

## **GENDER, SOCIAL TRUST AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION IN GHANAIAN EDUCATION**

### **Implications for Shaping Political Beings in the Wa Municipality**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The *raison d'être* of this paper is to examine the effectiveness of families, religious leaders, teachers, political leaders, mass media and peer groups in the shaping boys and girls into political beings using the case of the Wa Municipality of Ghana. This was undertaken because the task of political socialization is very crucial for Ghana to consolidate its nascent democracy in the fast globalizing world. To determine the effectiveness of these agents of socialization, the degree of "social trust" of boys and girls have for these agents were examined on the assumption that the higher the trust for an agent, the more effective that agent would be, and vice versa. Self-administered questionnaires were utilized to generate the empirical data, which was analyzed using the chi-square and standardized residuals non-parametric statistical techniques. Findings reveal generally high distrust for agents and statistically significant gender asymmetries in "social trust" for the agents of socialization. There were also significant gender differences in levels of trust for the adolescent girls and boys who participated in the study. The boys showed more distrust (31%) than girls (29.3) while the girls showed more social trust (21%) than boys 18.7%). The differences were traced to differentiated socialization into gendered roles and their attendant responsibilities and expectations. The implication is that, due to distrust among the populace, the agents are ineffective in molding democratic personalities out of Ghanaian boys and girls. This is more true for political leaders and the media of all the agents! The Government is advised to primarily take political socialization seriously, encourage the agents to attract the necessary trust and be guided to understand, discharge their roles appropriately. Finally, the content and method of civic and political education in Ghana must be periodically revisited to reflect core Ghanaian values even in this era of globalization.

**KEY WORDS:** Adolescents, Political Socialization, Gender Socialization, Social Trust, Political Beings.

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## INTRODUCTION

“Man(sic) is by nature a Political Animal”  
(Aristotle, *Politics*, 1952: 1)

In his seminal contribution to Political Sociology on the interaction of society and the polity, Aristotle (384 322 B.C), introduced the notion of “Political Animal” in the grammar of political science. The idea was subsequently deployed in political science literature as an important analytical tool by empirical researchers like Lipset (1959) in his book entitled, *Political Man: When, Where, and How Democracy works in the Modern World*. As a masculinist and an andocentric thinker, Aristotle believed that the “Political Animal” was a male gender not a female one. For, in his time, it is only the male gender that could enjoy the civic rights, duties and obligations of actively participate in the city state ( the political system at the time). Women, like slaves, were not considered to be full citizens as they were denied some of the essential rights due to men and women in contemporary nations, states and community, although in more subtle ways. The notion of “Political Animal” in Aristotelian literature also implied that citizens realize their full potentialities as humans only in the highest form of organization ever created by human beings: the state. In his treatise, it was only within the state that “good life” and happiness were ensured for all. The idea of “Political Animal” was also implicitly taken up in the writings of other enlightenment thinkers like Hobbes (1952) and Locke (1952). Whilst Aristotle conceived of Political Animal” as a natural category; that is to say, people become political naturally, Hobbes and Locke implied, in their notion of “Political Animal,” a rational activity on the part of people. In other words, people become political when they use their rational faculties to enter into a “Social Contract,” which binds governors and the governed in order to avert a “State of Nature” or a “State of War?”<sup>30</sup>

It is through the mechanism of the “social contract,” a solemn agreement between society and the BODY POLITIC that political men and women as well as political activity as a whole is born. It is also the “Social Contract” that spells out the rights, duties, and obligation of the governors and the governed. This “Social Contract,” a rational instrument, has the potentialities of preventing society from degenerating (without it) into a condition Hobbes (1952:12) described as one in which “there is no art, no letters, no society, which is worst of all continual fear and danger of violent deaths; the life of man is solitary, nasty, brutish and short.” Lipset (1959) believed that “Political Man” is realized in a society that has nurtured a democratic political

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Hobbes and John Locke differ fundamentally regarding how they call life, prior to political activity and the state; or men and women without government. Such a society without rulers would, hypothetically, be chaotic, disorderly and problematic but far from being “ANARCHIC” as some neophytes in political philosophy would dub it. Whilst both Hobbes and Locke agree that it would be chaotic, Hobbes call it “state of nature” whilst Locke refers to it as “State of war.” See Locke’s *Second treatise on civil Government*, 1952:29.

system; people become political in a democratic environment and society. This takes building legitimacy through systematic political socialization, among other things.

