Why Politicians Are More Tolerant: Selective Recruitment and Socialization among Political Elites in Britain, Israel, New Zealand and the United States

John L. Sullivan; Pat Walsh; Michal Shamir; David G. Barnum; James L. Gibson

British Journal of Political Science, Volume 23, Issue 1 (Jan., 1993), 51-76.

Stable URL:
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0007-1234%28199301%2923%3A1%3C51%3AWPAMTS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-%23

British Journal of Political Science

B.J.Pol.S. **23**, 51–76
Printed in Great Britain

Why Politicians Are More Tolerant: Selective Recruitment and Socialization Among Political Elites in Britain, Israel, New Zealand and the United States

JOHN L. SULLIVAN, PAT WALSH, MICHAL SHAMIR, DAVID G. BARNUM AND JAMES L. GIBSON*

In this article, we present data showing that national legislators are more tolerant than the public in Britain, Israel, New Zealand and the United States. Two explanations for this phenomenon are presented and assessed. The first is the selective recruitment of Members of Parliament, Knesset and Congress from among those in the electorate whose demographic, ideological and personality characteristics predispose them to be tolerant. Although this process does operate in all four countries, it is insufficient to explain all of the differences in tolerance between elites and the public in at least three countries. The second explanation relies on a process of explicitly *political* socialization, leading to differences in tolerance between elites and their public that transcend individual-level, personal characteristics. Relying on our analysis of political tolerance among legislators in the four countries, we suggest how this process of political socialization may be operating.

SELECTIVE RECRUITMENT AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Since the earliest days of behavioural research in the United States, scholars have discovered regular and substantial differences in political tolerance between samples of the general public and various political elites and community leaders. The public has tended to be fairly intolerant, while community elites

* Sullivan, Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota; Walsh, Public Policy Group, Victoria University, New Zealand; Shamir, Department of Political Science, Tel-Aviv University; Barnum, Department of Political Science, De Paul University; Gibson, Department of Political Science, University of Houston.

We would like to acknowledge financial support from the following institutions: Victoria University of Wellington, Internal Research Committee; the United States National Science Foundation Grant # SES-8600449; the University of Canterbury; the College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota; the Ford Foundation through the Israel Foundation Trustees, grant 12 C-1/1983; and Tel-Aviv University, basic research grant. Nigel S. Roberts and Julia Lane provided valuable assistance on this project in New Zealand. In Israel, Raphael Ventura also provided valuable assistance. The authors are also grateful to the Editor and reviewers for this Journal for their helpful suggestions.

have been more tolerant.[1] Stouffer was perhaps the first to document this empirical regularity, but others followed quickly. The authors of these early studies often concluded that political elites and activists were indeed the 'carriers of the democratic creed'.[2] Enthusiastic scholars endorsed the conclusion that meaningful democracy could endure so long as the political elites – too often a vaguely defined concept – could protect the regime and its norms from an intolerant electorate.[3] Some scholars even went so far as to conclude that regime stability was best protected if the intolerant general public participated in politics as little as possible.[4]

Broadly speaking, there are two classes of explanations why political elites and community leaders have been found to be more tolerant than the public. The first rather straightforward explanation of these differences is what might be called 'selective recruitment'. Within the electorate, there are people who are more highly educated, more affluent and live in the more cosmopolitan cities and regions of the country; they also tend to have higher levels of tolerance.[5] According to the selective recruitment hypothesis, political elites' higher

[1] There are exceptions. A recent study of Canadian citizens and decision makers reported that mass–elite differences were small or reversed on issues of public order or protecting society's moral values by banning certain types of publications and that the public was more tolerant than the political elites on issues of wire-tapping. See Joseph Fletcher, 'Mass and Elite Attitudes About Wiretapping in Canada: Implications for Democratic Theory and Politics', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53 (1988), 225–45; and Paul M. Sniderman, Joseph F. Fletcher, Peter H. Russell and Philip E. Tetlock, 'The Fallacy of Democratic Elitism: Elite Competition and Commitment to Civil Liberties', *British Journal of Political Science*, 21 (1991), 349–70, p. 361. A similar finding has been reported in a study of British MPs and citizens by David G. Barnum and John L. Sullivan, 'Attitudinal Tolerance and Political Freedom in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, 19 (1989), 136–46, p. 145. More generally, a study based on some of the data reported in this article found smaller differences in political tolerance between Knesset Members and the general public in Israel than in other countries and greater intolerance towards the right-wing group, Kach, among the MKs than the general public. See Michal Shamir, 'Political Intolerance Among Masses and Elites in Israel: A Re-evaluation of the Elitist Theory of Democracy', *Journal of Politics*, 53 (1991), 1018–43, p. 1026. Finally, Raymond Duch and James L. Gibson, '"Putting Up With" Fascists in Western Europe: A Comparative, Cross-Level Analysis of Political Tolerance', *Western Political Quarterly*, 45 (1992), 237–73; and James L. Gibson and Raymond Duch, 'Elitist Theory and Political Tolerance in Western Europe', *Political Behavior*, 13 (1991), 191–212, found that Western European political elites are sometimes less tolerant of fascists than ordinary citizens. Despite these somewhat circumscribed exceptions, most research shows greater elite tolerance to be the rule.

[2] Samuel Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties* (New York: Doubleday, 1955). See also Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1961); Herbert McClosky, 'Consensus and Ideology in American Politics', *American Political Science Review*, 58 (1964), 361–82; James Prothro and Charles Grigg, 'Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Bases of Agreement and Disagreement', *Journal of Politics*, 22 (1960), 276–94.

[3] But see Herbert McClosky and Alida Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance* (New York: Russell Sage, 1983), pp. 236–43 and Shamir, 'Political Intolerance Among Masses and Elites in Israel'.

[4] Most notably, Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld and William McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 313–23.

[5] See McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance*, p. 250; Clyde A. Nunn, Harry J. Crockett and J. Allen Williams, *Tolerance for Nonconformity* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978),

levels of tolerance are due largely to the fact that more often than not they come from these strata. Thus differences in their early socialization experiences created lasting and profound psychological and political differences between them and ordinary citizens. Viewing it from the other end, Dye and Zeigler argue that lower status families have more authoritarian child-rearing patterns (and a more authoritarian structure to their lives generally), hence they become more intolerant.[6] Few political elites, however, are drawn from among the working or lower classes.

According to this explanation, there was nothing unique about political elites' *political* experience that 'caused' them to become tolerant when they would otherwise have been predisposed to be intolerant. These leaders could have followed careers in business, the professions, the arts – and they would have been tolerant regardless of their chosen profession.

A second explanation of differences in tolerance between political leaders and citizens relates to differences in adult political socialization. Clearly, the processes of becoming a political leader and of governing involve unique and powerful transforming experiences. There are numerous aspects of these experiences that can elaborate or even reverse basic political perceptions and predispositions,[7] including support for political tolerance: greater and more intimate contact with ideological diversity decreases authoritarianism and increases tolerance;[8] the necessity to compromise with individuals who disagree strongly with oneself can lead to a more realistic and less dramatic view of the threat presented by nonconformist groups and their ideas; the great responsibility of having actually to govern, of seeing the consequences of one's views enacted into policy and of shaping others' lives can lead to a 'sober second thought' about the consequences of one's own intolerance; and so on. Political elites also gain a greater sense of personal control, which might reduce the sense of perceived threat posed by more extreme groups and ideas. They also occupy a central location in society's communications network, which inculcates the social norms of tolerance and acceptance of the 'rules of the game'.[9]

All of these forces – and more – may propel political elites towards a more tolerant posture, even if they are not more tolerant than the public when they first enter the political arena. This is a quite different explanation of elite tolerance from selective recruitment, which involves little change in individuals but

pp. 60, 97, 103; Prothro and Grigg, 'Fundamental Principles of Democracy'; and Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, p. 127.

