning, experiences, and stimuli from interactions within society.

This view on rational choice does not necessarily negate the role of cynicism that certainly impacts the decisions and actions of individuals pertaining to politics. Certainly, negative perceptions and attitudes do discourage involvement. However, treating cynicism as a measure of effective political socialization must be reviewed and reconsidered. By suggesting that cynicism is a measurement of political socialization, political socialization is treated as a one-dimensional affair of information transmission and static social interactions.

Political socialization can aid in the development of beliefs that motivate the actions of individuals; however, the same can be said about inertia, indifference, and inaction. If agents of socialization provide individuals with knowledge and learning about political values, it also empowers individuals to resist, and resistance can take various forms. Given that rational choice places a premium on the agency of individuals, the same capacity to identify that action is beneficial can also identify that inertia and inaction can be to one's benefit. This agency also argues that individuals are informed in their decision-making, that rationality rules dictate this compromise, as we consider that individuals are not just informed by their knowledge and rationality, but by their emotions and personhood as well, and thus, cynicism and indifference also fall under rational thinking. Inaction is not laziness or a sign of lacking in intelligence; it can be critical thinking and identifying that action may not be appropriate. Non-participation in politics, be it out of cynicism, inertia, or indifference, remains informed and valid. Non-participation is not a result of poor or negative socialization. Instead, rational choice suggests that political socialization should focus on how individuals reflect on their beliefs and options rather than looking at inaction, indifference, and inertia in negative terms. As such, Ordonez and Borja (2021) suggest that inaction can be a result of a variety of reasons; however, drawing upon the work of Freeden, they suggest that inaction is a result of pre-existing attitudes related and tied to the concept of resilience. For them, resilience is the internal capacity to adapt through difficulties in place of dissent or opposition.

Alternative Political Participation

While rational choice theory can explain inaction or even the rejection of information from agents of socialization, alternative political participation is more nuanced than simply action or inaction. Further reading into alternative political participation suggests that there is more to be considered when identifying what political participation is, beyond what it is not and what it is, scholars should reassess what political participation means and what it potentially could be.

Kaim (2021), by drawing upon the work of Niklas Luhmann, proposes that dualism in political participation is restrictive and subsequently problematic. Kaim (2021) then presents how political participation has been identified. First, political participation is either conventional or unconventional, with conventional the following characteristics: it is legal; institutionalized; any action that has an internal logic; it occurs in a specific space in the public sphere; it has a collective nature; and lastly, conventional participation promotes social unity rather than plurality. With these categories, conventional participation is voting. The second category of political participation, then, is unconventional participation. Simply put, it is the opposite of conventional participation. In Kaim's conception of political participation, if the characteristics of political participation are opposite to the conventional,

then it is unconventional. In this regard, Kaim's conventional and unconventional forms of political participation can be seen in six dichotomies: legal-illegal; institutionalized-not institutionalized; government-opposition vs government-governed logic; public-private; collective-individual; and unity-plurality. While these characteristics help in identifying types of political participation, there arises a conceptual restriction in defining what constitutes political participation; this dualism, as Kaim (2021, p. 62) cites from Luhmann (2002), dualisms offer simplicity in identification and categorization, but nuance and complexity are overlooked. Under such strict dualisms of the conventional and the unconventional, many modes and actions are left out of political participation. Thus, dualisms do not accurately describe the nuances of political participation as they restrict and limit what political participation is and, more to the point, they provide a normative view of what political participation should look like. Kaim (2021) presents alternative political participation as a solution to this restriction.

Alternative political participation is an in-between concept between conventional and unconventional. As an in-between concept, it seeks to offer a more accurate depiction of political participation; it is not a catch-all for both conventional and unconventional, simply, it covers what the former forms of participation exclude. Under alternative political participation, the six dualisms are viewed as a continuum of action, indicating that instead of looking at conventional and unconventional as opposites, being something treated with an either-or exclusivity, political participation, then, in reality, is a complex phenomenon that cannot be easily defined. This is not to say or suggest that political participation is truly an elusive concept that should not even be attempted to be uncovered, but let us consider what politics is. Heywood (2019) describes politics as an activity wherein people amend and make the general rules of their lives. Linssen et al. (2014), citing Brady (1999) and van Deth (1986) then maintain that political participation is any act that directly or indirectly attempts to influence government decision-making. Such a definition of political participation demands nuance, not restriction, for us to begin to understand the phenomenon. Thus, adopting Kaim's (2021) concept of alternative political participation allows for a broader conception of politics and political participation.

CONCLUSION

Applying these ideas to political socialization then seems apt. If we consider that political socialization is indeed political learning (Makasiar-Sicat, 1976), then surely this knowledge, if it's anything, provides individuals with information about their political world. As the authors above have described, political socialization in the Philippines is the learning of one's role, actions, and expectations within a societal milieu in a political landscape. However, within this learning is the consideration of an individual's agency, a capacity to act on the prerogative of an identified action that will provide the most utility. As rational choice

theory places it, that power, too, is identified to belong to the hands of people (Dowding, 2019) as agents of their own destiny within what options are available to them: both what is in their environment, as well as what is left to their individuality. And by applying the learnings, reflecting on interactions and experiences found in the structure that is occupied by various agents of socialization, we can consider that many actions and even the initial inactions of people constitute political participation if we consider political participation as a concept of process or continuum.

If we confine our ideals about political socialization to the expectation that individuals in a democracy ought to vote or conventionally participate in politics, then we overlook just how complex political socialization truly is. Scholars who have attempted to understand political socialization in the Philippines have followed a specific conceptual trajectory that placed emphasis on the role of cynicism because of poor socialization by agents, and that a proper application of the learning in political socialization should be met with political participation. However, as I have maintained at the start of this article, that view remains normative and restrictive.

Applying rational choice theory in this context suggests that cynicism or even apathy may not necessarily be the answer to 'poor' or ineffective socialization. There may potentially be a myriad of complexities in rationalizing inaction that goes beyond negative attitudes. And whatever actions that may come out of this, alternative political participation suggests to us should not necessarily be excluded.

I am not suggesting that there is no accurate or proper way of conceptualizing and measuring political socialization. I am claiming that the process of learning and internalization is complex, that corresponding actions based on learning, anchored in participation and cynicism, are not explained in explanations of the socialization process. It may explain the behavioral aspect, but since political participation, as Kaim (2021) suggests, too, is complex, so is our treatment of socialization. After all, not all political learnings are observable directly, and not all negative sentiments towards politics carry with them their actions.

Schools may provide civic education and values expected of individuals in society (Makasiar-Sicat, 1976), and religious organizations may spur their members towards political action and even influence their orientations and political beliefs (Gorospe-Jamon, 1999), and culture might very well determine the values of a society (Gastardo-Canaco, 2016); however, by placing agency on individuals we can consider that individuals still go through the socialization process but dictated by their own sense of realizing benefits and interests, may choose to not act in accordance to what we may traditionally expect of them; and more importantly, we may consider that even inaction regardless if it is brought by cynicism or otherwise; and the in-between actions of individuals are part of political participation as a whole (Kaim, 2021). In

closing, this paper affirms a call for a reorientation of future pursuits of political science in the Philippines to consider alternative explanations to political socialization and political action.

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