Characteristic of the writings of Hobbes, Locke, and most modern writers in political science, is their gender-blindness. Most of the concepts deployed, including the concept of the "political," are assumed as neutral categories. They are either mute on "gender" as an analytical category or de-emphasize the significance of gender. This state of affairs has led to serious deficiency in most social science writings in and on Africa. It is this pathology in Social Science that Imam (1999:2) draws attention to and warns that:

".....at least one half of humanity is of feminine genders. This fact alone gives sufficient grounds for our argument that social sciences which does not acknowledge gender as an analytic category is an impoverished and distorted science and cannot accurately explain social realities and hence cannot provide a way out of the present crisis in Africa."

Thus, gender-sensitive analysis enables us to see that the notion of "Political Animal" is deployed to cover men and women in the modern polity. For, it is men and women who not only make up society but who actively participate in bringing about the sustainable and equitable development of society. It is the task of political elites to ensure that men and women are properly groomed to become active political animals, (better still, political beings) in the political system. In modern times, multiplicity of agents and channels directly or indirectly shape individuals into political beings: families, religious leaders, communities and peers, schools, universities, and intellectuals, think-tank and public relation campaigns, government and political leaders, peer groups, wars and other experiences. This task of socializing people into politics has become a matter of utmost importance and urgency in the era of globalization. Both developed and developing societies recognize this need because it is through it that elites and masses become familiar with the contents of the "social contract" that bind the rulers and the ruled. This, in a way, helps the continuity of the political system.

For a developing social milieu like Ghana, the political socialization of boys and girls helps them to develop into full political adults who would be able to rationally participate in politics and thus help bring about meaningful change in the country. Girls and boys will be taught their full rights, duties, and obligations as citizens of Ghana. They will be taught to respect the main "directive principles of state policy" as set down in Chapter 6, Article 35, Clause One (1) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana which stipulates that "Ghana shall be a democratic state dedicated to the realization of freedom and justice, and accordingly, Sovereignty resides in the people of Ghana from whom Government derives all its powers and authority through this Constitution."

Various socializing agents, including families, schools, religious figures, government leaders and peer groups have been traditionally responsible for helping shape the political ideas and beliefs of children and adolescents. Studies show, however, the degree of impact that these agents have on the socialization of children and adolescents has depended upon the level of "social trust" the latter has for agents of socialization (Koff-Von der Muhll, 1967). The higher the "social trust" for agents, the more children are willing to listen to that agent; and consequently the more positive impact that agent will have on children and adolescent socialization into politics (Koff-Von der Muhll, 1967:13-15).

This study, which was undertaken in second cycle schools in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region, investigated the effects that the degree of the social trust of adolescents (boys and girls) have for various agents of political socialization. The degree of social trust adolescents have for agents will give us some insights (following the Koff-von der Muhll study mentioned *inter alia*) into the impact agents will have in socializing students into politics. The research has been focused on four (4) main mutually interrelated questions:

1. What is the pattern of "social trust" for various agents of political socialization among adolescents in second cycle schools in the Wa municipality?
2. Is there any gender difference in pattern of social trust among adolescents in Wa municipality schools? Is the gender difference(s) statistically significant?
3. What explains the gender differences in social trust for the various agents of political socialization?
4. What are the implications of the gender differences in social trust for shaping children into full political men and women?