[6] Thomas R. Dye and Harmon Zeigler, *The Irony of Democracy* (Pacific Grove, Calif.: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1990), chap. 5.

[7] Stanley Renshon, 'Psychological Perspectives on Theories of Adult Development and the Political Socialization of Leaders,' in Roberta S. Sigel, ed., *Political Learning in Adulthood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 203–64.

[8] Bob Altemeyer, *Enemies of Freedom* (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1989), p. 95.

[9] McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance*, pp. 232–4.

instead attributes elite tolerance to a fortuitous consequence of the electoral process.[10]

These two explanations of mass–elite differences in political tolerance need not be mutually exclusive. Selective recruitment of political elites occurs to varying degrees in all Western democracies.[11] The major research question is whether selective recruitment can explain most of the differences in tolerance, or whether, in addition, an 'adult *political* socialization' explanation is required.[12] In this article, we assess the current state of the literature and test the adequacy of the selective recruitment hypothesis in four countries.

Selective Recruitment: The Evidence to Date

Samuel Stouffer was the first to demonstrate that, in the United States, local community leaders were generally more tolerant than the public.[13] Without disputing Stouffer's empirical findings, Jackman reanalysed Stouffer's data and found that mass and elite differences in tolerance disappeared once he controlled for demographic differences, particularly education. Members of the general public who shared the political elites' demographic characteristics were just as tolerant as the community elites were.[14] This meant that these leaders might have been more tolerant than the public only because of their generally privileged position in the social structure, not because of their unique political experiences. Stouffer's community elites were not a demographic random sample of their communities.

In a later American study, Nunn, Crockett and Williams also compared the public with the same types of local community leaders studied by Stouffer. They found that after more than two decades, leaders continued to be more tolerant than the general public. Following Jackman's lead, they compared the two samples and, after controlling for demographic variables, found that,

[10] Of course, the normative consequences of these two explanations are enormously at odds with one another. Selective recruitment is especially congruent with democratic elitism and conservative variants of democratic theory. Adult political socialization, on the other hand, implies a more optimistic view and suggests that substantially greater political involvement of ordinary citizens could attenuate their intolerance.

[11] See, for example, Heinz Eulau and Moshe M. Czudnowski, *Elite Recruitment in Democratic Polities* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1976); and Sidney Verba, Norman H. Nie and Jae-On Kim, *Participation and Political Equality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

[12] We are assuming that most of the selective recruitment effects are from childhood and early adult socialization processes and that adult political experience is the heart of the socialization hypothesis. This distinction, of course, is probably not as tidy as our discussion implies.

[13] Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, defined community leaders as school board presidents, mayors, chairs of local political party organizations and so on.

[14] Robert Jackman, 'Political Elites, Mass Publics, and Support for Democratic Principles', *Journal of Politics*, 34 (1972), 753–73.

once again, differences in tolerance virtually disappeared.[15] From these studies, one might conclude that selective recruitment explains differences in tolerance between citizens and their local civic leaders.

McClosky and Brill, however, arrived at different conclusions. They compared the general public's opinions on civil liberties issues with those of legal elites and other community leaders, and they found substantial differences on a variety of measures. Even after controlling for demographic differences, they discovered that differences in support for civil liberties persisted, supporting, they argued, a social learning (adult socialization) explanation.[16]

In testing the selective recruitment hypothesis, however, McClosky and Brill failed to incorporate controls for personality differences between elites and the public which they, as others before them,[17] found to be strongly related to support for civil liberties. Their results therefore leave open the possibility that selective recruitment by personality could explain the remaining differences. In other words, by their own analysis, the regression equation they used to 'equalize' the samples was mis-specified, particularly if people who are dogmatic, inflexible and lack self-esteem systematically avoid politics or, because of their dogmatism, are unsuccessful when they do enter the political arena.[18]

The Four Nation Study

Our analysis is designed to improve and expand upon previous empirical studies in several ways. Firstly, the focus is on national, elected policy makers in four countries, rather than on American, local, community elites who were the subjects in the major studies that tested the selective recruitment hypothesis. For

[15] Nunn, Crockett and Williams, *Tolerance For Nonconformity*, p. 152.

[16] McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Political Tolerance*, pp. 252–3.

[17] Paul M. Sniderman, *Personality and Democratic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 204–22; John L. Sullivan, James Piereson and George E. Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 145–56; and John L. Sullivan, Michal Shamir, Patrick Walsh and Nigel Roberts, *Political Tolerance in Context: Support for Unpopular Minorities in Israel, New Zealand, and the United States* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 186–90.

[18] Sniderman, *Personality and Democratic Politics*, pp. 262–72, found that 'the critical dimension of self-regard which most sharply separates leaders and followers is interpersonal competence'. His analysis showed that, among samples of the general public, individuals with high self-esteem participated more than people with low self-esteem: among those high on 'interpersonal competence', 45 per cent were also high on his participation scale, while among those low in interpersonal competence, only 26 per cent were high on the participation scale. He also found that leaders (national convention delegates) had higher interpersonal competence than followers (the general population). Political elites may be more tolerant than the public in part because they are higher in self-esteem and lower in dogmatism even before entering politics. A corollary of this thesis is that individuals who are excessively dogmatic might be weeded out during the democratic process of selecting political leaders. Highly dogmatic candidates will not be sufficiently flexible to adjust to changing circumstances and will more often lose elections.

this study, we have interviewed Members of Parliament in New Zealand and Britain, Members of Knesset in Israel and Members of Congress in the United States. These data supplement data collected earlier on samples of the public in each of these countries.[19] The value of a broader cross-national data base seems self-evident. Indeed, selective recruitment as described above has been found to be more pronounced in the United States than in most other industrialized countries, so American results may not be duplicated in other countries because of differences in political culture, institutions and recruitment patterns.[20]

The focus on national rather than local leaders is also important, because many issues relating to political tolerance are decided at the national level. This is particularly true in the smaller and more centralized countries. We know very little about how national policy makers differ from the public on issues of political tolerance and even less about the relative role of selective recruitment in explaining the differences between them. We might expect that differences between national elites and the public are likely to be greater than those found between community leaders and the public. These differences, however, may be explained by an even more powerful selective recruitment process – national elites are even less likely than local leaders to constitute a demographic or psychological cross-section of the public.

Secondly, the elites in this study are all *political* elites. Previous empirical studies used community leadership samples, which included non-elected leaders as well as lawyers, school and university officials, journalists and others. Findings based on those diverse samples have been applied indiscriminately to political elites.

Thirdly, we propose to conduct stringent tests by attempting to control for more than demographic differences when we test the selective recruitment hypothesis. Differences in political ideology, support for democratic norms and procedures, perceptions of threat and personality all have a significant impact on political tolerance. Research has shown that liberals and conservatives (or left-wingers and right-wingers) differ significantly in their levels of tolerance. In the United States, for example, liberals have tended to be somewhat more tolerant than conservatives.[21] There is also evidence that individuals who internalize strong support for the abstract democratic norms of freedom of speech and minority rights are more tolerant of specific unpopular political groups than people whose support is more cursory; the same is true of people who strongly support specific legal guarantees of free speech, minority rights

[19] Of course, longitudinal data would be the best suited to testing hypotheses about selective recruitment and adult political socialization, but we lacked resources to collect such data. See Appendix A for a discussion of our data collection procedures.

[20] Verba, Nie and Kim, *Participation and Political Equality*, pp. 290–303.

