II-A Behavioral Aspects of Politics: Political Culture

Political Science 100
Introduction to Politics

Behavioral Aspect of Politics

- What does citizens think and how do they behave?
- Why?
- Survey research
  - Opinion polls
    - Do you support the president?
    - What do you think about the economy?
- Aggregation of individual answers
- Income, education, gender, religious orientation ➔ political orientation

Political Culture

- Culture?
  - Music, paintings, literature
  - Values shared by members
    - Americans: individualistic
    - Japanese: group-oriented
- Political Culture
  - (Not cartoons or movies about politics)
  - Public attitude toward politics
  - Shared basic political basic values, assumptions

Attributes of Political Culture

Examples

- Pride in nation
  - High in the U.S., low in Japan and Germany
- Legitimacy of the government
  - Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union
- Role of citizens in politics
  - Active participation, deference to the authority
- Role of the government
  - What government should do
Political Culture

- Individual belief: basis of decision and power relations
- Political Culture approach
  - Citizens’ value ==> politics
- Precursor
  - Max Weber: Protestantism and economic development (religious value ==> economic activities)
- Civic Culture: political attitudes in five nations
  - Opinion survey (5,000 respondents)
  - Democratic value ==> democratic system

Political Culture
The System Level

- National pride (proud or very proud)
  - 90-100%: US, Austria, Mexico, Spain, etc.
  - 80-90: Norway, China, Britain, Brazil, . . .
  - 70-80: France, Switzerland, Russia
  - 50-70: Estonia, Japan, Germany
  - High ==> binding people together in times of political strain
- Legitimacy of political system
  - Citizens believe that they ought to obey the law ==> High
  - High legitimacy ==> effective in policymaking
  - The basis of legitimacy
    - Election, Tradition, ideology, etc.
  - Loss of Legitimacy
    - Political instability

Political Culture
The Process Level

- What is expected of you as a citizen?
  - Participants
    - Participating, informed, demanding, etc.
  - Subjects
    - Passively obey government officials
  - Parochials
    - Hardly aware of politics, illiterate, isolated, etc.

Hypothetical Models of Political Culture
Political Culture
The Policy Level

• Expectations of the government’s overall involvement in society and the economy
  – Should government manage economy
  – The government should ensure everyone is provided for
    • 60-70%: Chile, 50-60%: Nigeria, Spain, 40-50%: Italy, Britain, China, 30-40%: Argentina, 20-30%: South Korea, Germany, 10-20%: US
  – Expectation => big government

Post-materialism

• Materialism vs. post-materialism (Ronald Inglehart)
  – Generation shift
  – Materialism: seeking material wealth (strong defense, order maintenance, economic growth)
  – Postmaterialism: non-material well-being (environmental protection, freedom, personal control)

Discussion

• Political culture as the background
• Political process still important
  – Value may be exploited or altered by politics