## **Comparative Political Cultures:**

## Some Basic Hypotheses on the Study of Political Development

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Presently, the study of comparative politics is increasingly emphasizing the relationship between the political system and the social and cultural settings. Using the concept of political culture will help us to see politics in any society in relation to several factors which surround and condition it. A political system may be conceived as a part of the cultural complex. Thus, the influence of the socio-cultural setting on the patterns of behavior of the political system is worth considering.

It is generally felt that most analysts do not attempt to discover the relationships between culture and behavior. This is a crucial gap in the literature on political culture, because political culture alone does not tell us much about the performance of a political system. In addition, a study focusing on a single country has a limited level of generalization. This leads Hughes and Pinney to go so far as to maintain that except in comparative analysis the concept of political culture has no meaning and thus no utility.<sup>1</sup>

This article will attempt to suggest some tentative hypotheses and research problems relevant to comparative analysis of political culture in the study of political change. Our emphasis is on how political culture developes and is related to behavior and the process of political development, and on the presence or absence of some basic values and characteristics important to the process.

Recently political culture has become popular in the study of comparative politics. It is one among many complex characteristics of a political system. Political development is viewed as primarily a function of the political culture.<sup>2</sup> As Almond and Powell state, political development is the process of differentiation of political structure and secularization of political culture which enhance the capability of the political system. Thus the congruence of structural and cultural changes is a prerequisite to the political development.<sup>3</sup> An analysis focusing on a single aspect of political life, such as political culture, may help us understand the problems and forces supporting or inhibiting political development.

Professor Almond, who has done much to formulate the concept, defines political culture as the pattern of individual orientations and attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and toward the self. He classifies it into three

components: cognitive, affective, and evaluative.<sup>4</sup> For Samuel Beer, the term political culture refers to "values, beliefs, and emotional attitudes" concerning political action.<sup>5</sup> While Roy Macridis conceives of a political culture as "shared goals and rules of individual and group interaction." However, Pye's definition seems to be more comprehensive and makes it possible for analysts to take into account historical heritage and cultural uniqueness:

Political culture is the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process and that provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity. Political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. A political culture is the product of both the collective story of a political system and the life histories of the members of that system, and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experiences.<sup>7</sup>

In analyzing the problem of political culture in relation to political development we will use the above definitions.

Among many others, Robert A. Packenham sees political development as primarily a function of political culture, "the set of attitudinal and personality characteristics that enables the members of the political system both to accept the privileges and to bear the responsibilities of a democratic political process." He is not alone in stressing democratic values. Lipset is among many others who see political development as a function of democracy.

On the other hand, Pye states that the problem of political development can be viewed as "one of cultural diffusion, and of adapting, fusing, and adjusting old patterns of life to new demands," or in terms of the diffusion of a "world culture" derived from "modern life." This is based on the scientific outlook, a rational view of life, and advanced technology, on the primacy of secularity in human relations, on a formal acknowledgement of human values and the acceptance of rational—legal norms governing human behavior, and on the dependence to democratic values and the encouragement of mass participation. 11

Elsewhere, Pye identifies seven meanings of Political development. The overlapping meanings represent three key dimensions of modernization: equality, capacity, and differentiation. Political development, according to Pye, "strikes at the roots of people's beliefs and sentiments about politics, and hence the process of development must be profoundly affected by the character of the political culture of a society." He maintains that in the last analysis the problem of political development revolves around the relationships between the authoritative structures, the political process, and the political culture. Therefore, political culture is an important variable of political development. 13

The analysis of political culture in relation to the problem of political development may be broadly classified into two aspects: attitudes and personality. <sup>14</sup> For the former, the concept of political culture as a major determinant of political development has been mostly a postwar development. <sup>15</sup> The theoretical and monographic studies are notable for reflecting a previously neglected or underemphasized variable of political development. Although the characteristics designated as requisites or inhibitors of political development are differently named they tap a common predisposition of political culture.