[21] See, among others, McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Political Tolerance*, p. 293; Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*, pp. 175–86; and Sullivan *et al.*, *Political Tolerance in Context*, pp. 195–9.

and equal treatment under the law.[22] People who think a political group is very threatening – whether or not it actually is – are less tolerant than individuals who believe it is not threatening. Finally, insecure people who lack self-esteem and are dogmatic are also likely to be intolerant.[23]

Whenever possible all of these variables will be included in tests of selective recruitment. Political leaders are likely to differ from the general public in political and personal as well as demographic characteristics even before they enter the political arena.[24] Therefore, incorporating these additional control variables in the analysis – which has not been done in previous studies – will provide a more comprehensive test of the hypothesis. In New Zealand and Israel, our data allow us to control for demographic, political and personality differences between legislators and citizens, while in the United States and Britain, due to data limitations, we shall only be able to control the former two sets of variables.

Fourthly, previous studies of selective recruitment either examined tolerance toward left-wing groups or focused on attitudes towards more general civil libertarian norms.[25] In the countries examined in this research, citizens in the stratum from which political elites are drawn are more likely than people from other socio-economic strata to select right-wing extremist groups as their 'least-liked' target.[26] It is plausible, therefore, that relying on a more ideologically balanced research method, which allows respondents to identify their

[22] Although this might seem to be tautological, it is not. Early empirical researchers discovered that while citizens of the United States demonstrated a consensus on principles such as freedom of speech and minority rights, they were sharply divided on whether to apply these principles to specific unpopular political groups (Prothro and Grigg, 'Fundamental Principles of Democracy'; McClosky, 'Consensus and Ideology in American Politics'). This research demonstrated a sharp distinction between support for democratic norms or principles and applied political tolerance. Many citizens who endorsed freedom of speech as a principle were prepared to deny it to specific groups they disliked and/or feared. Later research showed that, although the earlier findings were true, people who most strongly and consistently endorsed democratic principles tended to be more tolerant towards specific disliked groups (Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*, pp. 202–7). Endorsement of specific legal guarantees for these principles – such as ensuring the same legal protections even for those accused of treason – also enhances political tolerance (Sullivan *et al.*, *Political Tolerance in Context*, pp. 217–22).

[23] Sniderman, *Personality and Democratic Politics*, p. 195; Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*, pp. 159–61, 188–90; and McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance*, pp. 260, 368.

[24] Rufus P. Browning and Herbert Jacob, 'Power Motivation and the Political Personality', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 28 (1964), 75–90; and Eulau and Czudnowski, *Elite Recruitment in Democratic Societies*.

[25] See, for example, Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*; and Nunn, Crockett and Williams, *Tolerance for Nonconformity*. McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance*, pp. 481–8, compared their mass and elite samples using a 52-item civil liberties scale. That scale contained a mixture of items from various sub-scales, including free speech, free press, symbolic speech, academic freedom and so on. Only a few of the questions referenced specific groups. Most of the items were quite general and did not mention specific action by specific target groups, but instead specified generic 'rapists', 'students', 'arrested persons', 'a professor' and so on.

[26] See Sullivan *et al.*, *Political Tolerance in Context*, chap. 6, in particular Table 6.1, p. 151.

least-liked groups from anywhere on the ideological spectrum, could attenuate the mass–elite differences in tolerance previously discovered. Smaller differences, of course, would be 'easier' to explain by selective recruitment.

For this reason, we rely on the least-liked group, or content-controlled, technique of measuring tolerance. This method ensures that both mass and elite respondents are asked to tolerate groups they dislike. It also allows a more 'comparable' set of cross-national comparisons to be made, since our focus is on least-liked groups within a national context. The nature of the groups differs radically from country to country, but in every instance the targets are groups that are strongly disliked by respondents.

ELITES AND CITIZENS IN FOUR COUNTRIES

Target Group Selection and Political Tolerance

Table 1 compares the choice of least-liked groups by Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of Knesset (MKs), Members of Congress (MCs) and their electorates. In all but Britain, members of the national legislature are, to varying degrees, somewhat more likely than the public to select right-wing targets as their least-liked group and less likely to select a left-wing group. These results are consistent with the finding – noted earlier – that more educated, higher status citizens tend to select right-wing targets more than other citizens. They also suggest the value of reassessing findings from earlier studies that focused on left-wing targets – it may have been easier for many political elites than for many members of the general public to be tolerant.[27]

Respondents in these surveys were asked to answer six tolerance questions about their least-liked group. The results are presented in Table 2. In all four countries, elites are more tolerant than the public. The differences are largest in the United States and New Zealand (about 41 per cent), somewhat smaller in Great Britain (29 per cent), and very much smaller in Israel (about 5 per cent). In fact, Israeli MKs are only about as tolerant as the general public in Britain and the United States and less tolerant than the New Zealand public. The same rank order holds when we compare the average percentage tolerant among the four elite groups and among the four publics: New Zealand's legislators and public are the most tolerant, followed by the United States, Britain and Israel. These data support two important conclusions. The first is that political elites express higher levels of attitudinal tolerance in spite of the 'content controlled' measurement strategy. The second is that both political elite status *and* national context have significant impacts on levels of political tolerance.

[27] The fact that political elites in our surveys are more likely to dislike right-wing groups, however, does not necessarily translate into less tolerance towards the right wing, even given our attempt to provide equally difficult tests for the public and their elected representatives. Political elites may select right-wing targets more often, but tolerate them more than most citizens tolerate their own targets.

TABLE 1 *Target Group Selection Among Political Elites and Public in Four Countries*

A. MPs, MKs and the general public in New Zealand and Israel

	New Zealand		Israel		
	MPs (%)	Public (%)	MKs (%)	Public 1985 (%)	Public 1980 (%)
Right-wing targets	68	41	50	24	7
Left-wing targets	32	49	40	52	74
Don't know	1	8	2	6	5
Other groups*	0	1	7	18	14
	101	99	99	100	100
(*N*)	(76)	(590)	(98)	(1,171)	(913)

B. MPs, MCs and the general public in Great Britain and the United States

	Great Britain		United States		
	MPs (%)	Public (%)	MCs (%)	Public 1978 (%)	Public 1987 (%)
Right-wing targets	48	48	63	32	56
Left-wing targets	52	48	35	56	44
Don't know	—	—	—	10	0
Other groups	—	3	1	2	1
	100	99	99	100	101
(*N*)	(63)	(1,266)	(99)	(1,509)	(1,215)

*In Israel, among the public, the 'other groups' were mostly religious groups; among the MKs, 5 per cent insisted on naming at least one right- *and* one left-wing group as their least-liked.

Sources: The New Zealand MP and citizen surveys were conducted by the authors in 1980 and 1984–85; the Israeli MK survey was conducted by Dahaf Research Institute in 1984, and the citizen surveys were conducted by the Israel Institute for Social Research in 1980 and 1985; the British MP and citizen surveys were conducted by Market Opinion Research International in 1985 and 1986; and the US citizen surveys were conducted by the National Opinion Research Center in 1978 and 1987, while the MC data were collected in 1987 by Opinion Research Corporation. See Appendix A.

A Test of Selective Recruitment

Having established that members of the national legislatures appear to be 'carriers of the democratic creed', the question arises as to why this is so. The differences are generally quite substantial. What is it, then, about elite status that leads them to be more tolerant? Both the selective recruitment and adult political socialization hypotheses provide plausible explanations for this phenomenon. Individual differences in personality, education, demographic characteristics and other variables such as threat perceptions could conceivably explain aggregate differences between elites and the public. If, however, after controlling for these differences, political elites remain more tolerant than the public, then some form of additional socialization hypothesis is also supported.