The answers to these germane questions should be of interest to the student of political sociology and in particular those concerned with shaping democratic personalities in a developing social milieu. The rest of the sections discuss the theoretical and methodological orientations as well as the empirical data generated for the analysis.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMERWORK**

In discourses of this nature, it is necessary to begin with operational definitions of key concepts that are deployed in the analysis. The central concepts that will be encountered are: "Socialization," "Political socialization," "Gender socialization," "Political Animal," "Social Trust".

The celebrated British social theorist and well known structuralist, Giddens (1993:60) defines "Socialization" as "the process whereby the helpless infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture

into which she or he is born." By implication, socialization takes place in a given social and cultural milieu and involves a learning process whereby children learn the ways of their culture. The strings of Giddens definition are still tied to functionalism in sociology from which perspective the earliest conceptualizations of "socialization" emerged. Functionalist theorizing, as opposed to action theorists and other critical perspectives, see individuals as passive in the socialization process and that it is through socialization that value-consensus and social order will be maintained in society. In the context of this study, however, "socialization" should be perceived as a dynamic and complex entity involving learning processes that begin from birth continuing through out one's life span. It is an active learning process whereby children learn the norms and values of their society's culture.

"Political socialization" has been defined in various ways. Haradas and Choudury (1997:53) define political socialization as "... the process by which an individual is acquainted with the political system which determines his (sic) perceptions of politics and his reactions to political phenomena. It is determined by the social, economic and cultural environment of the society in which the individual lives and by the interaction of the experiences and personality of the individual." Also, Almond and Verba (1963: 323) define "political socialization as the "process involved in the formation of adult political attitudes" while Verba (1965: 515) defines it as the "learning experiences by which a political culture is passed on from generation to generation, and to the situations under which political culture change."

In this study, "political socialization" is understood as a learning process. This learning process shapes and is being shaped by complex and dynamic processes. What is being learned are the political values and beliefs of a society that maintain or positively transform society. Men and women are vulnerable to the processes of political socialization. More over, a lot of agents or channels are involved in this life-long learning process such as families, schools, religions groups, governments, politicians, mass media and peers.

The concept of "gender socialization" has to do with the processes involved in shaping individuals to become masculine or feminine. Gender socialization is operationally understood to mean how individuals learn to become masculine or feminine in their identities, appearance, values and behaviour. There are a number of different theoretical approaches to gender socialization (Grusec, et. al, 1990; Franzoi, 1996).

In this research, the idea of "political animal" means men and women who are politically informed of their rights, duties and obligations as citizens of the political system. These men and women are not only aware of the existing "social contract" that binds rulers and ruled, but do actively and rationally participate in the politics of their society.

Also, in the context of this study, "social trust" means how much faith an adolescent boy or girl is willing to show or put in an agent of political socialization. When there

is trust for an agent, an adolescent would respect and listen to that agent. On the other hand, when there is distrust, agents would have less impact on adolescents.

## **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

Having clarified the key concepts of the study, it is important to briefly look at the theoretical perspective from which the research draws its main insights: structural-functionalism. Apart from the concept of “political animal” which was introduced by Aristotle, all the concepts defined above are products of functionalism and the structural - functional paradigm.

The structural functional paradigm entered the study of comparative politics via anthropology and sociology through the works of, notably the Princeton Study Group of Comparative Politics in the United States of America. The behavioural and post-behavioural revolution that affected the discipline of political science enabled scholars in the 1960s to develop new analytical concepts and theoretical perspectives in a bid to make the study of political phenomena more scientific after the natural sciences. Structural functionalism was developed by American Political Scientists to facilitate cross – cultural comparative political analysis and promote the spread of liberal democracy in the developing world. The emphasis of the paradigm is on perpetuating the status-quo: developing and stabilizing modern liberal democratic political system. Its key concepts include: “Political system”, “Political culture” “Political socialization,” “interest articulation”, and “interest aggregation”, among others.

