

# Preface

The articles in the current issue of *Politics, Culture and Socialization* can be seen as a true debate on political education.

The issue starts off with a critique of EU, or rather of the EU countries: how long do we have to wait before EU countries will employ a true political public sphere? The question could hardly be more pregnant and topical, seeing the problems Greece is facing, and the reactions at the EU playing level. Roland Benedikter (University of California at Santa Barbara, USA) and Lukas Kaelin (University of Vienna, Austria) make the unusual comparison in their article, between EU and US (“European versus American Public Spheres: Negotiating Differences and Similarities in Times of Crisis”). The winner is the US; but is this a fair comparison? We find some justification of this phenomenon in the (fourth) article by Bojan Todosijević (The Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia). Using the Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies (DPES) data, the author demonstrates that in-group identification affects the political expression of ideology (“Ideology and politics: The role of national identification”). If this is true, European decision-makers still have a long way to go if one believes that they sincerely attempt to realize a European public sphere.

The second article could not be more contrasting with the above-mentioned, as it seems to assume the existence of some kind of a common European political public sphere, may it be through the Socialist International. Wojciech Zięta (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland) argues that communism and liberalism may have divided social democracy, but that modern social democracy may be successful in integrating particular contradictions with its concept of “the third way” because it is a situational and inclusive doctrine (“The “third way” as an example, redefining the ideological identity of modern social democracy (in the second half of the 20th century)”).

How would this relate to power and justice concepts? Is there a third way to be discovered also for these issues? Ingo Juchler (Universität Potsdam, Germany) in the third article, anyhow discusses the concepts in the context of this classic ancient text by Thucydides and wants his pupils to experience the tense relationship between them. All this should further their political understanding of *international relations* (“The Melian Dialogue, or Power and Justice as Themes in Political Education”). It is, besides, not a surprise that this kind of political education encourages students’ political participation and has a positive impact on their civic knowledge and understanding. This is what Kerry J. Kennedy, Joanna Li Lijuan and Keith Can Ki (Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong SAR) conclude from their research on student participation in Hong Kong schools (“Civic Knowledge and School Participation: A Role for Schools in Promoting Civic Learning”). A very motivating conclusion for all those concerned with democracy and education.

This issue ends with three insightful reviews of recent books in the field of political psychology and political socialization. The books reviewed by Henk Dekker (University of Leiden, The Netherlands), Hester Leerdam (University of Antwerp, Belgium) and Felix Vermeulen (University of Antwerp, Belgium) are from 2013 (*Growing into politics*;

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*Contexts and timing of political socialization*, Abendschön, Simone), 2015 (*Young Citizens and Political Participation in a Digital Society: Addressing the Democratic Disconnect*, Philippa Collin), and 2010 (*The Personalization of Politics: A Study of Parliamentary Democracies*, Karvonen, Lauri).

We hope that you will enjoy this issue of the journal *Politics, Culture and Socialization*. While the current issue mainly focuses on political socialization and education, we can already tell you that the coming one will be a special issue, detailing discursive practices and rhetoric used in political cultures.

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