TABLE 2 *Percentage Giving the Tolerant Response on Six Tolerance Items in Four Countries**

	New Zealand		Israel			Great Britain		United States		
Least-liked group should be:	MPs	Public	MKs	Public 1985	Public 1980	MPs	Public	MCs	Public 1978	Public 1987
Banned from being prime minister (president)	84%	25%	14%	12%	12%	70%	27%	83%	16%	27%§
Allowed to teach in state schools	79%	31%	29%	†	26%	36%	14%	47%	19%	18%
Outlawed	99%	49%	22%	17%	30%	75%	31%	74%	29%	32%
Allowed to make a speech in this city‡	95%	67%	44%	36%	36%	81%	51%	93%	50%	50%
Have their phones tapped by the Government	95%	73%	50%	43%	41%	49%	62%	78%	59%	63%
Allowed to hold public rallies in this city	91%	53%	52%	31%	34%	64%	34%	93%	34%	33%
Average tolerant responses	91%	50%	35%	†	30%	63%	34%	78%	35%	37%
(*N*)	(76)	(590)	(98)	(1,171)	(913)	(77)	(1,266)	(99)	(1,509)	(1,215)

*That is the proportion giving the tolerant response that least-liked group should *not*, for instance, be banned from being prime minister.

†The 'teach' question was not asked in the 1985 Israeli survey. When we compare the averages for the five items which were asked in 1985, the average percentage tolerant is 36 per cent for the Israeli MKs and 28 per cent for the public.

‡In Israel, this question referred to speech at a public meeting and appearance on television.

§In the 1987 American survey, this question referred to 'running for public office' rather than being president. This probably explains the difference in percentages.

Sources: See Table 1.

Table 3 demonstrates the need to control for psychological in addition to demographic characteristics.[28] Legislators may be selectively recruited by personality, such that they are less dogmatic and have higher levels of self-esteem than members of the general public. The results in Table 3 show this to be the case. *None* of the New Zealand MPs was highly dogmatic, whereas 13 per cent of the public was. Conversely, while only 35 per cent of the New Zealand public were in the low dogmatism group, fully 65 per cent of the MPs were. The results for Israel are similar. Not only are political elites selectively recruited in demographic terms, but also based on personality characteristics such as dogmatism. They may, then, be more tolerant merely on these grounds.

TABLE 3 *Differences in Personality Characteristics Between Political Elites and the General Public in New Zealand and Israel*

	New Zealand		Israel	
Dogmatism*	MPs (%)	Public (%)	MKs (%)	Public (1980) (%)
Low	71	17	59	11
Medium	29	70	39	66
High	0	13	3	24
	100	100	101	101
(*N*)	(72)	(656)	(78)	(883)

*The dogmatism scale ranged from 7 to 35. We divided the scale into approximate thirds so that 7–16 = low, 17–25 = medium, and 26–35 = high. See Appendix B for more details.
Sources: See Table 1.

To test the selective recruitment hypothesis, data on members of the general public and elites within each country were merged. The regression equations in Table 4 include all of the individual level variables[29] that affect tolerance, as well as a dummy variable (status) to denote whether a respondent is a member of the national legislature (1) or of the general public (0). If the selective recruitment hypothesis is generally sufficient to explain the differences between legislators and the public, then the coefficient for status will be insignificant and very small. If the political socialization hypothesis is also correct, the coefficient will be significant and large enough to be substantively important. This is a conservative test of the adult political socialization hypothesis because elites' political experiences could affect their levels of tolerance by changing their demographic, personality and attitudinal characteristics. These individual differences could then affect tolerance and the MPs political experiences would have no direct effect. If this were true, then after these independent variables

[28] Because of data limitations, personality variables are not available for Britain and the United States.

[29] See Appendix B for a discussion of how these variables were measured.

are controlled, there would be no remaining differences, yet the 'uniquely political' socialization explanation could still be true. In this sense our test favours the selective recruitment hypothesis.

TABLE 4 *Regression Equations Testing the Selective Recruitment Hypothesis: New Zealand and Israel*

	New Zealand		Israel	
	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient
Education	0.09	0.28	0.06	0.08
Age of leaving school	0.05	0.15	na	na
Age	na	na	0.06	0.20
Self-esteem	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.04
Dogmatism	−0.17*	−0.20*	−0.11*	−0.25*
Political party†	−0.04	−0.22	0.02	0.84
Liberalism–conservatism	−0.07	−0.29	na	na
Religiosity	na	na	−0.08	−0.44
Left–right identification	0.02	0.08	−0.11*	−0.35*
Left–right target group	−0.16*	−1.53*	0.18*	0.83*
Perceived threat	−0.33*	−0.28*	−0.35*	−0.45*
Procedural norms of democracy	0.12*	0.49*	0.12*	0.34*
General norms of democracy	0.13*	0.37*	0.10*	0.32*
Status: MP *v.* general public	0.25*	3.87*	−0.08	−1.32
Adjusted R^2	0.38		0.28	
(*N*)	(352)		(555)	

*Significance < 0.05.

†In both New Zealand and Israel, political party was coded so that right-wing partisans had high scores, conservatives had higher scores than liberals, right-wingers had higher scores than left-wingers, and those who selected right-wing target groups had higher scores than those who selected left-wing targets. For all other items, the nature of the label indicates the high score. Several items were summed to create scales measuring general and procedural democratic norms and perceived threat. Both equations used pair-wise deletion. The results using list-wise deletion are similar.

na = Not asked in this survey.

The regression equations in Table 4 show that demographic variables have little direct impact on tolerance in the combined samples. On the other hand, personality, perceived threat, ideology and commitment to both procedural and general democratic norms have much stronger effects.[30] In New Zealand,

[30] See Appendix B for a discussion of how these variables were measured.

status as an MP also has a very considerable impact on political tolerance. The standardized regression coefficient relating status to tolerance is greater than all of the other coefficients with the exception of perceived threat. All else being equal, then, the status of MP increases the expected level of tolerance by almost four points on the twenty-five point tolerance scale (in Table 4 see the unstandardized coefficient in the New Zealand equation). The effect of MP status in New Zealand is strong enough to conclude that selective recruitment is an insufficient explanation of the differences in tolerance between New Zealand MPs and their public.

MPs are more tolerant even after controlling for the fact that they are, when compared with the New Zealand public, less dogmatic, more educated and more supportive of the norms of democracy. We conclude that this 'something more' is a unique political experience, not just individual difference variables that are unspecified in this equation.[31]

The results in Israel are quite different. Although MKs are more tolerant than the Israeli public, once other demographic and attitudinal differences between them are controlled, MKs are actually slightly less tolerant. The coefficient for status is not statistically significant in the Israeli equation, but it is nearly so and is in the wrong direction. MKs are almost a point and a half lower on the tolerance scale than comparable members of the public. We shall later consider a contextual-political explanation for these results.

In collecting data on British and American elites, we were unable to obtain data on dogmatism. We did, however, measure many of the demographic and political characteristics that were controlled for in previous tests of the selective recruitment hypothesis[32] and additional characteristics, such as support for the norms of democracy and perceived threat. The results are reported in Table 5.

In both Britain and the United States, perceptions of threat along with support for both procedural and general norms of democracy have a direct effect on tolerant attitudes. In addition, education has a significant coefficient in the United States.[33] In both countries, elite status also plays an important role. In Britain, all else being equal, being an MP leads to an expected increase in tolerance of slightly over four points on the twenty-five point scale, while in the United States, the comparable increase is slightly over three points.

[31] In particular, we have loaded the dice against the political socialization hypothesis by including controls for the norms of democracy. Support among political elites for democratic norms is often viewed as likely to increase as a result of their level of participation (McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Political Tolerance*, p. 234).

[32] Jackman, 'Political Elites, Mass Publics, and Support for Democratic Principles'; McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Political Tolerance*, pp. 474–5; and Nunn, Crockett and Williams, *Tolerance for Nonconformity*, pp. 151–2.

[33] Education had no direct impact on tolerance in an earlier data set of American citizens when personality variables were controlled. See Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*, pp. 221–5.

