The influence of cultural norm on Indian politics

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Abstract: **This study will be focused in analyzing on how political culture can impact in the rule of law and political system in Albania. Political system is defined as the interaction between political institutions and political culture. While, the constitution of the legal state is a common responsibility of the citizens, civil society and state institutions. All these three concepts, political culture, political system and rule of law are strongly connected among them; this way political culture will impact in the performance of independent judiciary and political institutions. In case of Albania, there's a different situation; political culture, yes it can affect but the question is if it improves the performance of these institutions or worsen that. Albanian political culture must be perceived within the context of the historical background, because such periods of time like communist regime, problematic transition (accompanied with civil war on 1997) will have the impact in political and cultural education of the citizen. That will contribute to deepening of subordinated point of view and approaches, subordinated to authorities, non-active civil society, corruption expansion in all governmental structures and so leading to harm of liberal democracy. To this background and political culture, many issues addressed to accountability of political elites in control and responsiveness to the voters will be appeared. Legal accountability, which implicates governing according to the law, equality in the face of law, will be in danger if changes don't get started with public opinion, education of democratic values, independent judiciary, power division and corruption extinction.**

Keywords: **Political culture, rule of law, political system, civil society.**

1. Introduction

A major problem with attempting to utilise 'culture' is that it 'is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (Williams, 1976, p. 76). This has led to a proliferation of usages of the concept: even by the 1950s there were over 150 definitions of culture (Crang, 1998, p. 2) and goodness knows how many more have been coined since then. 'Culture' (with or without the apostrophes) would seem to be a classic example of an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie, 1955/6), one that is capable of multiple definitions and with no clear system for choosing between these as to what the term actually 'means'.

In this respect culture has become something of a case-sensitive term, being used by writers for particular purposes at particular times without there being any consistency between these usages. A consequence of this has been a tendency to make indiscriminate use of the concept which has generated problems of determining whether what is being examined is 'cultural' at all or whether there has been a conflation of categories that muddies the waters and explains little at all.

A generalised solution to the proliferation of usages of the concept of culture has been to simply categorise uses into particular types. The usual summary that develops from this (see Smith, 2000, ps. 22-3) is to discuss culture as referring to:

- Some form of realisation of universal values. The usual starting point here is with a particular reading of Arnold (1960).
- A way of life shared by a particular social group based on shared values, institutions, modes of behaviour, meanings and languages, whether an entire society (eg.

German or Nigerian or British culture) or a sub-section of the whole (eg. club or biker or drug culture). In academic terms the exploration of various sub-cultures (Hebdige, 1979) can be balanced against more 'artistic' examinations of such lived cultures (see, for example, Laxness, 2001 on rural Iceland in the first part of the 20th century).

- The recording of human experience and how this is understood and interpreted by both members of the social group concerned and by interested outsiders. This can range from criticism of artistic products (books, paintings, music, etc) to anthropological explorations of societies.

Each of these understandings of what 'culture' means opens up the possibilities for exploration through the employment of a wide range of techniques. Examples of such approaches that have been previously used, or which have been proposed for use, could include those deriving from anthropology (Jenks, 1993, chs. 2-3), or biography (Inglis, 1993, ch. 9), or 'cultural studies' (Finlayson and Martin, 1997). Perhaps the only thing that is common amongst such techniques is that they are overwhelmingly qualitative in nature and are rarely capable of providing a simple explanation for the complex phenomena that are the subject of exploration. Indeed the greater the tendency towards various forms of post-modernist discussion and argument the less simplicity (or clarity) there appears to be.

The discussions that have taken place within these arguments have, however, generated a number of issues for debate that are of relevance for the study of politics and, of course, more

specifically for the analysis of culture and politics. Rather than go through these in detail here they will simply be mentioned as they will be returned to at a later stage of the discussion. Of key concern (as with a great deal of political science) are the issues of structure and agency, causality and meaning. The importance of these will become apparent after considering how politics has currently attempted to use culture in the past

2. Politics and Culture

The 'cultural turn' in political science has taken as many turns as there have been discussions of 'culture' in the discipline. In this, at least, political science has been no different to other disciplines. Where the study of politics has tended to part company with other readings of the concept has been as a consequence of the dominant acceptance of behavioural approaches to the analysis of the subject. This methodological predilection can be seen from the usual starting-point of discussion of culture in politics with the attempt to investigate a 'civic culture' (Almond and Verba, 1963). The version of 'culture' employed in this was, of course, concerned with the evaluations, knowledge and emotive feelings about politics and political organisations and actors that were contained within populations.

