

# 6. Political Culture & Political Socialization

**For**  
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# Culture defined

- Mark Ross defines Culture as “...worldview that explains why and how individuals and groups behave as they do, and includes both cognitive and affective (that is, emotional) beliefs about social reality and assumptions about when, where and how people in one’s culture and those in other cultures are likely to act in particular ways.”
- E.B.Taylor, Culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society

# Culture explained

- To put it more succinctly, Timothy C. Lim explains culture can be understood as a shared, learned and symbolic system of values, ideas, beliefs and practices that shapes and influences our perceptions and behaviour.

*(Timothy C Lim, Doing Comparative Politics :An Introduction to approaches and issues,(3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)Lynne Reiner Publishers,London,p.89)*

## **Figure 3.7 Definition of Culture: Core Features**

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- Learned. Process of learning one's culture is called enculturation.
- Shared by the members of a society. There is no "culture of one."
- Patterned. People in a society live and think in ways that form definite patterns.
- Mutually constructed through a constant process of social interaction.
- Symbolic. Culture, language, and thought are based on symbols and symbolic meanings.
- Arbitrary. Culture is not based on "natural laws" external to humans, but created by humans according to the "whims" of the society.
- Internalized. Culture is habitual, taken-for-granted, and perceived as "natural."

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*Source:* Dahl n.d.

# Political Culture meaning

- It is simply defined as “a particular distribution of political attitudes, values, feelings, information and skills that affects the behaviour of a nation’s citizens and leaders throughout the political system”.
- Gabriel Almond “Every political system is embedded in a particular pattern of orientations to political actions, which is referred as Political Culture”.
- Sydney Verba- “Political Culture consists of the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which defines the situation in which political action takes place”.

# Almond and Verba on Political Culture

The salience features of Political Culture are:

- First, Civic Virtue and responsibility, Sharing of values with others, trust and confidence in one's fellow being, and freedom from anxiety;
- Participatory pluralistic democracy;
- Rational bureaucracy; and
- Stability through modernization

# Types of Political Culture

- ***Participant***-active participation of citizens into decision making process;
- ***Subjects***-citizens are aware of the outcome of the govt. but do not participate in the process that result into policy decision;and
- ***Parochial***-Implies low expectation and awareness about the govt and generally not involved

# Comparison of 3 types: Almond and Verba

## The 3 types of political culture

Almond  
& Verba

### Parochial

- No awareness of a central government
- No separation between local government & society
- Minimal specialization in social roles
- Acceptance of social order

### Subject

- Awareness of central gov.
- Clear separation between gov. & society
- Specialization in social roles
- Hierarchy of rulers & ruled
  - power flows downward
  - obedience
  - no questioning & expectation of change

### Participatory

- Awareness of central government
- Clear separation between government & society
- Specialization in social roles
- Expectation of society members to influence rulers
  - as individuals
  - as groups
- State acts as a neutral actor

Always  
mixing



# Civic Culture

Based on their study of 5 countries, Almond & Verba found out that the Civic Culture epitomized the best out of three mentioned above because it calls for:

1. Political Orientation (political orientation and attitudes)
2. Cognitive Orientation (Knowledge & belief about the system)
3. Affective Orientation (feelings of attachment or alienation about the system)
4. Evaluative Orientation (Judgment and opinion about the system)

# Socialization Explained

- It is chiefly understood as the process of perfecting the individual for society. Originally a part of sociological analysis, socialization gained access into the study of politics by the end of 1930s to make a suitable application of its impact on political culture and its consequences, as a whole, for political system.
- It has mainly been use to study and explicate the civic attitude and study of personality and politics and national character.
- It equates with social learning, inculcation of skills, motives and attitudes for the performance of role in society.

# Criticism of Political Culture Theory

- Initially it has been criticized by anthropologists by posing it as purely a deceptive and classificatory and it revolved around relating to reductionism, bias, explanatory values and autonomy as Easton warned that most generalizations are valid only within particular cultural situation.
- It is ,as Bostock argues, based on descriptive rather than analytical criteria, and therefore non explanatory and non-predictive (non-heuristic).

# Criticisms...

- Socialization theory has tended to be speculative, tentative and imprecise as they do not emphasize properly upon the adult learning.
- However all these accusations were answered by Almond and Verba as they argue that political culture is not a theory but relates to variables used in postulating a theory, that it contributes in understanding the psychological or subjective dimension of politics.

# Evaluation

- Revival of Cultural studies in modern times, according to Ronald Inglehart, led to what he prefers to call as Post-materialist society having these underlying characteristics:
  - i. Self-expression;
  - ii. Identity-politics
  - iii. Pleasure seeking

These values not necessarily move in unilinear way.

# References

- Chilcote, Ronald H., Theories of Comparative Politics, Westview Press, London, 1981 (pp. 177-214).
- Lim, Timothy C. Doing Comparative Politics : An Introduction to Approaches and Issues, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Lynne Reinner Publishers, London, 2016 (p. 89)