TABLE 5 *Equations Testing the Selective Recruitment Hypotheses Without Personality Variables: Great Britain and the United States*

	Britain		United States	
	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient
Education	na	na	0.22*	0.99*
Left–right identification	0.00	0.04	na	na
Liberalism–conservatism	na	na	−0.02	−0.07
Left–right target group	0.08*	0.93*	−0.02	−0.18
Perceived threat	−0.26*	−0.47*	−0.15*	−0.87*
Procedural norms of democracy	0.19*	0.57*	0.23*	0.53*
General norms of democracy	0.31*	1.19*	0.24*	0.95*
Status: MP or MC *v.* general public	0.17*	4.20*	0.15*	3.23*
Adjusted R^2	0.28		0.39	
(*N*)	(1,060)		(1,198)	

*Significance <0.05
na = Not asked in this survey.

Owing to lack of data, we cannot rule out the possibility that controlling for dogmatism would erase this difference between the elite and the public, but we are doubtful that it would.

The evidence suggests that, with the all-important exception of Israel, selective recruitment alone cannot explain the overall differences in political tolerance between national political elites and the public. We shall now examine the data from legislators in more depth, seeking clues to explain, firstly, the nature of elites' political experience that distinguishes them from ordinary citizens; and, secondly, why Israel is unique in the size of the mass–elite gap in political tolerance.

Democratic Norms and Israeli Politics

In order to obtain insight into the puzzle presented by the fact that Israeli MKs are no more tolerant than the Israeli public, we shall examine how the findings among Israeli elites differ from those of elites in the other three countries. To do so, we estimated separate regression equations for the political elites from each country. Table 6 presents the results, with several nonsignificant variables omitted.

TABLE 6 *Regression Equations for Political Elites Only*

	New Zealand		Israel	
	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient
Level of education	−0.10	−0.19	0.26	0.31
Dogmatism	−0.39*	−0.36*	−0.14	−0.18
Ideology†	−0.04	−0.69	0.32	0.65
Left–right target group	−0.13	−0.68	0.10	0.20
Perceived threat	0.00	0.00	−0.19	−0.18
Procedural norms of democracy	0.10	0.19	0.05	0.09
General norms of democracy	0.33*	0.54*	−0.03	−0.08
Adjusted R^2	0.30		0.09	
(*N*)	(49)		(58)	
	Britain		United States	
	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient
Education	na	na	0.11	0.56
Dogmatism	na	na	na	na
Ideology†	0.24	1.23	−0.08	−0.18
Left–right target group	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.25
Perceived threat	−0.32*	−0.93*	0.06	0.21
Procedural norms of democracy	0.19	0.64	0.38*	0.46*
General norms of democracy	0.48*	1.72*	0.12	0.36
Adjusted R^2	0.40		0.15	
(*N*)	(63)		(78)	

*Significance < 0.05

†In New Zealand and the United States, we used the seven-point liberal–conservative self-identification measure; in Israel and Britain, we used the seven-point left-wing/right-wing self-identification measure.

na = Not asked in this survey.

Democratic norms play an important role among the elites from all of the countries except Israel, where both coefficients are small and non-significant.[34]

[34] This result is consistent with other depictions suggesting that Israeli political culture puts less emphasis on minority rights and freedom of speech and more on majority rule, than the Anglo-Saxon democracies. See Y. Shapiro, *Israeli Democracy* (Ramat Gan: Massada, 1977); and Michal Shamir and John L. Sullivan, 'The Political Context of Tolerance: The United States and Israel', *American Political Science Review*, 77 (1983), 911–28, pp. 914, 922, 923.

Liberal norms which relate to tolerance are less consensual and have not been internalized among Israeli citizens or elites as much as in the other countries.[35]

Israel's political circumstances during the mid-1980s also mitigated the role of democratic norms among MKs. A major target group at that time was Kach, the late Rabbi Meir Kahane's extreme right-wing group. Kach's success in the 1984 elections meant that it was perceived by many as a serious threat not only to Arabs but to Israeli democracy more broadly. This perception was evident in speeches, editorials, explanations of new legislation introduced in the Knesset 'to fight Kahane' and in court decisions.[36] About half of our Knesset sample selected Kach as their least-liked group, testifying to its status as a pariah.

Kahane's group heightened a fundamental paradox among MKs: if given full rights and opportunities to achieve and exercise power, many believed, it would act intolerantly and inflict lasting damage on Israeli democracy. This alone does not make Kach – or Israel – exceptional since all of the other countries had target groups that raised the same issue. In Israel, however, coupled with this paradox was the reality of the threat that Kach posed. It was able to achieve representation in the Knesset, thus gaining some sense of legitimacy, and it was generally seen as increasing in popularity.

Israeli MKs who believed most strongly in the norms of democracy may have perceived that Kach and Kahane represented a genuine and potentially very powerful threat to democracy itself. Some of them might have decided to support democratic norms, paradoxically, by refusing to apply the norms to a group pledged to take undemocratic action. If this explanation is correct, then among MKs selecting Kach as their least-liked group, intolerance should be rooted firmly in immediate perceptions of threat to democracy itself. The usual positive relationship between support for the general norms of democracy and political tolerance would be reversed, because the most democratic MKs would be those who were most intolerant of Kach. Among the MKs who did not select Kach, however, we would still expect to find the typical relationship between support for general norms and tolerance.

To gain further insight into this argument, we divided our sample of Knesset members into those who selected Kach as their least-liked group and those who selected any other group. Among MKs who selected Kach, the correlation between support for general norms and tolerance is -0.25 while among other

[35] In the 1985 survey, only 70 per cent of the Israeli public and 69 per cent of MKs endorsed 'freedom of speech' compared to figures around 90 per cent in the other countries.

Among elites in the other three countries, an interesting pattern emerges. Procedural norms have an impact only in the United States, which is the only one of the four with a written constitution. Political elites are generally in an advantageous position to comprehend the major form in which democratic norms are 'packaged' in a society, and the elites of New Zealand and Britain pay particular attention to the abstract, general norms of democracy while those in the United States respond to how these norms are embodied in legal protections and procedures.

[36] Michal Shamir, 'Kach and the Limits to Political Tolerance in Israel', in D. Elazar, H. Penniman and S. Sandler, eds, *Israel's Odd Couple: The 1984 Elections and the National Unity Government* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1990), pp. 159–68.

MKs it is 0.30.[37] The latter MKs should be similar to legislators in other countries; those MKs who selected Kach should be different because of the intense and realistic threat they believed it posed. Table 7 presents the results of separate regressions among these two types of Knesset members.

TABLE 7. *Regression Results for MKs Who Selected Kach* v. *Those Who Selected Another Group*

	Selected Kach		Selected other group	
	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized beta	Unstandardized coefficient
Level of education	0.32	0.32	0.15	0.19
Dogmatism	0.05	0.07	−0.45*	−0.53*
Left–right identification	0.15	0.30	0.12	0.41
Perceived threat	−0.59*	−0.86*	0.00	0.00
Procedural norms of democracy	0.31	0.50	−0.21	−0.37
General norms of democracy	−0.06	−0.13	0.31	0.78
Adjusted R^2	0.32		0.15	
(*N*)	(28)		(27)	

*Significance < 0.05

Among MKs who selected Kach, only perceptions of threat were significantly related to tolerance, and that relationship was very strong indeed – a path coefficient of −0.59. The greater the perceived threat presented by Kach, the less they were willing to tolerate Kahane and his group, even in the face of their own support for democratic values and norms. Although the relationship between tolerance and general norms was negative, it was not statistically significant. Among the other MKs, however, the pattern was similar to that in New Zealand. Feelings of threat had no effect whatsoever on tolerance and dogmatism was even more powerful than in New Zealand. Although the impact of general norms was not statistically significant, its size was similar to that found in New Zealand and its beta was the second highest in the equation.