Edward Shils maintains that one of the important functions of political development is to close the gap of culture and personality between the elite and the mass. If James S. Coleman, who views political development in terms of "the political aspects of the major structural, aspirational, and capacity 'trends' discernable in the ongoing evolution of a world culture," sees education as its prime determinant especially in providing the specializing skills and training requisites for effective adaptation and in changing attitudes and reducing the gap between the ruling elite and the less modernized mass. If

Edward C. Banfield holds that "amoral familism" is the cause of the difficulties of a backward society. Its basic personality is the lack of a sense of community obligation or of a spirit of cooperation, a sentiment of trust and a capacity to postpone gratifications, and the belief that selfish material gain is the only motive for participation in public affairs. He concludes that unless these are remedied by cultural change, social and economic development is not very probable.<sup>18</sup>

For Seymour M. Lipset, achievement, universalism, diffuseness, and egalitarianism are major patterns of values contributing to the viability of democracy.<sup>19</sup>

Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba posit a mixed "civic culture," a balance of parochial, subject, and participatory personality, as a condition for stable democracy. This scheme is supported by Pye and Verba, where an integrative as well as a pluralistic political culture is considered as a major factor in development. 21

For personality characteristics related to political development, there has been less work on other areas than on the United States.<sup>22</sup> There are also variations in emphasis upon personality development and value change in various disciplines.

In anthropology, many writers tend to see development in terms of changes in deeply internalized values that can occur only with great psychic and emotional stress. But some suggest that effective development can readily take place if there is a well adapted congruence between the traditional culture and the attitudinal requirements of a modern system. In other words, development can occur when traditional political culture is effectively adaptive to change.<sup>23</sup>

Daniel Lerner, a sociologist, finds that one basic characteristic of modern man is "empathy," the capacity for psychic mobility or the ability to place oneself

in another's role or situation. People must be able to understand a wide variety of people and situations and there must be a certain degree of trust, instead of aggression and hostility, among them.<sup>24</sup> This points to the ability of people to relate to each other effectively in associational relationships.

Everett E. Hagen, an economist, maintains the prime mover of social and economic changes is the "innovative" or creative personality which depends upon social and historical conditions. He relates the authoritarian personality configuration with traditional society, and the innovational personality type with developed society. Among the characteristics essential to effective enterpreneurs are the great need to reciprocate love, valuation, and understanding with each other and the great need in autonomy, achievement, and order.<sup>25</sup>

David C. McClelland, a psychologist, stresses that "need Achievement" or ambition is a condition of economic growth. According to him, there are various variables contributing to development. They are (1) modern social structure: universalistic norms, diffuseness of role relations, achieved status, collectivity orientation; (2) affective neutrality; (3) rationality; (4) optimism; and (5) primacy of material needs.<sup>26</sup>

In political science, Harold Lasswell specifies the personality characteristics of democratic citizenry as a warm and inclusive attitude toward others, a capacity for sharing values with others, a multivalued orientation, trust and confidence in human environments, and relative freedom from anxiety.<sup>27</sup>

One of the most important contributions to the analysis of political culture is Pye's study. He suggests that development, defined in terms of nation—building, is primarily the problem of personal identity, trust, and psychic health. The individual personalities, to Pye, must be sufficiently secure and well-integrated to accept psychologically the previleges and responsibilities of independence and self-government.<sup>28</sup>

In sum, most writers point to the need for certain changes in the quality of values and personalities which are conducive to development. The differences among political systems, especially in political cultures, depend upon the ways in which their basic values are combined. The latter, in turn, affects the processes of political development in distinctive ways. <sup>29</sup>

As mentioned earlier, a political culture is the product of both the life histories of the members of a political system and the collective history of the system, and therefore it is rooted equally in private experience as well as in public events. Now we will turn to discuss how political culture is developed or to the problem of socialization, which helps in understanding political development. "Political socialization is the process by which political cultures are maintained and changed." 30 Thus socialization is a potential source of change in the political culture.

It is obvious that personality development and value patterns are formulated through socialization processes. By this means individuals are inducted into either general or political culture at any stage of life. They learn the values about the concept of authority, interpersonal trust, the manipulation of environment, the criteria of achievement, their place in the political system, etc.

Political culture, thus is a result both of non-political experiences and of the experience with political processes. Therefore, the relationships between various stages of socialization and between the final political socialization process and the dominant patterns of behavior in the political culture may offer us an interesting problem for investigation in relation to the dynamics of continuity and change in a political system.

So far we have discussed some theories of political culture in relation to the problem of political development. Next, we will try to suggest the following hypotheses: 31

Hypothesis 1. If the basic values learned from most socialization processes are congruent with the requirements of the existing political culture, then there is more likely to exist an integrated and relatively stable political culture. (For example, a new political system that is democratic will be more stable if the socialization processes are also democratic at all levels. Democratic systems must meet certain standards or requirements in order to be democratic).

Hypothesis 1 a. If the traditional political culture of the past has a very high degree of adaptability, e.g. the pre-western Japanese political culture, then the existing political culture is likely to be open to change. (There is likely to be a carry-over of orientation toward development from the old to the new culture).

