

Political Culture

historically-based, widely-shared beliefs, feelings and values about the nature of political systems, which can serve as a link between citizens and government



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- **Political culture** – a people's predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about the political system of its country, and the role of the self in that system.

Subject Political Culture

One where citizens have knowledge of the political system but either don't participate in politics much or are given little to no right of political participation.

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Political Culture

Norms & values
of a people

Including ideas
of how the
political system
should operate

Different in
each country

Political Culture: Origins of the Concept

- ▣ **Political subcultures**
 - changes in objective conditions can produce changes in political culture, which in turn lead to changes in the way the government works.
- ▣ As citizens of countries became more educated, affluent, and urban, they began to demand a more open political system, forcing their authoritarian governments to democratize.

Gender and Ethnicity

Gender and ethnic identity affect our political loyalties. Men are more likely to vote Republican than women. Black voters are more likely than white voters to cast ballots for Democrats.

News Media

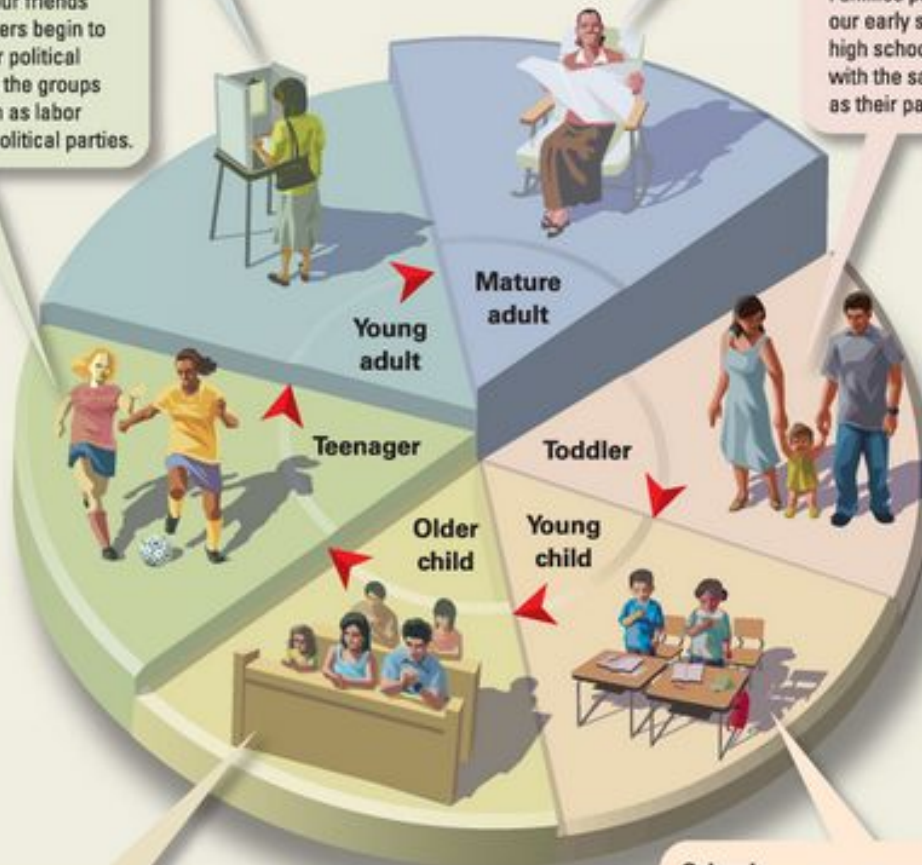
The news media influence what we pay attention to as adults. The effects of the media vary with our reading and viewing habits.

Peer Groups

As we age, our friends and co-workers begin to influence our political views. So do the groups we join, such as labor unions and political parties.

Family

Families play a large role in our early socialization. Most high school seniors identify with the same political party as their parents.



Religion

Religious teachings help shape political values. People may have more conservative or more liberal views based on their religious beliefs.