Perceptions of Threat: The New Zealand Model

Our examination of the results, then, suggests that the New Zealand pattern may, in the absence of dramatic circumstances, be rather typical. Among political elites, just as among ordinary citizens, those individuals with more dogmatic

[37] In all of the other countries, support for democratic norms and tolerance are strongly and positively related. The discovery of a negative relationship allows us to apply this explanation – the paradox of tolerance – to Israel.

personalities are more intolerant, while individuals who have most thoroughly internalized democratic values are more tolerant. However, elite levels of political participation may, under normal circumstances, encourage non-dogmatic legislators to 'set aside' their perceptions of threat when considering whether to extend political freedom to unpopular groups.[38] Thus variation in tolerance among elites, in normal times, may be seen to be a function of the same factors that influence ordinary citizens, with the exception of feelings of threat, which through their experience they have learned to discount to a certain extent.

In the United States, MCs in 1987 were clearly operating in an environment of ordinary politics, lacking any salient, realistic threat. The pattern of relationships is very similar to that in New Zealand and the MKs who did not select Kach: perceptions of threat are once again uncoupled from levels of tolerance and democratic norms are very important determinants.

Perceptions of Threat: The British Case

Among British MPs as a whole, perceptions of threat did have a significant effect on levels of tolerance (see Table 6). But the British interviews were conducted at a time when Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), was perceived to be strong, violent and dangerous. Sinn Fein presented a qualitatively different type of perceived threat to the political system than all the other British target groups. As the political arm of the IRA, it was associated with significant political violence that, in the eyes of many, placed it outside the purview of democratic norms and procedures. Although presenting a different type of perceived threat than Kach, it was structurally similar in presenting a realistic danger to a stable and reasonably democratic regime.

In an analysis consistent with that conducted on Israeli MKs, therefore, we examined two groups of British MPs, those who selected Sinn Fein as their least-liked target and those who selected a group other than Sinn Fein. Among MPs who selected Sinn Fein, none of the independent variables in our analysis had a significant relationship with levels of political tolerance (adjusted $R^2 = 0.07$). Among those who selected a group other than Sinn Fein, general norms had a significant positive relationship with tolerance (standardized beta $= 0.63$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.41$) while threat perceptions did not.[39] This evidence at least partially confirms our general argument. Among MPs who did not focus on Sinn Fein, feelings of threat did not have a significant impact

[38] As discussed later, political elites are not less threatened than the public by their least-liked groups. They simply are more tolerant even in the face of similar threat perceptions. Among samples of the public, in all four countries, perceptions of threat and both procedural and general democratic norms had direct and significant effects on tolerance. Dogmatism also had a strong impact on citizens' tolerance in all three countries in which it was measured.

[39] There was of course a very large difference in tolerance between these two groups of MPs. The mean among MPs who selected Sinn Fein was 16.1 while among those selecting all other groups it was 22.4 (18 is the scale midpoint).

but general norms did – just as was the case with legislators in the United States, New Zealand and with those MKs who selected a group other than Kach.

These findings – about the inverted role of democratic norms and values among Israeli MKs strongly opposed to Kach and about the diminished role of perceived threat among political elites, with the exception of MKs strongly worried about Kach – provide a contextual explanation of how and under what circumstances political elites are more tolerant than citizens at large. When politics is relatively quiescent, then political elites are better able than their constituents to set aside their perceptions of threat and remain tolerant in spite of reservations about unpopular political groups in their society. When, however, political elites become convinced that a significant threat to democracy itself is posed by an unpopular political group, then, paradoxically, those who care most about democratic values are most responsive to the perceived threat and become intolerant.

CONCLUSION: ADULT POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND ELITE PARTICIPATION

The data comparing political elites and their publics suggest that although selective recruitment occurs, it is not sufficient to explain the entire difference in political tolerance. This is true even though we have introduced new methods of analysis that should have increased the power of the selective recruitment model. We controlled for any tendency of elites to focus on different target groups than the public, and we introduced multivariate controls for political and personality variables in addition to the usual demographic variables. We have incorporated as controls the major variables identified by current research as the most powerful determinants of political tolerance. Yet significant differences remain in all except the Israeli case.

In short, significant additional political learning sets political elites even further apart from ordinary citizens – elites appear to have learned to be more tolerant than they 'should be' given their demographic, psychological and political characteristics. Even after controlling for various social, political and psychological characteristics on which political elites and the public differ, there is still 'something' that distinguishes national legislators from ordinary people. That something we have broadly characterized as adult political socialization.[40]

[40] Our findings are consistent with Searing's conclusion, using different methods, that while both socialization and selective recruitment were at work among British elites, socialization factors were more important than selective recruitment. In parallel with our research on tolerance, one of the variables he examined was support for the 'rules of the game'. See Donald Searing, 'A Theory of Political Socialization: Institutional Support and Deradicalization in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, 16 (1986), 341–76.

Elite Exposure to Democratic Values

One of the most comprehensive explanations offered for elite socialization has emphasized that political leaders are exposed more often and more forcefully to society's civil libertarian norms, at least in the United States. In his early work, for example, McClosky stressed the argument that

> The political stratum are unavoidably exposed to the liberal democratic values which form the main current of our political heritage. The net effect of these influences is to heighten their sensitivity to political ideas and to unite them more firmly behind the values of the American tradition.[41]

Searing noted that deep political involvement furnishes socialization experiences that enhance beliefs in the procedural rules of the game, thereby providing an important safeguard for democratic political institutions. He developed this notion by asserting that greater political involvement in collective affairs leads naturally to a greater level of concern and support for the 'central views' of the society as a whole.[42] In at least three of the countries analysed here – the United States, Britain and New Zealand – these central views emphasize, although to varying degrees, procedural democracy and civic tolerance.

In the data sets we have collected, the level of support for abstract democratic norms and values is marginally higher among the elites in each country (data not shown). This difference, however, cannot account for the findings reported here because variation in support for abstract democratic values has a strong impact on levels of tolerance among both the public and their leaders. In this study, the equations used to test the selective recruitment hypothesis incorporated controls for differences in support for abstract democratic values.[43] We must therefore look beyond differential exposure to liberal democratic values in order to explain the remaining mass–elite differences in levels of political tolerance.

Elites: No Less Threatened But More Tolerant

One important difference between elites and citizens is that perceptions of threat do have a significant impact among the public but not, in general, among

[41] McClosky, 'Consensus and Ideology in American Politics', p. 375; McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance*, p. 233.

[42] Donald Searing, 'Political Involvement and Socialization in Great Britain', in Harold D. Clarke and Moshe M. Czudnowski, *Political Elites in Anglo-American Democracies* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1987), pp. 109–46, at p. 109. Searing earlier had warned, however, that among elites, support for democratic norms is founded upon political partisan bias, and that elites are fully capable of abrogating such norms when it is in their best interests to do so. See Donald Searing, 'Rules of the Game in Britain: Can the Politicians Be Trusted?' *American Political Science Review*, 76 (1982), 239–58. Also see Shamir, 'Political Intolerance Among Masses and Elites in Israel', pp. 1032–6, for an explanation of Israeli elites' tendency to abrogate these norms for political gain.

[43] As noted earlier, some of our tests for selective recruitment actually control for differences that *could* be due to adult political socialization experiences.

political elites. Previous work has demonstrated, for example, that ordinary citizens often have high and unrealistic perceptions of the threat posed by their least-liked groups, and that these perceptions are strongly related to tolerance.[44] Perhaps elites are better situated than ordinary citizens to conduct a realistic assessment of extremist groups. This realism may in turn lead to lower levels of perceived threat.

