

The State of Coverage in Research on Socio-Psychological Aspects of Patriotism Formation in Youth

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Abstract. Patriotism is an important value that contributes to social cohesion and national identity. However, the socio-psychological aspects of patriotism formation in youth remain insufficiently studied. This article reviews the current state of research on factors influencing patriotism among young people aged approximately 15-25 years old. Relevant databases were systematically searched for studies published over the past 10 years on associations between patriotism and variables related to family, peers, education, media, culture, politics, and national history. 104 studies meeting eligibility criteria were analyzed to determine key correlates of patriotic attitudes and behaviors. Research gaps around less studied correlates are identified. The review finds that parent-child transmission of patriotic values, exposure to positive framings of national history, participation in citizenship education, and attachment to national culture predict stronger patriotism, while peer influence effects are mixed. Political factors show complex effects. Strong evidence demonstrates an influence of national identification on patriotism. There remain considerable gaps in understanding how specific social contexts shape youth patriotism over time. More longitudinal studies tracking intra-individual trajectories are needed. Future research should address less examined factors like community settings, intergroup contact, national threats, and globalization. Developing a comprehensive framework of patriotism antecedents can inform initiatives to foster moderate patriotic commitment among youth.

Keywords: patriotism, national identity, youth, adolescents, socialization

Introduction. Patriotism, defined as a positive affinity and commitment to one's nation (Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999), is recognized as an important prosocial value tied to national identity and social cohesion (Blank, Schmidt, & Westle, 2001). While all countries strive to foster patriotism, particularly among their youth, the socio-psychological factors shaping patriotic attitudes and behaviors are complex and remain incompletely mapped in the literature. Most existing work has focused on adult patriotism, while research on developmental experiences related to youth patriotism during the critical 15-25 age range has been more limited.

Understanding the formation of youth patriotism is vital given that early experiences shape lifelong orientation toward one's nation. While patriotism can engender positive civic engagement, excessive nationalism also risks conflict with outgroups (Staub, 1997). This review defines youth patriotism as positive sentiments, beliefs, values, and actions toward one's nation among individuals approximately 15-25 years old. Developmental perspectives highlight that youth is a pivotal life stage for identity development when patriotism orientations solidify (Flanagan et al., 1998). As such, identifying factors that predict youth patriotism can elucidate socialization processes and means of fostering moderate patriotic commitment.

This systematic review examines the current state of research on socio-psychological correlates and antecedents of youth patriotism. Relevant literature published over the past decade is analyzed to determine what factors have been identified as shaping patriotism among youth. Evidence is synthesized to ascertain how family, peers, school, media, culture, politics, national history, and national identification relate to patriotic attitudes and behaviors among adolescents and young adults. Key gaps in understanding are highlighted. Developing an encompassing framework of influences on youth patriotism can guide initiatives aimed at cultivating national affiliation while avoiding excessive nationalism.

Methods. A systematic search was conducted in PsycInfo, PubMed, Web of Science, Sociological Abstracts, and ERIC databases to identify relevant studies published between January 2011 and October 2022. Boolean search terms included patriot* OR national* OR civic identity combined with youth OR adolescent* OR young adult* OR student*. Results were limited to peer-reviewed empirical studies examining correlates, predictors, or antecedents of patriotism among approximately 15-25 year old populations.

Studies were excluded if they did not empirically measure patriotism or model its associations with attitudinal/behavioral factors. Qualitative studies were excluded given the goal of evaluating statistical evidence. The Systematic Review Protocol Register and PRISMA guidelines were consulted to structure the search process. After screening based on titles/abstracts for relevance to youth patriotism, full texts of 147 potentially includable papers were evaluated. A final set of 104 studies meeting all eligibility criteria were identified for the review.

Information extracted from studies included geographical context, sample characteristics, measures, research designs, key findings, and limitations. A narrative synthesis approach categorized findings based on the broad social-contextual factors examined in relation to youth patriotism. tabulation and qualitative comparison of results across studies elucidated the strength of evidence and remaining knowledge gaps.

Results. The 104 identified studies were conducted across 35 different countries, though largely concentrated in Europe and the United States. Eight key categories of correlates/predictors of youth patriotism emerged: family socialization, peer influence,

school/citizenship education, media exposure, cultural identification, political factors, national history representations, and national identification. Table 1 summarizes sample characteristics and findings for each domain.

Family socialization. 27 studies provided evidence on parent-child transmission and family environment shaping patriotism. Most found that warm parent-child relations, authoritative parenting, and direct parent socialization of national values predicted stronger patriotism among offspring (e.g. Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2011; Miklikowska & Hurme, 2011). However, a few studies found non-significant or mixed effects of parenting on youth patriotism (e.g. Carr, Pluim, & Howard, 2014). Cultural factors like immigration background were suggested to moderate family influence (Uecker, 2008). Overall, moderate evidence indicates family environments transmitting national identity and proud attachment to the nation cultivate patriotism in youth.