Stable political systems tend to have relatively homogenous political cultures which in turn are shaped by homogenous and consistent socialization processes. In such systems various agents of political socialization, both non-political and political, tend to establish and maintain a common type of political orientation. In this way socialization processes reinforce each other. They agree about the proper functions and limits of politics, about what should be the proper meaning, means, and ends of political actions. In other words, the coincident values learned in the socialization processes, whether they are passive, deferential, aggressive, or participant, tend to reinforce and support the existing political culture. Thus there is a tendency toward the continuity of an integrated and relatively stable political culture. <sup>32</sup>

Such congruences between the values learned from various political socialization processes and the political culture existed, for example, in traditional Japan,

Turkey, Ethiopia, and Italy.<sup>33</sup> In Ethiopia, all lessons and experiences stress hierarchical and deferential relationships both in social and political life. Children in Italy are often taught to distrust others. When they become adults they may assume that all others outside their 'group' are hostile and antagonistic. In Turkey the continued presence of the old patterns of political culture are given new labels in practice. The remarkable success of the Japanese in modernization stems from the high potential for development of the political culture in the traditional era. However, this in turn also reflects the ability of Japan in fusing the old and the new political culture.

Hypothesis 2. If the fundemental values learned from socialization processes are inconsistent with the requirements of the existing political culture (see footnote 31), then the prospects for developing a stable and homogeneous political culture are less likely.

In some political systems, the socialization processes may be discontinuous, inconsistent, or contradictory. Such inconsistencies create an important potential for tension or conflict and instability in the political cultures, and thus a high potential for system change. The political cultures in transitional societies tend to be fragmented. The people do not share common political orientations. Rather, they tend to have different expectations and turn to political action with socially undisciplined motivations. The gaps in the socialization processes may cause political disorientation and strain. This situation prevails in many new nations where the traditional values of the mass, characterized by the more affective and particularistic standards of family, are in sharp conflict with the new standards required in the political system.<sup>31</sup>

When the values learned from family, school, non-political institutions, and experience with the political process are sharply different, the prospects of developing stable political cultures, in which the required political orientations are congruent with actual governmental performance, are less likely to occur. In the Mexican political culture the political socialization processes are not congruent and coherent. It consists of a revolutionary elite political culture and the different values of the mass shaped by the traditional socializing agents. In Italy various socialization processes stress different concepts of development. These are in conflict with each other and thus lead to fragmented political cultures and cynical citizenry.<sup>35</sup>

In the Weimar Republic the hierarchical authority patterns stressing obedience shaped largely by socialization processes were inconsistent with and not supportive of the new participation expectations of the democratic system. When the international and economic events could not provide a positive socialization experience and the existing discontinuity could not be bridged the system eventually broke.<sup>36</sup> After casting aside many old traditions, however, the contemporary Germans are able to meet the requirements of the new democratic order and are open to change. On the contrary, in England, where the socialization process and the political culture are relatively homogeneous and stable, the skill in making the modern innovations rapidly become a part of the old traditions has contributed to the stability and orderliness of development and hence often an obstacle to further innovations.<sup>37</sup>

Hypothesis 3. The more rapidly the political process changes, such as the sudden emergence of a nation, the more likely the socialization processes will lag behind and be inconsistent with the political culture, resulting in the instability and ineffectiveness of the political system.

The impact of the historical experiences of a political system on the problems of continuity and discontinuity between socialization and political culture is also important. The historical events, revolution or colonialism for example, may cause changes in the political culture which are not consistent with the existing socialization processes. Usually the latter is not likely to keep pace with the political process. This often leads to tensions and conflicts and hence the instability and the ineffectiveness of the system. Where the political structure and process change rapidly the problem becomes more acute because of the differences between the orientations provided by socialization processes and the required standards essential for the performance of the system.<sup>38</sup>

The French revolutions and upheavals in the nineteenth century and the German Naziism and Italian Fascism continue to have great impact upon their political cultures. Similarly, in the new nations, the colonial experiences and the processes of attaining independence play an important role in the personality formation of the people. As a result, most of those transitional societies, where the old traditions have been disrupted, tend to have fragmented political cultures characterized by insecurity and uncertainty. The confrontation of old traditions with new and unfamiliar situations tends to produce conflicting values, resentment over foreign rule, and a crisis of identity.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, the long continuity of British and American political experience and the gradual process of change have contributed to the effectiveness of their democracy.

Hypothesis 4a. The politicization of social life varies directly with an absence of freely operating socializing agents.