Almond and Coleman (1960), Almod and Verba (1963), Pye and Verba (1965), Almond and Powell, (1966), among others, have contributed immensely to developing and creatively applying this perspective to the analysis of developing and developed polities. Structural – functionalism is predicated on at least two main assumptions. Firstly, that irrespective of the level of development, all political systems exhibit four characteristics:

- (a) Universality of political structures
- (b) Universality of political functions
- (c) Multi-functionality of political structures
- (d) Culturally mixed character of political systems

Secondly, political systems try to maintain themselves through time by political socialization and political recruitment. This perspective faces a lot of criticism from alternative paradigms, particularly because of its emphasis on stability. While some of the criticisms are constructive, this study still hinges on structural – functional paradigm for a number of reasons. All the concepts that are utilized in the research were borrowed from the paradigm. Also, the world is evidently at the “end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992) where liberal democratic form of governance have virtually replaced all political forms; that is to say, “actually existing socialism” and commu-

nism" have been defeated in the cold war ideological struggle between the East and West. Finally, all developing polities including Ghana, are adopting the neo-liberal panacea as a sine qua non for foreign aid and investment. So what better paradigm is there that ensures the crystallization of neo-liberalism in a developing social milieu like Ghana than structural-functionalism?

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The main hypotheses to be tested in the study are as follows:

1. The level of social trust for key agents of political socialization among adolescents in Wa Municipal schools is high.
2. There is gender differentiation in the level of social trust for agents of political socialization among adolescents in Wa municipal schools
3. The gender differentials in level of social trust for agents of political socialization among adolescents are statistically significant.

### **The Study Sample**

The study, the first of this kind in the Upper West, is on social trust for agents of political socialization and its implications for shaping political attitudes of children and adolescents in Ghana. The choice of a small sample of fifty (50) adolescent boys and girls was deliberate. Primarily, I was interested in developing and testing few tentative hypotheses which would be subsequently investigated in other researches. For methodological reasons, I was curious in determining not only gender differences in social trust among adolescents in second cycle schools, but whether these gender differentials is "statistically significant."

According to Blalock (1979: 300-301), it is relatively easy to establish "statistical significance" with large samples than small ones, when dealing with the chi-squared (X<sup>2</sup>). The selection of a small sample for this study therefore, is justified because it would enable me to test my hypothesis of "statistically significantly" gender differences in social trust adequately. The fifty (50) respondents for the research comprised twenty five male adolescents and twenty five female adolescents. One hundred self-administered questionnaires were distributed among adolescents in second cycle schools in the Wa Municipality of Ghana. The one hundred questionnaires were given random numbers; and then fifty (25 females and twenty five males adolescents) returned questionnaires were selected using systematic random sampling technique. The contingency tables and the statistical analysis were based on these fifty self-administered questionnaires from boys and girls.

## **Method of Data Collection**

Self-administered structured questionnaire was used as the key means of generating the quantitative data for this study. The questionnaires were simply worded, distributed and returned the same day. The main question on the questionnaire focused on "social trust" for agents of political socialization among adolescents. In the endeavor to tap information on students' degree of trust, they were asked to indicate how often they could trust the various agents of political socialization. The students' were presented with a question with the following introduction:

*Some people are almost always fair and honest; it is safe to trust them. There are other people whom it is better not to trust. We must be careful how we deal with them. What about the following people? In general, can one trust them?*

*Each agent of socialization was then introduced with the following phrase: "In general one can trust ..... " and four choices were presented to the students as follows: "always", "usually", "not often" and "never".*

In the analysis below, I combined "always" and "usually" as positive responses showing trust. I also put together "not often" and "never" as negative responses signifying social distrust.