This was clearly not the same view of culture that has become prevalent in other areas, particularly in terms of being limited in scope. If anything it leads to a view of politics as being essentially some form of sub-culture that takes a distinctly different form to all other sub-cultures, or, indeed, the general culture of which it is a part. A more generalised problem is that by treating politics as a sub-cultural arena of action the links between politics and the more general, overall, culture of a society becomes an issue of secondary concern and fails to link 'political' culture to wider patterns of social behaviour. Apart from this concern the forms of political culture that were identified (ie. parochial, subject and participant) are clearly limiting, even as generalisations. The existence of distinct patterns of patron –client forms of relationship, for example, is not easily accounted for (at a superficial level these could be treated as a form of subject culture but this rather ignores some of the more important elements of these relationships, particularly in their implications for the working of the political system as a whole).

The initial attempts to make some sense of the obvious point that politics and political activity occur within a particular set of circumstances and contexts effectively generated more problems than they resolved, not only at the theoretical level but also at the methodological. Not least amongst these was that the behavioural model of investigation that was employed (and is still regrettably common) tended to assume a commonality of meaning being attached to words (the obvious example being the use of the word 'pride' to assess levels of positive feelings for the political system). Such a view led to instances of cultural confusion so that it was always unclear as to whether the research was identifying common characteristics across systems or not.

Regardless of these difficulties 'culture' has been extended in use in politics such that it is possible to now identify a range of uses within the literature. These include seeing and using culture as:

• Societal contexts within which politics takes place (societal culture).
• A sub-set of society aimed simply at politics (political culture).
• Sets of rule-governed behaviour (administrative culture).

Each of these contains distinct variants on the general idea of culture but they effectively share a common set of assumptions about the role and impact of culture on politics.

At the very least these assumptions include the banal, if not trivial, point that variations between political systems should be expected to exist as a consequence of differences between the societal settings within which politics occurs. Secondly, it is assumed that there are specific effects upon politics that are generated by discrete arenas of human behaviour. Thirdly, these effects are different to those that are generated by distinctly political elements of social life (for example, ideology). Following from these are then a set of methodological assumptions about how the effect and impact of these variations can be at least assessed, if not precisely measured, usually through some crudely positivist approach to data and information. To justify these claims a brief summary of some of the work that has been undertaken in the areas identified above is necessary.

In terms of the societal context within which politics takes place there are a number of studies that emphasise the importance of different combinations of factors that contribute to the acceptance of such a view. The usual pattern in these studies is to claim that a factor influences the operations of the political system and that this factor is 'cultural' in itself. That is that there is something specific about the composition or operation of this factor that makes it peculiar to the particular society that is being studied. A major difficulty here is that the 'cultural' element that is being studied is often not 'cultural' at all but is simply a re-labeling of another factor altogether. For example, the discussion in Lockhart (1999), arguing for a cultural explanation of the structure of states organisational capacities is not actually demonstrating such a thing at all but, rather, is identifying an ideological explanation. In a similar vein Rose and Page (1996), for example, identified differences between politicians from the old West and East Germanys that affected their views of how the new, reunified, German state should function. These differences were certainly ideological but whether this formed an element in a distinct cultural formation (and how it would do so) remains unclear (Rose and Page did not claim that they were 'cultural' differences).