School

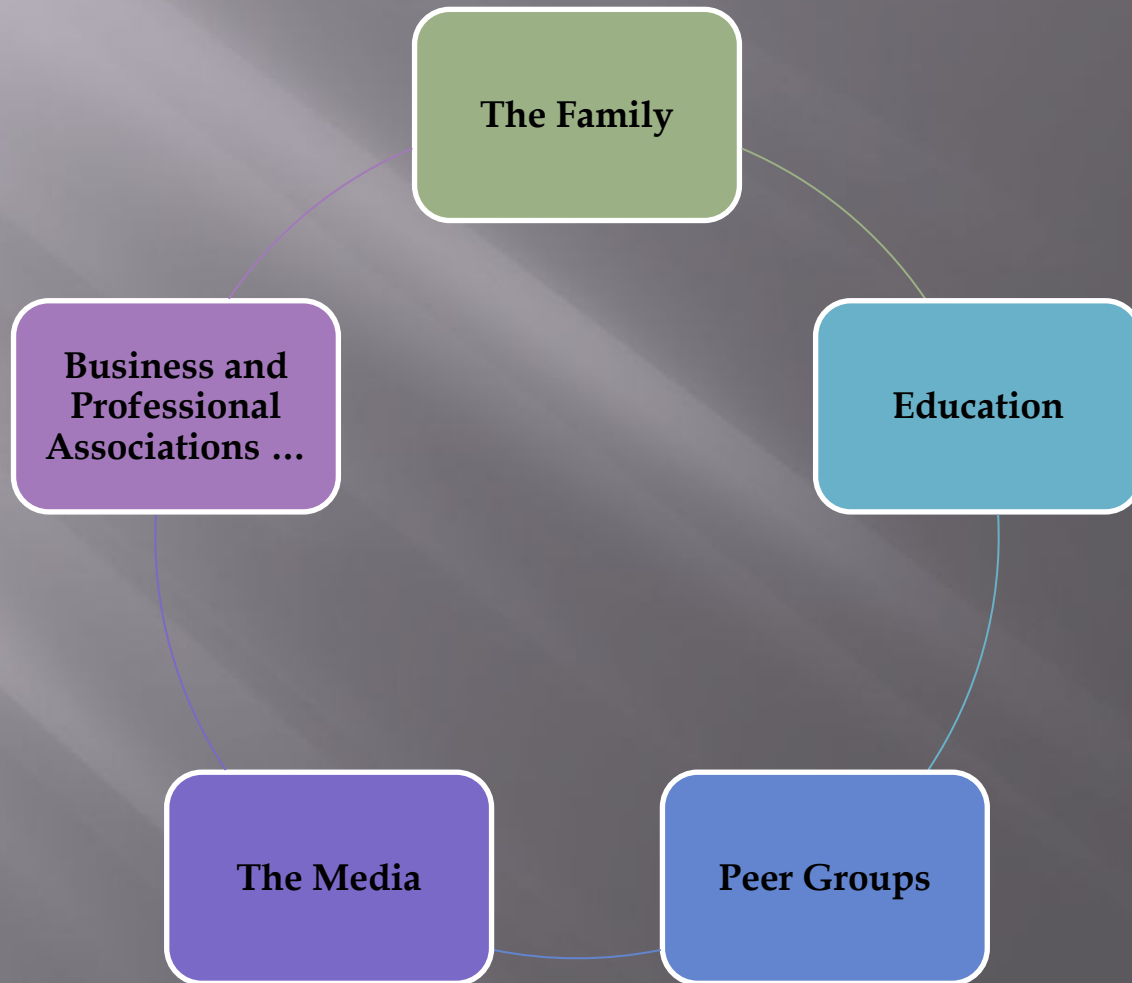
Schools teach us to love our country, respect the law, and value our rights. The more education Americans get, the more likely they are to participate in politics.

Socialization and Personality

- Nearly all human social behavior is learned
- It is natural in the United States for a husband and wife to walk side by side, while in India and other places, it is natural for a wife to walk slightly behind her husband



Agents of Political Socialization



Agents of Political Socialization

- ▣ **Political Socialization** – the process of shaping and transmitting a political culture. It involves the transfer of political values from one generation to another and usually entails changes over time that lead to a gradual transformation of the culture.
- ▣ **Agents of Political Socialization** – individuals, groups, or institutions that transmit political values to each generation.

Agents of Political Socialization

THE FAMILY

- ▣ The first and the most important source of political values. Youngsters who often hear their parents at the dinner table about country's political parties and the police often absorb those judgements.

EDUCATION

- ▣ Acquire important political values from the educational system: patriotism, the importance of voting, and the value of constitutional rights.

Agents of Political Socialization

PEER GROUPS

- ▣ As people grow older, their political values are influenced by their friends and coworkers. Even membership in social clubs and bowling leagues may influence the political culture.