## **Analytical Techniques**

Some important points are noteworthy in order to understand how the data for the study was analyzed. First and foremost, the measure used was the "nominal" scale – data developed as a result of categorization. Secondly, two-by-six (2 x 6) and four-by-six (4 x 6) contingency tables were developed from these largely nominal data. Thirdly, in all the tables showing numerical data, the absolute figures are out side the brackets whilst the percentages are enclosed in brackets. Following an important caveat from modern measurement theory which says that "measurement scales must match appropriate statistical techniques" (Kerlinger, 1974), I chose the chi-squared ( $\chi^2$ ) and "standardized residuals" non-parametric statistical methods which were found suitable for nominal and ordinal data. The chi-squared independence test ( $\chi^2$ ) would help us to determine whether statistically significant gender differences exist in degree of social trust for agents. The standardized residuals, on the other hand, would enable us to see which factor or item has contributed the most to the statistically significant differences obtained from the chi-squared result (Hinkle, et. al, 1997; Haberman, 1973; 205-220; Marscuilo and McSweeney 1997, 134-197; Reynolds, 1984).



The chi-squared ( $\chi^2$ ) formula used was as follows:  $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 / E$ .

Where,  $\chi^2$  = Chi-squared

O = observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

$\Sigma$  = Summation

The “standardised residuals” were computed based on the Chi-squared using the following formula:

$$R = O - E / \sqrt{E}$$

Where R = standardized residual

O = observed frequency

E = Expected frequency value.

$\sqrt{\quad}$  = Square root

Apart from these quantitative techniques, a critical and comparative analysis from a gender-analytic perspective was done as a supplement.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Differentials in Social Trust among Adolescents in Wa Municipal Schools**

As indicated earlier, the reason for exploring the concept of “social trust” has been to determine the relative effectiveness of the various agents of political socialization to which students are exposed in Ghana. Following David Koff and George Von der Muhll’s study among East African school adolescents in 1967, I assumed that there was a direct correlation between the degree of trust for an agent and the effectiveness of that agent in imparting political culture to adolescent students; all things being equal. Although there are a multiplicity of agents and channels to which students in Ghana are exposed, I focused on families, schools, religious leaders, governments or political leaders, media, and peer group. Participants were invited to rate their preferences. The “Always/Usually” responses were considered as positive responses indicating level of trust whilst the “Not often / Never” responses are coded as negative responses showing level of distrust.

If we carefully examine Table 1 below which depicts the pattern of adolescent trust for the various agents of socialization, some interesting findings emerge. Primarily, it is clear that distrust among adolescents is higher than the level of trust for various agents of political socialization as can be judged from the column totals and percentages in Table 1.

**Table 1: Students Trust for Various Agents of Political Socialization**

AGENT	ALWAYS/ USUALLY	NOTOFTEN/ NEVER	TOTALTOTAL
PARENTS/RELATIVES	35 (70)	15 (30)	50
TEACHERS	28 (56)	22 (56)	50
RELIGIOUS LEADERS	38 (76)	12 (24)	50
GOG POLITICAL LEADERS	5 (10)	45 (90)	50
MEDIA	17 (34)	33 (66)	50
PEER GROUP	7 (14)	33 (66)	50
TOTAL	130(43.3)	170(56.7)	300(100)

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Total sample size is 50. All percentages are enclosed in brackets. This is the case for all Tables that follow.

From Table 1 above, out of the 300 responses, 130 (43.3%) of the responses indicated “always/usually” while 170 (56.7%) indicated their distrust for the various agents of political socialization. Distrust for the agents was exhibited more for Government and political leaders (90%), the media (66 %) and Teachers (56%), than for peer group (36%) and families (30%) (“see the column for not often / never”). On the contrary, the adolescent respondents demonstrated more social trust for religious leaders (76%), parents and relatives (70%) and Teachers (56%). The highest level of social trust was shown for religious figures (76%) followed by Teachers (56%). The highest level of distrust was shown for Government and political leaders (90%) and the media (66%). These empirical data point to the interesting but tentative conclusion that families (parents and relatives) and religious figures, compared to the media and politicians, would be more effective in imparting political values and beliefs to the young in Ghana. The media and political leaders would be less effective considering the level of distrust exhibited for them.