Peters (2000), identifies other factors operating in this sphere – such as an acceptance, or not, of legal-rational authority as an organising principle of the state – but can only tenuously demonstrate that this is actually a 'cultural' phenomenon. The difficulty with this idea is that while it is clearly important for the acceptance of certain forms of organisational structure and

behaviour it is much more difficult to draw any clear connection between it and anything that can unambiguously be seen as being cultural. Reference by Peters to the earlier work of Katz and Eisenstadt (1960) implies that there may be a cultural influence at work in this area but this is at best indicative and requires further examination of how such processes as bartering or, again, patron-client type relationships create and actually structure what occurs in organisational settings.

Further elements of the societal context can also be considered as affecting politics, administration and management in differing societies. The extent of homogeneity or heterogeneity within societies, for example, could potentially affect the extent to which dominant forms of mobilisation and organisation are accepted, or not. The Japanese system, for example, appears to display an almost monolithic sense of how and why political structures and actors should operate that is developed from a host of elements (including religion, the practices of Japanese feudalism and the experience of rapid industrialisation). This is in marked distinction from divided societies (much of sub-Saharan Africa would fall into this, for example) where fragmented societies make the establishment of common patterns of political organisation and action somewhat more difficult, particularly in the context of the instrumental rationality that is associated with legal-rational authority (Turner and Hulme, 1997, ch. 4).

At this level there are clearly difficulties in demonstrating the precise mechanisms by which general societal cultures affect politics, even if there indicative signs that there is some form of causal relationship between the two. These difficulties are multiplied if the early versions of 'political culture' (discussed briefly above) are considered. If the idea of political culture is to mean anything it, arguably, needs to go beyond evaluations, feelings and knowledge to identify the subject as something that has specific implications for the practices of politics. Apart from the definitional and methodological problems of distinguishing elements of culture from elements of politics itself (for example, the confusion of 'culture' with ideology) some idea of the actual processes of politics themselves is surely required to identify the core of the matter. Simple questions – such as, for example, how are negotiation, bargaining and compromise undertaken – are a part of this and need to be developed further.

Examples from comparative politics, of course, exist that attempt to differentiate between political systems in terms of, for example, preferred patterns of policy-making (Richardson, 1982), or administrative traditions (Knill, 1998). In this respect 'culture' would appear to have some mileage behind it in the context of 'administrative cultures'. The manner in which administrative machines operate and are managed contains within it the idea of a specific 'way of life' that is undertaken within the context of shared belief systems, languages, codes of behaviour and symbolic practices that allow for the development of specific explanations and accounts of what is occurring. Mentioning such obvious and well-used ideas as 'rules of the game' (Rhodes, 1981), 'village life' (Heclo and Wildavsky, 1974), and 'street level bureaucracy' (Lipsky, 1980) indicate the range of already existing arguments that could be developed in this context.

3. Impact of culture on political behavior

Cultural influences interact with other parameters of diversity such as race, education, socioeconomics, and gender to influence the risk of elder abuse. Moon and Benton's (2000) examination of cultural norms among different ethnic groups living in an urban area found differences in tolerance of potential elder abuse. Face-to-face interviews with African American, Korean American immigrants, and White older adults revealed that White respondents had significantly higher tolerance for verbal abuse than either African American or Korean American elders. Among the three groups, however, Korean elders were the most distinct. They were the most tolerant of elder abuse overall, particularly financial exploitation. This finding may be an artifact of the traditional practice of Korean parents transferring their wealth and property to children when the parents retire. Adherence to cultural norms regarding family obligations and practices may also explain why the Korean older adults were significantly more likely than other respondents to blame the victim for the occurrence of elder abuse, have significantly more negative attitudes toward involvement of people outside the family, and be less likely to report elder abuse to authorities. In contrast, responses from a mixed-methods study of the ways in which older Korean immigrants define financial abuse revealed some deviation from traditional Korean customs, suggesting the influence of acculturation into American society on perceptions of elder abuse (Lee, Lee, & Eaton, 2012).