THE MEDIA

- ▣ In advanced industrialized societies, people receive much of their political information and many of their political values from the mass media. Newspapers, news magazines, radio, and television play an important role in transmitting political culture.
- ▣ The Internet is a major source of political ideas and values among young adults.

Agents of Political Socialization

- ▣ **Business and Professional Associations, the Military, Labor Unions, and Religious Groups** – examples of “secondary groups” – organizations may influence the way their members think about politics.
- ▣ Sometimes the influence is less direct, sometimes it may be direct.
- ▣ **Generation Y** – those born in the years of 1978 through 2000 – need to communicate with group through different media - the Web, text messages, podcasts, and the like.

Classifying Political Cultures

- ▣ Tremendous differences among the world's nations.
- ▣ Political Scientist Ronald Inglehart has found many cultural differences
- ▣ - closely correlated with a society's level of economic development
- ▣ - people in low-income societies are much likelier to emphasize religion and traditional gender roles.
- ▣ Almond and Verba – political knowledge, values, and beliefs of the five countries

Classifying Political Cultures

- ▣ **Democratic Political Culture** – tolerance for diverse points of view, moderation, accommodation, restrained partisanship, and trust – good foundations for democracy.
- ▣ **Authoritarian Political Culture** – the leaders of the country as well as much of the population reject both majority rule and minority rights.
 - ▣ Manipulative, exploitative, and opportunistic personalities of leaders.
 - ▣ Importance of stability and order.

Classifying Political Cultures

- **Consensual Political Cultures** – citizens tend to agree on basic political procedures (for example, the legitimacy of free elections) and on the general goals of the political system.
- **Conflictual Political Cultures** – are highly polarized by fundamental differences over those issues (divisions between political subcultures, ethnic, religious, or racial divisions may polarize countries).

The Evolution of Political Cultures

- ▣ Political cultures reflect a complex mix of stable values – for centuries, gradually or rapidly – result of education and socioeconomic development, a consequence of war, revolution, or economic upheaval.
- ▣ **Arab Spring** – the willingness of many protesters to risk death for democracy show the capacity of political cultures to change.
- ▣ Historically, Catholic countries in the West have been less hospitable to democracy than Protestant nations were – the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church. Early 1970s – important players.

The Evolution of Political Cultures

- ▣ Political resocialization – a conscious effort by government leaders to transform their society's political culture – when a war, a revolution, or other upheaval.
- ▣ For example, Cuba – used education and mass mobilization to reduce prejudice, fatalism, and other prerevolutionary values.
- ▣ Chinese politics during Mao Zedong's government – mass commitment to volunteer labor, social equality, and other revolutionary values.

Postmaterialism and Cultural Change

- ▣ Germany's defeat in World War II, the collapse of Soviet communism, and the Cuban revolution may dramatically change society's political culture.
- ▣ But other cultural transformations may occur more gradually as the result of broad social and economic developments.
- ▣ The phenomenon of **postmaterialism** is one of the most significant examples.
- ▣ Materialists, still the largest portion of the population, tend to make political decisions based on economic self-interest.
- ▣ + Materialists tend to be especially concerned about domestic law and order, a strong national defense, maintaining a stable economy, and controlling inflation.

Postmaterialism and Cultural Change

- Then, the number of postmaterialists has gradually increased in many of the world's industrialized democracies (Norway, Great Britain, and Germany).
- Postmaterialists (more liberal on social issues) more concerned more about a friendlier, less impersonal society than money.
- - protecting the environment;
- - increasing grassroots participation in politics and at the workplace;
- - defending free speech and other civil liberties.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Discuss the ways in which a society transmits its political values to its members, particularly to new generations. What are the principal agents of political socialization, and how might their role in the Kazakhstan differ from their role in socioeconomically developed nations?
- 2. Compare the primary characteristics of a democratic political culture with those of an authoritarian political culture. Which countries you can characterize as an authoritarian or a semi-authoritarian political culture, what do you say about their chances to become democratic?

Discussion Questions

- ▣ 3. How do information and communication technologies (ICT) such as the Internet and text messaging affect political socialization in developed democracies? What are the advantages and disadvantages of ICT as a socializing agent?
- ▣ 4. How does the level of economic development affect political culture? Can an authoritarian political culture exist in a modern, technologically advanced society?

Thank You