The findings for families and religious figures can be easily explained. Firstly, families and religious leaders are the primary contact for adolescents. The family environment constitutes the first milieu in which indirect and direct political learning takes place as the child imbibe the culture taught by his parents and imitates their democratic or authoritarian tendencies. Moreover, the premium African values and beliefs put on parents – child relationship leaves absolutely no room for disrespect, disregard towards these category of adults in society Gyekye (1997; 1996). Children and adolescents would naturally, therefore, tend to show respect for their parents even where the latter shows irresponsibility.

The findings for political leaders and the media of communication is disturbing. These agents (media and political leaders) are supposed to play a very active role in the socialization of young adults into politics. The modern Ghanaian nation – state expects a lot from these agents in the task of nation – building. Unless, politicians

and their accomplices, the media, prepare themselves to handle the task of socializing people into a new political culture that would enable Africans to hold their own in the global village, their populace would continue to be marginalized in the new millennium. Rotimi Fasan (2002:156-184) has drawn attention to bad political leadership due to poor elite culture, which has hampered Nigeria's macro-economic success and sustainable development.

The failure of political elites in Africa is not restricted to Nigeria alone. The newspapers and other media of communication are littered with stories of political mismanagement and corruption. Ghana was recently reported to have scored a high corruption perception index. People blame politicians. How would they enjoy "social trust" among adolescents in second cycle schools who are critical these days of every thing?

The high degree of distrust for the media is a little puzzling. The nation of Ghana can boast of today of at least eighteen (18) Governments and privately- owned newspapers, at least two television (T.V.) stations, and numerous radio (FM) stations, which are local and/national. Yet, these mass media sources were distrusted by the respondents of this study. The reason may or not be connected to bad reporting, alliance with the government, media failure to recognize their role as active agents of political socialization. Hence, I endeavored to explore further the subject of "social trust" among adolescents in Wa Municipal schools. I tried to find out whether any gender differences existed in the degree of social trust for the various agents of political socialization and if there were whether these differences were "statistically significant." To facilitate this process, I constructed a four-by-six (4 X 6) contingency table showing the distribution of social trust by sex (See Table 3).

Table 2: Trust by Gender

AGENT	TOTAL	MALE		FEMALE	
		Always/ Usually	Not often/ Never	Always/ usually	Not often/ Never
PARENTS/ RELA-TIVES	50	15 (30)	10 (20)	18 (36)	7 (14)
TEACHERS	50	15 (30)	10 (20)	12 (24)	13 (26)
RELIGIOUS LEADERS	50	16 (32)	8 (16)	15 (30)	11 (22)
MEDIA	50	4 (8)	21 (42)	10 (20)	15 (30)
GOVT/POLITI- CIANS	50	4 (8)	21 (42)	4 (8)	21 (42)
PEER GROUP	50	2 (4)	23 (46)	4 (8)	21 (42)
TOTAL	300 (100)	56 (18.7)	93 (31)	63 (21)	88 (29.3)

Source: Field Survey, 2008

$X^2 = 64.60$ ;  $df = 15$ ;  $P = (X^2 > 37.697) < 0.001$  (Significant)

It is evident from Table 2 above that distrust for agents of socialization is higher than social trust among both male and female adolescents. 31% of the males registered

their distrust while only 18.7% indicated social trust for the agents of political socialization. The corresponding figures for females are 42% indicated distrust whilst 21% showed social trust for the agents. So we see that the general pattern of more distrust than social trust is replicated among the genders. Again, following the general pattern, more trust was shown for religious leaders, parents and relatives, and teachers in this descending order, among boys and girls while more distrust was exhibited for government leaders and the media. However, the boys showed their highest "social trust" for religious personalities (32%) while the girls indicated their highest trust for parents and relatives (36%). Table 3 clearly shows differences in "social trust" and distrust among the boys and girls. The boys showed more distrust (31%) than girls (29.3) while the girls showed more social trust (21%) than boys 18.7%). But are these differences apparent or "Statistically significant"? To answer the above question, I stated and tested the "null" (H<sub>0</sub>) and "alternative" (H<sub>1</sub>) hypotheses using the chi-squared formula ( $\chi^2$ ) discussed above. The null hypothesis was stated as follows:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference between adolescent boys and girls in their degree of social trust for the various agents of political socialization.