Patterns of abuse also may vary in different types of communities. An examination of elder abuse in rural and urban communities found significantly more rural women were victims of physical abuse, emotional abuse, and active caregiver neglect than urban women, while more urban women had experienced more passive caregiver neglect than rural women (Dimah & Dimah, 2003). The structure and culture of rural environments also may inadvertently conceal and consequently facilitate abuse and inhibit prevention and treatment efforts. Close social ties with emergency responders and service providers in "tight knit" southern Appalachian communities, and low levels of education and economic security among older female victims of violence exacerbated the abuse (Teaster et al., 2006). Riddell and colleagues (2009) arrived at similar conclusions about the rural Canadian cultural context, suggesting that strong personal ties to the community, a culture of self-sufficiency, patriarchal views of the family, limited community services, isolation, and economic stressors contribute to and conceal abusive relationships and inhibit help-seeking behaviors.

4. Cultural, Political and Social Factors

When localizing and translating content into a language, numerous factors influence how the end message is perceived.

What might sound succinct and understandable in one language, when directly translated, might not convey the same meaning.

This section will cover some non-text factors that impact translation.

Cultural Factors

The idea of culture is vital to understanding the implications for translation and, despite the differences of opinion as to whether language is a part of culture or not, the two are connected. Culture factors range from syntax, ideologies, religion, language and dialect, to art and literacy.

If you have a website targeted at a North American audience, you would consider different localization strategies for the U.S. and Canada. English is the primary language for both countries, but there are cultural differences that affect certain phrases and words.

For example, if you are marketing your line of athletic shoes, in the U.S. you would have phrases like "tennis shoes", "cross trainers", or "running shoes" but in Canada, athletic shoes are referred to as "runners". In Canada, "college" refers specifically to community colleges, but "university" is used for any institution awarding a degree. In the U.S., "college" and "university" are commonly used interchangeably.

According to United North America, the U.S. has 13.5% more English speakers and 17 times more Spanish speakers, where Canada has 30 times more French speakers and .3% more Chinese speakers, per capita.

Political Factors

The political environment of a country or region can have a huge impact on how your message is seen and understood. Politics can be affected by religion, elections, wars, geographical location, and many other factors.

In many western countries, like the United States, Canada and much of Western Europe, religion and politics are separate. If you are marketing to them you don't typically have to worry about government interference if your content doesn't line up with the primary religion's teachings. However, in other regions, like the Middle East, where religion and politics are deeply intertwined, if your content goes against their religious beliefs you can expect serious consequences.

In countries, like China, where the government has total control and internet censorship is common, you could easily have your website blocked for not abiding by their laws. Some of the most commonly known sites blocked in China include: Google.com (and most of the local versions), Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, The New York Times, The Economist, Netflix, YouTube, Gmail, Shutterstock, and an estimated 3,000 other sites blocked in mainland China.

Social Factors

Socially factors are things that affect someone's lifestyle. These could include wealth, religion, buying habits, education level, family size and structure and population density.

What may be acceptable in one country, could be a possible no-no somewhere else. For example, if you are selling a food-related product in China and your flyer or website has a picture of food on it, you would need to make sure the image has chopsticks as cutlery, instead of a knife and fork. If the same image was used in India, cutlery would not be added.

In another example, being a resident of one country does not mean that you speak its language. The expat community in many areas is growing at an exponential rate because of better work opportunities and even unsavory political situations in their home country. If the expat community in a country are your target audience you should know which language(s) they speak and what their cultural, social and political factors are.

5. How Do Ideas, Norms, and Culture Affect Political Life?

The third task of an ideational research program must be to investigate the mechanisms through which ideas, norms, and culture influence political life. Many scholars confuse the existence of an idea, norm, or culture with proof that it exerts a causal impact on political life. Tracing the rise and institutionalization of ideas, norms. or cultures tells us nothing about their influence on outcomes. Indeed it is not even possible to know from the mere existence of norms and contents whether they are independent or dependent variables. For example, many criticized the grandfather of cultural analysis. The Civic Culture, because its authors did not establish a causal connection between beliefs and outcomes. They consequently may have gotten the causality backward; different political systems may generate different political views.

Without an explicit investigation of the mechanisms through which ideas, norms, and culture influence outcomes we have no way of knowing whether we have uncovered correlation or causality. (Such failings, of course, are all too common in studies using other kinds of variables, as well.) To build convincing arguments about the political importance of ideas, norms, and culture scholars need to identify the mechanisms through which the independent variables influence the dependent ones.