Hypothesis 4b. The appreciation of fundamental institutions, e.g. the rule of law or an impartial bureaucracy, varies inversely with an absence of freely operating socializing agents.

Hypothesis 4c. Unless the mass media can perform its functions effectively, the development of legitimate national institutions is unlikely to be achieved.

Socialization processes induct individuals into many aspects of the political culture, e.g. values, skills, loyalties, and cognitive guidelines through various socializing agents such as family, school, peer group, experience in employment, mass media, and political party. In the United States the family has a great influence upon party loyalties, while education contributes to the commitment to democratic values. In a society in which freely operating socializing agents are weak (such as mass media), social life is likely to be politicized to a high degree, and the development of essential institutions, e.g. an impartial bureaucracy and the rule of law, is less likely to be achieved.<sup>40</sup>

It is obvious that the highly politicized nature of transitional societies is mainly the result of the dominant role of partisan agents of socialization, such as the inspired independence movement of one—party systems in sub—Sahara Africa. The emphasis on the high degree of politicization of private life may be found in both totalitarian and non—totalitarian systems where the degree of the respect for functional specialization in the handling of issues and the relative autonomy of the different domians of political decision—making is low. This is opposed to democratic political cultures, such as in England or the United States, where autonomous socializing agents provide their political culture with explicit limits of politics and legitimate boundaries between the public and private life.<sup>41</sup>

Hypothesis 5. Unless the emphasis in hierarchical relationships learned from early socialization processes, e.g., the family, is changed into egalitarian relationships, the development of active political participation is unlikely to occur.

An important problem of political development is the dilemma between hierarchy and equality. Political cultures provide individuals with different attitudes toward power. In transitional societies the trend is toward the emphasis and the provision of moral justification for hierarchical relationships. Although development demands effective leadership it must also encompass sentiments about equality and the absence of arbitrary distinctions in social status.<sup>42</sup>

Unless there is an emphasis on egalitarian power relations and friendly participation, a peaceful change in power positions and the development of active participation are most likely impossible. The concept of power and authority has deep roots in the personality development during the early socialization process and continues to have a great impact on adult personality. In traditional political cultures, such

as Thailand, the family or other socializing agents tend to stress complete submission and obedience from children. Superior-subordinate relationships appear in all aspects of Thai life. In some political cultures, such as in the United States, the parental authority in early socialization tends to emphasize justice, friendly participation, and competence rather than obedience to authority.<sup>43</sup>

Hypothesis 6a. Unless the emphasis of the political culture on interpersonal distrust and pessimism is changed into interpersonal trust and optimism, then the development of public institutions will be less successful, except under a deliberate control system.

Hypothesis 6b. Unless interpersonal trust is balanced by a critical view of the political process, the development of a de-

mocratic political culture is unlikely to occur.

Socialization processes also instil in individuals a sense of interpersonal trust or distrust and optimistic or pessimistic views of life. This sense of trust and confidence in fellow citizens is a crucial aspect of political cultures. For the presence of distrust may have a great impact upon the faith in the effectiveness of the creation of public institutions essential for national development. The widespread existence of an uncritical and childlike trust in all forms of authority, however, is also an equal obstacle to political development, especially for a democratic political culture. Because politics involves both collective action or cooperation on the one hand, and conflict or competition on the other, the political system must be capable of managing this dilemma. The success in building public institutions depends upon the strong spirit of mutual trust in collective action as well as upon criticism and suspicion in their management.<sup>44</sup>

In the United States, the early stages of socialization provide a deep sense of interpersonal trust and optimism in problem solving, while the later political socialization processes stress a critical and suspicious view of political actors and practice to check their powers and demand their accountability.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, the balanced attitudes tend to provide supportive sentiments to the political structures and the expectation that reform is worth seeking.

The level of interpersonal trust in England and the United States appear to be higher than those in the less advanced democracies, such as Germany, Italy, and Mexico. The socialization processes in most transitional societies tend to stress both interpersonal distrust and uncritical faith in the public institutions. In Italy, Burma, Mexico, and Ethiopia the emphasis on distrust in human relations during the socialization processes often brings about conflicts and hostility in political action and the people have little faith in reform.<sup>46</sup>

Hypothesis 7a. When the socialization processes of the elite are separated from those of the mass, the tendency is for fragmented and unstable political cultures to develop, hence the gap between the elite and the mass.

Hypothesis 7b. Unless the elites are first socialized into the mass subculture before being recruited into leading political roles, the possibility of developing esoteric attitudes necessary for modernization without placing a great strain on the stability of the overall political culture will be low.

