

Today, all dynamic societies are based on **participation**. Two types might be distinguished:

- Democratic,
- totalitarian.

Definitions of **political culture**:

- G. Almond, S. Verba: *“system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values, which defines the situation in which political action takes place. In other words, the specifically political orientations and - attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system”*.
- L.W. Pye: *“the sum of the fundamental values, sentiments and knowledge that give form and substance to political process”*.
- D. Kavanagh: *“A shorthand expression to denote the set of values within which the political system operates”*

Types of political culture, by A. Lijphart:

- Based on range:
  - Political culture of **masse**,
  - political culture of the **elite(s)**.
- Based in internal characteristics and political culture of elite(s):
  - **Coalitional**,
  - **contradictive**.
- Based on the structure of society:
  - **Homogeneous**,
  - **heterogeneous**.

Basic elements of political system, by G. Almond and S. Verba:

- Specific **roles and structures** (legislative / executive branch of government),
- specific **people** holding specific positions (representatives, ministers, president),
- specific **political strategies**, decisions and ways of enforcing them.

All of the above might be divided into two groups:

- Those **initiating** political actions (political parties, interest groups),
- those **processing** political actions (bureaucracy, ministries).

Types of political culture:

- **Parochial**, in which no clear differentiation of specific political roles and expectations exists among actors, i.e. "political specialization is minimal". The parochial tends to be unaware, or only dimly aware, of the political system in all its aspects.
- **Subject**, in which institutional and role differentiation exists in political life, but towards which the citizen stands in largely passive relations. A subject tends to be cognitively oriented primarily to the output side of government: the executive, bureaucracy, and judiciary.
- **Participant**, in which the relationships between specialized institutions and citizen opinion and activity is interactive. A participant is assumed to be aware of and informed about the political system in both its governmental and political aspects.

The three types above are the **ideal** ones. Every modern society existing today is composed of some kind of mixture of those types. The fairer and more stable those mixtures would be the more durable the system will become. Some **mixture types** are:

- **Parochial & Subject**. A system in which majority of society has refused to follow the traditional rule and pledged their allegiance to some kind of more complex government (like absolutist monarchy).
- **Subject & Participant**. Where a faction of population is active and as clearly participatory features, but another part is largely passive and expecting state's involvement in their everyday life.
- **Parochial & Participant**. Where parochial culture is still dominant, but some new elements are being introduced. There are still no state structures and modern democratic system is just being built.

The values and attitudes which emerge and in democratic system relate to the manner in which people view their relationships with each other. **The civic culture** is pluralistic, and based on communication and persuasion, it's a culture of consensus and diversity, a culture that permits change but moderates it. Political culture is formulated as "the connecting link between micro- and macro politics.

According to R. Inglehart, among the polities of Europe, **basic satisfaction with life and political circumstance, and levels of inter-personal trust, are strongly correlated**

**with both the existence of relatively long-lived and stable democratic institutions, and with relative affluence of the populace.** Viable democracy does not depend on economic factors alone. Specific cultural factors are crucial, and they in turn are related to economic and macropolitical developments. Stable democracy interacts with three kinds of factors:

- Economic,
- political,
- cultural.

If a democratic political system is one in which the ordinary citizen participates in political decisions, a democratic political culture should consist of a set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, perceptions and the like, that support participation.

**Ecological fallacy:** mistake based on wrong assumption, stating that a phenomenon that exists on one level also exists on another level. Example: “Since there are no visible correlations between individual people’s opinions about democracy and overall system efficiency, there is no relation between democracy and political culture”. This assumption is wrong because of three reasons:

- Since it’s an attribute of societies, not individuals, relation between political culture and **democracy does not work strongly on individual level**, only on aggregated, national one.
- So, it is **not that important what individual person thinks and says about the democracy**, especially that nearly no – one will speak against democracy today.
- Impact of pro (or non) democratic political culture on effective democracy operates mainly on **aggregate (group) level**. Culture that emphasizes self – expression, tolerance, trust, life satisfaction and participation plays a crucial role in the effective democracy.

Possible additional readings:

- G. Almond, S. Verba, „The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations”, Sage Publications, 1989.
- R. Inglehart, C. Welzel, “*Political Culture and Democracy. Analyzing Cross – Level Linkages*”, Comparative Politics, Vol. 36, No.1 (Oct 2003), p 61-79