Because ideational variables do not affect outcomes on their own, that is, they become causally important only by influencing their human hosts, it is particularly important at this stage of analysis for scholars to delineate clearly the connection between ideas, norms, and culture and the political actors embodying them. To uncover the impact of ideas, norms, and culture it is necessary to delve into questions about political behavior.

Political behavior is a product both of actors' motivations, interests, and preferences and of the constraints and opportunities of their environment. Ideational analysis can contribute to understanding both. The growing insistence that motivations, interests, and preferences be analyzed and problematized rather than assumed or posited is one of the most important contributions that ideational scholarship has made. As Katzenstein notes in his introduction, the standard investigation of political behavior involves. "first, [the] specification of a set of constraints. Then comes the stipulation of a set of actors who are assumed to have certain kinds of interests.

Finally, the behavior of the actors is observed, and that behavior is related to the constraining conditions in which these actors, with their assumed interests, find themselves."30 While not entirely illegitimate in all cases, this perspective nevertheless leaves important questions unanswered and yields an impoverished understanding of political life. Aaron Wildavsky put it well when he wrote that, "Although it is eminently reasonable to study how people try to get what they want through political activity. It is also unreasonable to neglect the study of what people want and why."

Several of the authors under review confront these issues directly. Katzenstein opens The Culture of/Vational Security by stating that "state interests do not exist to be 'discovered' by self-interested rational actors. Interests are constructed through a process of social interaction. 'Defining' not 'defending' the national interest is what this book seeks to understand."?* Many of his contributors focus explicitly on how these "constructed" interests and identities shape the behavior of states and political actors. Similarly, one of the main purposes of Modernization and postmodernization is to show that postmaterialism helps determine the goals people strive to achieve in their personal and political lives, while The Currency of Ideas highlights how neoliberalism reshaped the priorities of political elites and the hence the behavior of European nations.

Many scholars have found that ideas can influence political behavior even if political actors have not internalized or do not believe in them. In such cases ideational variables work indirectly; they influence the translation of interests into outcomes by shaping the incentive structures associated with different courses of action. For example, many international norms exert their influence not by reshaping the identities or interests of actors but by shaping the environment within which they operate.

Even if actors do not believe in particular norms, they might abide by them if noncompliance carries a high cost.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between internally and externally generated constraints. Dana Eyre and Mark Suchman in their examination of the proliferation of conventional weapons in the book edited by Katzenstein argue that states adopt large standing armies, not because they need them, but because they are seen as critical components of "stateness." However, it is unclear if states or elites believe that without a large standing army they will not have a true state or that without it they will not be taken seriously by others. Similarly, Richard Price and Nina Tannenwald analyze the chemical weapons taboo but leave unclear whether states refrain from adopting chemical weapons because they think they are truly heinous and should not play a role in modern warfare or fear that development of them would elicit punishment fiom other actors. Ideas might be at work in both cases, but for theoretical and practical reasons it is crucial to distinguish between them. In the former, norms have been internalized; in the latter, actors engage in strategic calculation. It should not be excessively difficult to devise tests to differentiate between these two cases. The most obvious way would be to find an example where sanctions for violating norms are removed. If an actor continues to adhere to a norm even when breaking with it would entail no consequences, then internalization may have occurred..

6. Social Conflict

There is conflict in all human societies, and all societies have systems for regulating it. Conflict between people or groups often arises from competition for resources, power, and status. Family members compete for attention. Individuals compete for jobs and wealth. Nations compete for territory and prestige. Different interest groups compete for influence and the power to make rules. Often the competition is not for resources but for ideas—one person or group wants to have the ideas or behavior of another group suppressed, punished, or declared illegal.

