

Unit:4

Political Culture: Meaning, nature and types.

Political culture refers to the collection of attitudes, values, beliefs, and norms about politics and governance that are shared by a group of people. It shapes how individuals within a society view their political system and their role within it. Understanding political culture is essential for comprehending how political systems function and how citizens interact with their government.

Meaning

Political culture encompasses the deep-seated, long-lasting aspects of political life that influence the behavior of individuals and institutions. It includes:

- **Attitudes towards authority:** Whether people are deferential to authority or skeptical and questioning.
- **Beliefs about the role of government:** Views on what government should or should not do.
- **Expectations of political processes:** How fair and effective people believe political processes are.
- **Political values:** Core values such as liberty, equality, democracy, and justice.

Nature

The nature of political culture is complex and multifaceted:

1. **Historical Roots:** Political culture often has deep historical roots, influenced by a nation's history, traditions, and significant events.
2. **Socialization:** It is transmitted through political socialization processes, such as family, education, media, and peer groups.

3. **Dynamic:** While political culture is relatively stable, it can change over time due to major events, social movements, or generational shifts.
4. **Layered:** It can exist on multiple levels – national, regional, and local – and may vary among different subgroups within a society.

Types

Political culture can be categorized into several types, often described by political scientists in different models. Here are a few prominent types:

1. Almond and Verba's Civic Culture:

- **Parochial Political Culture:** Citizens are mostly uninformed and unaware of political processes, with little interest in politics. This type is often found in traditional societies.
- **Subject Political Culture:** Citizens are somewhat informed and aware but are mostly passive. They are subject to the decisions made by the ruling authorities without much input or participation.
- **Participant Political Culture:** Citizens are well-informed and actively participate in political processes. This type is typical of democratic societies where individuals feel they can influence government actions.

2. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba's Typology:

- **Civic Culture:** A mix of participant, subject, and parochial cultures. It represents a balanced political culture where citizens actively participate but also accept the decisions of the authorities.

3. Daniel Elazar's Political Culture Classification:

- **Moralistic Political Culture:** Government is seen as a positive force to achieve a good society. High levels of citizen participation are expected.
- **Individualistic Political Culture:** Politics is viewed as a marketplace of competing interests. The role of government is limited, and citizen participation is less emphasized.

- **Traditionalistic Political Culture:** Politics is dominated by an elite, with limited participation from the general populace. Government's role is to maintain the existing social order.

4. **Subjective Political Culture:**

- Involves the personal orientations and internalized attitudes towards the political system. This can be shaped by personal experiences and individual psychological factors.

Understanding political culture is crucial for policymakers, political analysts, and scholars as it influences the stability of political systems, the effectiveness of governance, and the nature of political change.

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