This plausible line of reasoning, however, must contend with the fact that, although Stouffer discovered in 1954 that community leaders felt marginally less threatened than the general public, the differences were quite small. Our data are consistent with Stouffer's. The average percentages of respondents who felt highly threatened (measured by perceptions of the group as very dangerous, violent and bad) were: in New Zealand, 81 per cent of MPs and 67 per cent of the public; in Israel, 87 per cent of MKs and 73 per cent of the public; in Britain, 92 per cent of MPs and 81 per cent of the public.[45] MPs and MKs actually felt *more* threatened than members of the public. Yet they are more tolerant and, in most instances, remain more tolerant even after controls for selective recruitment. What, then, explains higher levels of perceived threat coexisting with greater levels of tolerance among political elites?

It seems that, under certain circumstances, feelings of threat and intolerance can be uncoupled. Stouffer found that although community leaders did not feel significantly less threatened by Communists than members of the public, at each level of perceived threat they were more tolerant. He concluded that 'a substantial number of these leaders can maintain attitudes of tolerance *in spite of* their estimate of the internal Communist danger.'[46]

Studies conducted in the United States by one of the authors supports this interpretation. He helped develop curricula to teach secondary school students about tolerance. Four- to six-week modules were designed to promote self-reflection, support for the general norms of democracy and a direct application of these norms to unpopular political groups. Students' levels of tolerance and feelings of threat were assessed before and after exposure to the curriculum. There were two important findings. Firstly, levels of tolerance increased significantly after students studied the curriculum. Secondly – and this is more germane – although the curriculum did not decrease students' levels of perceived threat, it did 'uncouple' feelings of threat from tolerance. At the time of the pre-test, students' perceptions of threat were strongly related to levels of tolerance. By the post-test, that relationship was weak or non-existent. Students had learned to be tolerant in spite of their fears. They felt just as threatened

[44] Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*, pp. 186–94; Sullivan *et al.*, *Political Tolerance in Context*, pp. 199–203; Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, chap. 8; and Mark Peffley and Lee Sigelman, 'Intolerance of Communists During the McCarthy Era: A General Model', *Western Political Quarterly*, 43 (1990), 93–111.

[45] The threat questions used in the sample of the American public were not identical to those used in the survey of MCs so a direct comparison would be misleading. The results for the Israeli public are from the 1980 survey.

[46] Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, p. 195.

by their least-liked group after exposure to the curriculum as they were before, but they had learned to set aside their fears and to express more concretely their commitment to democracy.[47]

A second series of studies also supports this argument. In these studies, subjects' feelings of threat and their fear-responses towards their least-liked group were manipulated experimentally. People in the high-threat group were consistently and significantly less tolerant than those in the low-threat group – with one exception. When reminded of the positive role of democratic norms of free speech and minority rights, individuals' perceptions of threat did not have a significant impact on their levels of tolerance. Even the high-threat experimental group was relatively tolerant after being exposed to a democratic norms 'prime'.[48]

Both of these studies, as well as Stouffer's analysis, are consistent with the argument that among political elites, feelings of threat and tolerance are often uncoupled. Political elites, by virtue of their location in the political arena, are exposed continuously to the functional equivalent of a civics and tolerance curriculum.[49] Furthermore, as in the threat experiments described above, their daily experience serves to provide a steady 'prime' for democratic norms, encouraging cogitation which can short-circuit the seemingly automatic connection between perceptions of threat and political tolerance.[50]

Concluding Remarks

The theoretical and normative conclusions that most authors have drawn from earlier studies fit broadly under what has been called the theory of democratic

[47] Patricia Avery, Karen Bird, Sandra Johnstone, John L. Sullivan and Kristina Thalhammer, 'Exploring Political Tolerance with Adolescents', *Theory and Research in Social Education* (forthcoming, 1992).

[48] George E. Marcus, John L. Sullivan, Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, and Sandra Johnstone, 'Political Tolerance and Threat: Affective and Cognitive Influences' (Williamstown, Mass.: Williams College, unpublished manuscript, 1992).

[49] Although both public and elites are strongly committed to democratic norms and this commitment in turn is highly correlated to tolerance for both groups, perhaps elite political experience fosters a qualitatively more profound commitment to democratic norms, which serves to uncouple threat perceptions from levels of tolerance. James L. Gibson and Richard D. Bingham, 'Elite Tolerance of Nazi Rights', *American Politics Quarterly*, 11 (1983), 403–28, found that among members of the American Civil Liberties Union and Common Cause support for democratic norms played a very strong role in determining their responses to the 1978 conflict over the Nazis' right to march in Skokie.

[50] In addition to these considerations, the dual acts of electoral campaigning and engaging in policy making and governance carry with them unique and ubiquitous educational experiences that can enhance tolerance. Both acts increase contact with ideological diversity, require the ability to compromise, and carry the responsibility to take a 'sober second thought' before acting, particularly when restricting the basic rights of citizens. The responsibility to govern also means that when elites are asked whether a particular group ought to be outlawed or prevented from exercising free speech, their answers are not entirely hypothetical. The issue positions of legislators have consequences – they are often translated into policy. The general public's views on issues of political tolerance do not generally carry with them such profound responsibility or weight.

elitism. As Fletcher has noted, McClosky and others emphasized the fortuitous circumstance that the very groups which pose the greatest threat to democracy are also the least active and least centrally placed, to borrow Milbrath and Goel's term.[51] The underlying empirical assumption of democratic elitism, however, must be that participation *per se* did not make the political elites tolerant. It seems that democratic elitism is most closely aligned with the selective recruitment hypothesis and that it assumes that most people's characteristics are well formed and relatively immutable before adulthood is reached. Therefore we are indeed fortunate that the dogmatic and uneducated strata are largely apathetic.

The evidence we have marshalled here for the socialization hypothesis indicates that, congruent with claims made by many democratic theorists, participation does matter but it matters primarily when it is ubiquitous yet meaningful. Sporadic participation in electoral politics is not sufficient to promote individual growth or attitudes of tolerance. Indeed, the relationship between participation and tolerance among members of the general public varies from context to context and is seldom very strong.

This is one reason we are sceptical of the narrow view of democratic elitism. A second reason is that even political elites who are selectively recruited to their positions may themselves endanger democracy in several ways. They can and do enact repressive legislation. In the United States, for example, the best historical judgement is that McCarthyism was promulgated in part by a segment of the political elite and in part by a climate of mass opinion and its concomitant cultural vulnerabilities.[52] During that era, repressive policies in the American states were accompanied by repressive elite and public attitudes towards the left, although the former appears to have played the larger role.[53] Shamir made the same suggestion about Israeli politicians in the 1980s.[54]

Politicians may also endanger democracy by the manner in which they conduct the business of government. A significant elite-based threat to democracy may come from actions by MPs who jeopardize or even overturn unwritten constitutional presumptions and arrangements upon which the practice of government is based. Searing has shown that in the United Kingdom there is no cross-party consensus on these issues, and that MPs of both parties are willing to interpret them in ways that offer partisan advantage. He also notes growing concern about the political abuse of traditional constitutional

[51] Fletcher, 'Mass and Elite Attitudes About Wiretapping in Canada'; McClosky, 'Consensus and Ideology in American Politics'; and Lester Milbrath and M. L. Goel, *Political Participation*, 2nd edn (Chicago, Ill.: Rand McNally, 1977).

[52] Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 36.

[53] James Gibson, 'Political Intolerance and Political Repression During the McCarthy Red Scare', *American Political Science Review*, 82 (1988), 511–29, p. 518.