Social change can be potent in evoking conflict. Rarely if ever is a proposed social, economic, or political change likely to benefit every component of a social system equally, and so the groups that see themselves as possible losers resist. Mutual animosities and suspicions are aggravated by the inability of both proponents and opponents of any change to predict convincingly what all of the effects will be of making the change or of not making it. Conflict is particularly acute when only a few alternatives exist with no compromise possible—for example, between surrender and war or between candidate A and candidate B. Even though the issues may be complex and people may not be initially very far apart in their perceptions, the need to decide one way or the other can drive people into extreme positions to support their decision as to which alternative is preferable.

In family groups and small societies, laws are laid down by recognized authorities, such as parents or elders. But almost all groups—from university faculties to local scout troops—have formalized procedures for making rules and arbitrating disputes. On a larger scale, government provides mechanisms for dealing with conflict by making laws and administering them. In a democracy, the political system arbitrates social conflict by means of elections. Candidates for office advertise their intentions to make and modify rules, and people vote for whoever they believe has the best combination of intentions and the best chances of effectively carrying them out. But the need to make complex social trade-offs tends to prevent politicians from accomplishing all of their intentions when in office.

The desire for complete freedom to come and go as one pleases, carry weapons, and organize demonstrations may conflict with a desire for public security. The desire for resolute, efficient decision making—in the extreme, a dictatorship—may conflict with a desire for public participation—in the extreme, a democracy in which everyone votes on everything. The creation of laws and policies typically involves elaborate compromises negotiated among diverse interest groups. Small groups of people with special interests that they consider very important may be able to

persuade their members to vote on the basis of that single issue and thereby demand concessions from a more diffuse majority. Even when the majority of the people in a society agree on a social decision, the minority who disagree may have some protection. In the U.S. political system, for example, federal and state governments have constitutions that establish rights for citizens that cannot be changed by elected officials no matter how large a majority supports those officials. Changes in those constitutions usually require super majorities, of two-thirds or three-quarters of all voters, rather than just greater than one-half.

One strategy for political minorities is to join forces, at least temporarily, with other small groups that have partly similar interests. A coalition of small minorities may be able to exert considerable influence. A coalition of minorities may even become a majority, as long as their common interests outweigh their differences.

A similar protection of political rights is provided by the two-house system in the federal legislature and in most state legislatures. In Congress, for instance, the lower house has representation in proportion to population, so that every citizen in the country is equally represented. However, the upper house has exactly two members from every state, regardless of its population—thereby ensuring that the citizens of any state, however tiny, have the same representation as those of any other state, however large.

In addition, societies have developed many informal ways of airing conflict, including debates, strikes, demonstrations, polls, advertisements, and even plays, songs, and cartoons. The mass media provide the free means for (and may even encourage) small groups of people with a grievance to make highly visible public statements. Any of these ways and means may either release tensions and promote compromise or inflame and further polarize differences. The failure to resolve or to moderate conflicts leads to tremendous stress on the social system. Inability or unwillingness to change may result in a higher level of conflict: lawsuits, sabotage, violence, or full-scale revolutions or wars.

Intergroup conflict, lawful or otherwise, does not necessarily end when one segment of society finally manages to effect a decision in its favor. The resisting groups may then launch efforts to reverse, modify, or circumvent the change, and so the conflict persists. Conflict can, however, also solidify group action; both nations and families tend to be more unified during times of crisis. Sometimes group leaders use this knowledge deliberately to provoke conflict with an outside group, thus reducing tensions and consolidating support within their own group.

7. Conclusion

The intuitive notion that culture has an impact on the world of politics is neither new nor, in itself, significant. Attempting to actually understand the processes and paths by which it has the effects that it does raises, however, a range of questions and issues that need to be dealt with before investigation can take place. Traditional behavioural approaches to culture have generally been unimpressive, either confusing cultural with other forms of explanation, or presenting such a constrained understanding of the concept as to be largely worthless. Given the nature of the concept as being essentially contested alternative methodologies and epistemologies to those of behaviouralism are more likely to have some hope of clarifying the relationships between culture and politics that at present are shrouded to the point of total opacity. For this reason, if no other, the exploration of alternative approaches to the understanding of culture and the effects of culture on politics needs to be undertaken if the concept is to escape from being a residual category and is to become a meaningful component of analysis.

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