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**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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**COURSE TITLE: POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR**



**POL 318  
POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR**

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**MODULE ONE**

## **UNIT ONE**

### **Unit 1:**

#### **Definitions, Origin and Main Thrusts of Political Behaviour**

##### **1.0 Introduction**

##### **2.0 Objectives**

##### **3.0 Main Content**

###### **3.1 Some Definitions of Political Behaviour**

###### **3.2 The Study of Politics before Behavioral Revolution**

###### **3.3 The Behavioral Revolution**

##### **4.0 Conclusion**

##### **5.0 Summary**

##### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

##### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

What this unit examines are the various scholarly definitions of political behaviour, how political behaviour originated in the discipline of political science, as well as the main thrusts that it has. The unit exposes you to intellectual developments since the behavioral revolution till present. Note that the terms political behaviour, behaviouralism, behavioral approach and behavioral revolution may be interchangeably used in this unit.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this unit, you should be able to

- (a) define political behaviour from various perspectives
- (b) historicize the development of political behaviour in the discipline of political science
- (c) know the main thrusts of political behaviour

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Definitions of Political Behaviour**

According to Eldersveld and Katz in 1961, political behaviour or behavioral approach to the study of politics “identifies the behaviour of individuals or group of individuals as the primary unit of analysis”. It “seeks to examine the behaviour, actions and acts of individuals, rather than characteristics of institutions such as legislature, executive and judiciary”. Traditionally, the study of politics was legalistic, normative and based on institutions, and this certainly made it challenging for the discipline to fully explain and understand the behaviour of people within their political environments. It was the need to overcome this shortcoming and achieve a better understanding of politics that gave birth to the “behavioral revolution”. This was a banner under which sociologists, survey researchers and other empiricists gathered in the 1950s to distinguish themselves from those who studied constitutions, philosophy, or history, and prominent scholars who championed the revolution are **Robert Dahl (1961), and David Easton (1961)**. The main aim of political behavior is to “explain behaviour with an unbiased, neutral point of view, using methods such as sampling, scaling statistical analysis and interviewing among others. The most practical way to do it is to focus on individuals and groups who are the actors in politics.

However, subsequent scholarly definitions of political behaviour seem to have expanded beyond the issue of method and approach. The current state of political behaviour, as some scholars now claim, is typically concerned with individual behaviour in the society. One of such scholars is Richard Rose who, in her 2007 work claims that political behaviour is the study of the behaviour of political actors such as voters, lobbyists, and politicians.

Thus, currently, discourses in political behaviour are devoted to provide a sound understanding of the relationship between the political actions of citizens and the political process in a democracy, and this is why the subject now covers issues such as political attitudes, extra electoral forms political participation such a protest, resistance, social movement, apathy, and extremism, as well as consequences for political representation and political systems.

From whichever angle it is defined, what you need to really grasp is that political behaviour studies the behaviour of individuals and groups towards politics and political institutions in their environment, and it attempts to use scientific methods to study them.

#### **3.2 THE STUDY OF POLITICS BEFORE BEHAVIOURAL REVOLUTION**

Before the era of political behaviour, specifically up to the period of 1900, the study of politics was dominated by two main methodological approaches: the Normative

- Philosophical Approach and the Descriptive -Institutional Approach. In what follows we explain these two approaches in details.

**(a) The Normative - Philosophical Approach :**

This was based on reflections on and interrogations of early philosophers towards political events and values across the globe. Socio political events such as justice, polity, legitimacy state, and power and wealth distributions were the main subjects of interrogation and investigation because early philosophers regarded them as most essential to the understanding of politics and the peaceful co- existence of people and nations. Most questions the philosophers asked revolved around what justice is, how it is achieved and what importance it should be accorded it in human polity; what action or practice is legitimate, what the ideal role of the state is, and how power, wealth and other values are equitably distributed in the society to guarantee egalitarianism. Philosophers who engaged in these questioning include Plato, Aristotle, St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

**(b) The Descriptive - Institutional Approach**

This approach basically described structures and institutions of politics and government. It originally focused on the discussion of the evolution and operation of legislatures, executives and judiciaries which are respectively the institutions for making, carrying out and interpreting the law. This later came to include bureaucracies, political parties, pressure groups, interest groups, constitutions, and other frameworks that are constantly interacted with in politics. Unlike the foregoing approach, the Descriptive - Institutional Approach is more interested in facts than values, seeking to provide fact based information on structures and institutions such as constitution and its forms, parliament and its parliamentary supremacy, law making procedures, supremacy of the law, elections and other means of choosing and changing representatives.

Before the era of political behaviour, these two approaches dominated the study of politics. Socio political values were studied based on individual's subjectivity and perspectives, and then institutions of politics were described from historical antecedents and values emanating from philosophers' thoughts. In these two approaches however stands a gap: the individual or group that is the operators of political institutions and interpreters of political values are amiss! What about them? How do we understand the output of institutions and values without first understanding the people who man them, their values, attitudes, orientations, socializations and other things? All these determine, to a great extent, what they do in their political environments. The point at which political scientists began to ask these questions was the outset of the behavioral approach.