The alternative hypothesis was also formulated as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between adolescent boys and girls in their degree of trust for the various agents of political socialization.

A chi-squared was computed whose value is 64.60, with fifteen degrees of freedom (see Table 2). This calculated value is far greater than the theoretical value of 37.697 at 0.001 or 0.1% probability level. The result shows that the "null hypothesis (h<sub>0</sub>)" must be rejected and the "alternative hypothesis (h<sub>1</sub>)" "accepted. This implies that the gender difference in level of social trust for agents among adolescents in Wa Municipal schools is "statistically significant." To find out which of the agents of political socialization may have contributed to the statistically significant difference, a "standardized residual" was computed using the formula discussed above (See Table 3 for the results). The standardized residual for each agent of socialization are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Standardized Residuals for Trust by Gender

AGENT	MALE		FEMALE	
	Always/ usually	Not often/ Never	Always/ usually	Not often/ Never
PARENT & RELATIVES	1.84	1.41	2.30	-1.98
TEACHERS	1.92	1.33	0.52	-0.60
RELIGIOUS LEADERS	2.17	1.91	1.37	-0.93
MEDIA	-1.75	1.38	-0.17	0.12
POLITICAL LEADERS	-1.75	1.38	-2.00	1.69
PEER GROUP	-2.41	1.89	-2.00	1.69

Source: Mansaray, 2008

When a standardized residual for each of the category is greater than 2.00 (in absolute value), the researcher can conclude that I is a major contributor to the significant chi-squared ( $\chi^2$ ).

The standard residual value presented in Table 3 suggests two important conclusions. Firstly, parents and relatives, religious leaders, and peer groups have contributed to the statistically significant gender differences in social trust among adolescents. The standardized residual values for these agents are 2.30, 2.17, and -2.00 in absolute value respectively. The other point is that, more male adolescents than females are willing to trust religious leaders and peer groups. Also, more female adolescents than male were willing to trust their parents and relatives.

Thus, the main differences between boys and girls in their degree of social trust/distrust for agents of socialization can be summarized as follows:

1. More females (21%) than males (18.7%) exhibited social trust for the various agents of political socialization. Social trust is higher among females than male adolescents.
2. More males (31%) than females (29.3%) showed distrust for the various agents of socialization. Distrust is higher among males than females.
3. More males than female were willing to trust religious leaders and peer groups.
4. More females than male adolescents are willing to trust parents and relatives.

What explains the empirical results of marked gender asymmetries in social trust for the various agents of political socialization? The factors are complex, dynamic, multifarious and mutually interrelated. However, several theories have emerged to account for asymmetries in gender roles, perceptions and knowledge. There are many typologies for classifying gender role theories. I have adopted Howard and Hollander (1997) frame work for classifying gender role theories, according to which there are four main theories that explain gendered relations: essentialist theories, socialization theories, poststructuralist theories, and social constructionist theories (Howard and Hollander, 1997). This paper would briefly consider the socialization theories, or what Franzoi (1996) called "social learning theory" because of its pertinence to the problem being addressed. According to this theory, gender differences are environmentally determined and are the results of socialization through observational learning, and the application of reinforcement and punishment. African/Ghanaian societies bring up boys and girls differently using various rewards and punishments mechanisms as they try to inculcate patriarchal and andocentric cultures into the young. "Self-interest" rationality and individualism present in capitalist societies is rare in African communal life. Boys are taught to be aggressive, radical and courageous; while girls are expected to be humble, meek, and docile. These differences in

socializations have implications for gender differences in social trust or distrust.  
Implications for Shaping Political Beings In Ghana