Hypothesis 7c. If there are uneven changes in socialization processes between the modern and traditional subcultures, political development is unlikely to occur unless the gap between the modern and traditional subcultures is reduced.

In all political systems there are both the elite subculture and the mass subculture. The relationship between the two, e.g. the degree of homogeneity between them and within each of them, determines the nature and performance of the systems. Thus stability and development appear to be greatly affected by the pattern of socialization processes that support the two subcultures.<sup>47</sup>

In most transitional societies, such as Ethiopia, India, and Mexico, the channels of the socialization processes tend to be quite separated and to induct people into two different political cultures. The individuals destined for political leaderships tend to have different backgrounds from the mass. In some transitional countries those positions are set apart at birth. In cases where the elites are recruited from the mass they tend to resent the mass subculture because they feel that it is outmoded. On the other hand, in the more developed societies, such as the United States, England, and the Soviet Union, individuals were first socialized into the mass subculture before being recruited into leading positions or roles. This sequential pattern of socialization into the two subcultures makes it possible to develop the increasing esoteric attitudes necessary for modernization without placing a great strain on the stability of the overall political culture. Particularly in the democratic systems, the elite can still appreciate the basic values of the citizenry once associated with them.<sup>48</sup>

Uneven patterns of change in the socialization processes of the elite and mass subcultures on one hand, and of the modern and traditional subcultures on the other, are also closely related with the process of political modernization. The relationship between the two divisions and the relative gap between the traditional and modern subcultures, e.g. the urban and rural segments, are decisive factors governing the course of development, and vice versa.<sup>49</sup>

In most transitional societies, such as India, Egypt, and Thailand, a small elite tends to be more modernized while the vast majority remains relatively unchanged and closely tied to the more traditional political culture.<sup>50</sup>

In Japan and Mexico the pattern of division of their political culture tends to increasingly seperate the urban and rural segments of population as development progresses, while in Italy the process of cultural change proceeds in accordance with the sharp division between the more industrialized north and the traditionalist rural south. Unless the gaps between the traditional and the modern, the elite and the mass, are reduced, political development is unlikely to occur.<sup>51</sup>

The hypotheses suggested in this article deal only with the problem of how political culture is developed and related to the process of political development. They do not represent the complete discussion on the subject, rather they touch mainly on the socialization processes which help us understand the relationships between political culture, political behavior, and the problems of political development. The differences among political systems, especially among political cultures, depend upon the ways in which their basic values are combined. The latter in turn affects the processes of political development in distinctive ways.<sup>52</sup> One can develop more research problems and hypotheses by disscussing the relationships among various dimensions of political culture. Thus the political culture concept provides us with a promising tool for analysis and investigation. We may use it for comparative study both among different areas and within a political system. The concept is an attempt to apply behavioral analysis to study such classical problems as political ideology, legitimacy, sovereignty, nationhood, and the rule of law, particularly in comparative analysis.<sup>53</sup>

## Reference

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12Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba (eds.) Political Culture and Political Development (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 11-13.

<sup>13</sup>Pye, "Aspects of Political Development," p. 45-48. Among many other variables are: capacity, differentiation, institutionalization, national integration, participation, populism, social mobilization, and social and economic conditions.

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<sup>34</sup>Pye, "Aspects of Political Development," pp. 70-109; Pye and Verba, op. cit., pp. 18, 553-554.

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36 Almond and Powell, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>37</sup>Pye and Verba, op. cit., pp. 19-20, 83-129, 130-170.

<sup>38</sup>Pye, "Aspects of Political Development," p. 106; Pye and Verba, op. cit., pp. 7, 554-560; Almond and Verba, op cit., pp. 5ff; Leites, op. cit., 103, 109, 111-117; and Inkeles and Levinion, op. cit., pp. 1002-1013.

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<sup>47</sup>Pye and Verba, op. cit., pp. 15-16 and Almond and Verba, op. cit., pp. 26-28.

<sup>48</sup>Pye and Verba, op. cit., pp. 15-17, and Shils, op. cit., pp. 11, 30, 35. <sup>49</sup>Pye and Verba, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>50</sup>Almond and Powell, op. cit., p. 72; C.E. Black, The Dynamics of Modernizaton (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 121; and Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz (eds.), Nation Building (New York: Aterton Press, 1968), pp. 86-87.

<sup>51</sup>Pye and Verba, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 23-26.

<sup>53</sup>Almond and Verba, op. cit., pp. 11-13, 30-35, 40-44, and Pye and Verba, op. cit., pp. 8, 13, 512-560.