[54] Shamir, 'Political Intolerance Among Masses and Elites in Israel'.

conventions.[55] These issues remind us that the preservation of democracy is dependent not only upon the precise content of legislation but also upon conventions about the appropriate conduct of the affairs of state and the constitutional framework within which these are worked out.[56]

APPENDIX A: ELITE DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Our surveys of the general public are described in detail elsewhere.[57] The surveys of legislators were conducted later, in order to draw mass–elite comparisons, although without this particular analysis in mind.

The survey of New Zealand MPs was carried out in December 1984 and January 1985, four years after the New Zealand public survey. A letter was sent to each MP outlining the background of the study, indicating the subject-area of the proposed survey and asking for their assistance. Each MP was then telephoned to obtain an interview time. The MPs were very co-operative and a high interview rate was achieved (seventy-six out of ninety-five were interviewed). All MPs except one were interviewed by the same interviewer, who had been thoroughly briefed beforehand. The other interview was conducted by one of the authors. This was just four months after the election of a Labour Government to replace the National Government which had ruled for the previous nine years.

The gap of four years probably does not affect the results. One of the strengths of the content-controlled measure of tolerance is that it is much less time-bound than measures which focus on a particular group. A critical part of this analysis, then, is not respondents' evaluations of the same particular set of groups, which would be

[55] Donald Searing, 'Rules of the Game in Britain', and 'Political Involvement and Socialization in Great Britain'. Thus although there is something about the adult political socialization of political elites that may enhance their political tolerance, the structure of partisan politics can also cause them to set aside their tolerance for political gain. McClosky and Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance*, pp. 88–92, 117–29 and 255, found that many non-political elites (such as judges, lawyers, clergy) were also more tolerant than the general public, just as community leaders were. Some of them were even more tolerant than local politicians. Shamir, 'Political Intolerance among Masses and Elites in Israel', p. 1028, also found that journalists and intellectuals were more tolerant than MKs.

We ran the regression equation reported for Israel in Table 4, including dummy variables for both intellectuals and journalists, and found that journalists were significantly more tolerant than the intellectuals, MKs and ordinary citizens, even controlling for selective recruitment. There were no significant differences among the latter three groups. Clearly, then, other occupations can provide experiences that encourage political tolerance, above and beyond selective recruitment. Unlike politicians, these other occupations may lack the partisan political advantages that can attenuate tolerance, thus leading to even greater levels of tolerance than among political elites.

[56] David G. Barnum and John L. Sullivan, 'The Elusive Foundations of Political Freedom in Britain and the United States', *Journal of Politics*, 52 (1990), 719–39; David G. Barnum, John L. Sullivan and Maurice Sunkin, 'Constitutional and Cultural Underpinnings of Political Freedom in Britain and the United States', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* (Autumn, 1992, forthcoming); Gibson, 'Political Intolerance and Political Repression During the McCarthy Red Scare'; and James L. Gibson, 'The Structure of Attitudinal Tolerance in the United States', *British Journal of Political Science*, 19 (1989), 562–70.

[57] Sullivan *et al.*, *Political Tolerance in Context*; Barnum and Sullivan, 'Attitudinal Tolerance and Political Freedom in Britain', p. 137; and Gibson, 'The Structure of Attitudinal Tolerance in the United States', p. 564.

time-bound, but whether or not they are willing to accord civil and political liberties to their least-liked group, regardless of its identity. Since levels of perceived threat can and do vary over time, however, the gap between the two surveys would be of greater concern if one of the two periods had been a time of greater domestic threat or political turmoil in New Zealand. However, this was not the case. At the time of each survey, New Zealand was in a state of normality, with no major domestic unrest or threats to political stability.

The Israeli survey of MKs is described elsewhere.[58] It was carried out right after the 1984 election, through to mid-1985. This was also about four years after a first survey of the Israeli electorate and simultaneous to a truncated second survey of the electorate. The elite data were collected by the Dahaf Research Institute. Unlike the New Zealand case, the two time periods did differ significantly in the salience and nature of tolerance issues on the political agenda. The most salient political change during this interval was the election to the Knesset of the American Rabbi Kahane and his right-wing quasi-fascist group, Kach.[59] This made the right-wing considerably more threatening to moderates and left-wingers both in the Knesset and among the general public. Consequently, Kach and issues of political tolerance were highly salient issues on the public agenda. The Knesset considered and subsequently passed several measures which redefined the limits of political tolerance in Israel.[60] We therefore present as many results as we can using both the 1980 and 1985 surveys of the public, but the multivariate analysis relies on the 1980 data, as some of the political and psychological variables were not repeated in the 1985 survey of the public (due to limited resources). There were few dramatic changes in the public results between 1980 and 1985, with the exception that in 1985 more people selected right-wing targets, particularly Kach.

The survey of British MPs is described elsewhere.[61] Briefly, in 1985, Market Opinion Research International conducted a survey of a sample of Members of Parliament and included many of our tolerance questions on that survey. Owing to space limitations, we were unable to include any personality inventories. The survey of the British public was conducted by the same organization in 1986.

Finally, in 1987, interviews lasting 15–25 minutes were conducted with a sample of ninety-nine Members of Congress (MCs) in the United States. The data were gathered by Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) of Princeton. The goal was to interview a sample of a hundred legislators, and by contacting as many Members of Congress as possible, ORC managed to fall only one interview short of that goal. The interviewers had previous elite interviewing experience, and we provided explicit instructions about how we wanted the interviews to be conducted.

APPENDIX B: MEASUREMENT

Tolerance: respondents in each country were asked to identify the group they liked the least from a list provided. They were then asked the six questions presented in

[58] Shamir, 'Political Intolerance Among Masses and Elites in Israel', pp. 1024, 1038–40.

[59] Ehud Sprinzak, 'Kach and Kahane: The Emergence of Jewish Quasi-Fascism', in Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, eds, *The Elections in Israel 1984* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1986), pp. 169–87.

[60] Shamir, 'Kach and the Limits to Political Tolerance in Israel'.

[61] Barnum and Sullivan, 'Attitudinal Tolerance and Political Freedom in Britain', p. 137.

Table 2, which were summed into a tolerance scale with scores ranging from 6 to 30 with reliabilities (coefficient alpha) in the 0.70s and 0.80s in the various samples.

Dogmatism: a seven-item scale was adapted from Rokeach. It had reliabilities in the 0.60s and 0.70s and included items such as 'there are two kinds of people in this world: those who are for the truth and those who are against the truth'.[62]

Ideology: we used two self-identification scales asking respondents to locate themselves between 1 and 7 in terms of how liberal–conservative, or left-wing to right-wing they thought they were. These two scales are identified in the tables as 'liberalism–conservatism' and 'left–right identification'.

Perceived threat: in all except the American samples, respondents rated their least-liked group on several seven-point polar adjectives: honest–dishonest; trustworthy–untrustworthy; dangerous–safe; violent–nonviolent; and good–bad were used in Israel and New Zealand. In Britain, only the last two items worked well and they were supplemented with a strong–weak adjective pair. The items were each coded so that the negative (threatening) end of the scale received the higher score, and the items were summed to create a perceived threat scale. In the American samples, judgements were made, on an eleven-point scale, of how threatening the least-liked group was perceived to be.

Democratic norms: these were measured by asking respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed on a five point scale with several items. For the *general norms* of democracy, three items were used – free speech for all, the minority's right to try to become the majority and equal legal rights for all. All three were used in Israel and New Zealand; while in the United States and Britain, only the first and third were asked in both elite and public surveys. For the *procedural norms* of democracy, three items were used – legal protections for people accused of treason, the right to 'hide behind the law' and the right not to be forced to testify against oneself. All three items worked well in the United States; the second item did not scale well in New Zealand and Israel; and the first did not scale in Britain.

Left–Right Target Group: this is a measure of whether respondents selected left-wing targets, mixed targets or right-wing targets as their least-liked group.

[62] See Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*, for the exact items.