The *raison d'être* of this study was to examine the degree of adolescent "social trust" for various agents of political socialization in second cycle schools in the Wa Municipality of Ghana. The specific objectives were to determine whether gender differences in social trust exist for agents and whether these differences are statistically significant. The research revealed that distrust is higher among students than "social trust" for the various agents of political socialization; and the distrust was exhibited more for Government and political leaders and the media compared to the rest. Only religious leaders and parents and relatives enjoyed high social trust among the adolescents in the sample selected.

Marked gender asymmetries in "social trust" for the agents were discovered among adolescents. Again, distrust for the agents was higher among the boys than the girls. However, more females than males showed trust for the agents of socialization; while more males than females are willing to trust religious leaders and peers. Thus, one of the three (3) tentative hypotheses tested was invalidated while two were confirmed. That is to say, social trust for the various agents of socialization was lower than expected, disconfirmed the first hypothesis. However, the statistically significant gender differences in social trust for agents confirmed the second and third hypotheses.

These empirical findings have important implications for political socialization research in general, and in particular, the shaping of boys and girls into full 'political men and women in Ghana. If distrust, rather than trust for agents is higher among children and adolescents, how would the agents be effective in discharging their functions?

Political socialization cannot be left in the hands of blind forces like wars, conflicts and disasters which have the potential of molding the values and beliefs of the young. It is key agents like families, religions figures, media, political leaders and teachers, who must actively mold the political orientations of children, in the appropriate elite and mass cultures for democratic development. In this regard, capacity- building seminars must be organized for agents in the Municipality and the wider Upper West Region. These seminars must focus on educating the agents to acknowledge their role as active agents of political socialization, not merely as offering moral education to the young. They should be reminded to improve their image among the young in society. The contents and methods of political socialization must be prepared by experts in universities and think-tanks. The agents should be taught these materials in the seminar as well as the sort of behavioural codes to be expected of them. Regarding the gender asymmetries, steps must be taken to close the gap by encouraging more girls and boys to be interested in politics and government. Steps must be taken to discourage the differential treatment of boys and girls especially in the educational sphere. It is boys and girls who eventually grow up to be adults charting the destiny of Ghana in the new millennium and beyond.

## CONCLUSION

Political socialization is an indispensable mechanism for transmitting democratic values and beliefs to the young. A multiplicity of agents works as partners in development to carry out this important role in modern nation-states (developed and developing alike). These agents include the family, religious leaders, school teachers, political leaders, mass media and peer groups. However, for these agents to be very effective in society, the public must have some remarkable degree of "social trust" for these agents. The higher this trust the more effective they would be and vice versa.

A developing country like Ghana that is struggling to consolidate its nascent democracy, needs the effective functioning of families, religious leaders, mass media, teachers, and political leaders. These agents have the historic task of teaching Ghanaian boys and girls the requisite norms and values that would shape democratic personalities and viable democratic social order in Ghana. The empirical findings on "social trust" for these agents in Wa Municipality, if true for the Upper West and the rest of Ghana, is very disturbing and discouraging. High distrust and significant gender differences in "social trust" for agents of socialization implies that these agents of socialization would not be able, all things being equal, to do their work as shapers of democratic men and women. The Ghanaian Government must, primarily, take political socialization seriously.

Secondly, the agents must not be left to their own devices; they must attract the necessary trust and be guided to understand as well as discharge their roles appropriately. Thirdly, boys and girls must not be given differential treatment but given the necessary education to ensure the full development of their potentialities.

Finally, the content and method of civic and political education in Ghana must be periodically revised to ensure that the country's core values are reflected at all times even in this era of globalization.

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