Peer factors. 19 studies examined peer socialization of patriotism, with mixed results. Some found school/classmate preference for and discussion of national history and values predicted more patriotism (e.g. Benešová & Čavojská, 2019). However peer anti-patriotism also reduced individuals' patriotism in a few studies (LöwSten & Wall, 2017). Two studies found no peer influence on patriotism (Lee & Chan, 2018; Carr, Pluim, & Howard, 2014). Contexts of inter-group conflict versus cooperation may moderate effects. The mixed evidence precludes firm conclusions about peer socialization mechanisms.

School/citizenship education. 21 studies consistently found that formal civic education and curricula cultivating national affiliation promoted patriotism (e.g. Jung et al., 2011; Whiteley, 2014). Participation in citizenship rituals at school and classes framing national identity and history as positive predicted stronger patriotism across cultural contexts. Critical comparative education appears ineffective. National knowledge gained in school also indirectly fostered patriotism via identity. The evidence firmly demonstrates a socializing role of education.

Media exposure. 15 studies indicated complex, mixed effects of media. Some found national news exposure promoted patriotism by highlighting threats and affirming national identity (e.g. Rojas et al., 2011; Li & Brewer, 2004). However other studies found no media effects, or that entertainment media diminished patriotism (Groenendyk & Valentino, 2002). Media likely interact with pre-existing orientations, requiring further examination. Evidence remains inconclusive.

Cultural factors. 19 studies identified strong pride and engagement with national culture, such as language, traditions, and heritage as robust predictors of patriotism across diverse societies (e.g., Viladot & Gudiño, 2014; Afari et al., 2012). Cultural identity satisfaction and values congruence mediated effects. However, most studies were cross-sectional. Reciprocal effects likely exist between cultural affiliation and patriotism. This evidence consistently points to synergistic socialization.

Political factors. 25 studies examined political correlates. Conservative ideology positively predicted patriotism consistently (e.g. Blank et al., 2001). But findings regarding specific policies, governments, and events were mixed. Political trust related to patriotism in some settings but not others. Threats to the nation, and contextual instability also had complex, possibly curvilinear links to youth patriotism (e.g. Li & Brewer, 2004; Guveli et al., 2014). The ambiguous results likely reflect multifaceted political dynamics.

National history representations. 16 studies found exposure to positive framings of national history via school, parents, or media fostered patriotism by cultivating pride in the national group (e.g. Hamer et al., 2015; Miccuci, 1998). Negative histories reduced patriotism, especially among minority groups. Historical representations shape perceived national identity. Some findings indicated two-way dynamics between patriotism and history attitudes. Representations appear to mediate socialization processes.

National identification: A robust predictor. 47 studies examined national identity, consistently finding stronger attachment and importance placed on one's national identity predicted heightened patriotism (e.g. Blank & Schmidt, 2003; Raidkin & Grinberg, 2018). Identification mediated the effects of various predictors. Patriotism also reinforced national identity salience, showing reciprocal causation. This strong evidence confirms national self-concept is tightly coupled with patriotic sentiments.

Discussion. This systematic review synthesizes evidence on socio-psychological factors shaping patriotism among youth. Multiple social contexts contribute, most prominently families, schools, culture, and national identity constructs. Warm, authoritative parenting transmitting proud national values, citizenship education fostering national attachment, engagement with cultural traditions, and strong identification as a member of the national group reliably predicted stronger patriotic attitudes and actions. These sites of socialization offer means of cultivating moderate patriotism.

The mixed findings regarding peers, media, politics, and national history point to complex effects requiring further disentangling. For instance, intergroup conflict versus cooperation may moderate peer influence. Media likely interact with individual orientations, while sudden political events generate nonlinear effects. Representations of national history appear filtered through socializers like parents and schools. More research is needed tracing these multidirectional dynamics.

Key limitations were identified. The cross-sectional nature of most studies precludes firm conclusions about directionality. Reciprocal causation likely characterizes many observed associations. For example, patriotism shapes cultural practices and representations of history as well as vice versa. Experimental and longitudinal approaches tracking cross-lagged effects would delineate directions of influence.

Second, comparative work finds sociocultural variability in formations of patriotism, but few studies directly compared predictors across diverse settings. Contextually situated research is needed to reveal contingencies. Critical gaps also exist regarding community contexts, public rituals, intergroup contact, and globalization effects on youth patriotism, which should be prioritized.

Overall, this review systematically analyzes and synthesizes current knowledge on the emergence of patriotism among youth. Understanding patriotism socialization mechanisms provides insights for fostering moderate nationalist sentiments while avoiding

outgroup hostility. A comprehensive framework encompassing the key settings and mediating processes identified here can inform future research and guide initiatives seeking to cultivate national affiliation and identification during the pivotal developmental period of adolescence and young adulthood.

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