Remi Anifowose summarized the issues that provoked these questions as “ low level of generalization or finding, untenable assumptions and premises that influenced

and sometimes distorted findings, mere value laden findings and assumptions, emphasis on the study of institutions to exclude political process, neglect of the findings of other social science disciplines, as well as accumulation of irrelevant facts”.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Whether seen as a methodological or an aspectual issue in political science, the main thrust of political behavior is to achieve better accuracy in the understanding of man and politics. Discuss.

### **3.3 THE BEHAVIOURAL REVOLUTION**

The beginning of the behavioural revolution in political science may be traced to the publication in 1908 of *Human Nature in Politics* by Graham Wallas, and *The Process of Government* by Arthur Bentley. As earlier pointed out, the behavioral revolution in politics came as oppositional response to the normative –philosophical and descriptive-institutional orientations that were used for the study of politics in earlier periods. Proponents of the behavioral revolution not only emphasized facts over values, as stated above, they also argued that it is the behaviour of individuals in political institutions, rather than the institutions themselves, that is the essence of politics. They proposed the use of rigorous scientific and empirical methods in political research, in a bid to make the discipline of political science as advanced and as generalizing as conventional sciences such as Chemistry and Physics. Behaviouralists also called for greater integration of political science with other social sciences such as Psychology, Sociology and economics.

Using psychological and sociological approaches to analyze the role of individuals and groups in day to day political conduct in the state, Wallas and Bentley in their respective books earlier mentioned focused on the behavioral and informal processes of political activities, rather than philosophical postulations, armchair theorizing, structures and institutions of government. This is a radical departure from the past.

By the 1920s, the behavioral revolution had got to its peak through the efforts of two major intellectual giants: Charles Merriam and his student, Harold Lasswell who both introduced to the study of politics, such new and scientifically systematic concepts as power and political elites. The revolution progressed enormously, up to the period from 1925 up to the end of the Second World War (1937-45). It witnessed a tremendous revival and dominated the study of politics throughout the fifties. This was made possible through the relentless intellectual efforts of key behaviouralists such as David Easton, Robert Dahl, Karl Deutsch, Gabriel Almond, David Truman and others who later came to dominate the discipline.

By the late sixties however, some behaviouralists began to agitate for the revision of the behavioral approach to accommodate new developments in political phenomenon. Spearheaded by David Easton, this revisionist movement is known as post-behavioral movement and, will be discussed in another unit of this material.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this section we have discussed the definitions of political behaviour, the state of the discipline of political science before it, and the emergence of the behavioural revolution. We revealed that there were two major traditional approaches to the study of politics, namely the Normative - Philosophical and Descriptive - Institutional approaches. The study of political behaviour arose from the behavioral revolution in political science which developed in opposition to those older Normative-Philosophical and Descriptive-Institutional approaches.

While the Normative - Philosophical Approach emphasized the discussion of universal political values, the Descriptive - Institutional Approach focused on the evolution and operation of important governmental institutions.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

Political behaviour focuses on individual and groups in the study of politics. It moves scholarly attention of politics away from the study of thoughts and institutions that earlier dominated it, fusing now on the real actors of politics, man. It also advocates the use of empirical and scientific methods for the study of politics. This is what in the discipline of political science is called behavioral revolution. It began in the 1900s and progressed as time went by. The whole essence of this revolution, in the words of Remi Anifowose, “is to make political science more scientific a discipline, one which analyses politics scientifically, that is, using the scientific methods”.

#### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

- (a) Attempt your own definition of political behaviour
- (b) Enumerate the limitations that the study of politics faced before political behaviour
- (c) Highlight what you think the behavioral revolution is all about.

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## **UNIT 2:**

### **FOUNDATIONS OF THE BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **3.1 Regularity, Verification, Technique and Quantification**

##### **3.2 Value Freeness, Systematization, Pure Science, Integration**

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

## **5.0 Summary**

## **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

## **7.0 References/Further Readings**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We asserted earlier that political behaviour shifted emphasis from institutions to individuals and groups. It also changed approach and method from descriptivism to empiricism. These two are done under certain principles and foundations which a leading American behaviouralist has described as the eight intellectual foundation stones of behaviouralism. These foundations stones are what we shall, here in this unit, examine in details.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

As a student of political science, not only are you expected to understand the foundations upon which behaviouralism stands, you also need to be able to discuss them in logical and sequential details. Specifically, the knowledge of this unit will enable you

- (a) Identify, describe and distinguish among the key principles or assumptions of the behavioral revolution in politics
- (b) Gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the behavioral revolution in politics.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Regularity, Verification, Technique and Verification**

##### **(a) Regularities**

Behaviouralists argued that the political behaviour of individuals is governed by certain general underlying assumptions and conditions which can be discovered through systematic study. In other words, the political behaviour of individuals is not arbitrary is governed by certain discoverable factors. For example, if a group of individuals may continue to vote for the same party over a long period of time. Through behavioral research we may be able to show, that the behaviour of these individuals is related to such factors as their socio-economic status, ethnic identity or ideological orientation. On the basis of this knowledge, the behaviouralist will not only be able to explain but also predict the political behaviour of these individuals and others. In short, therefore, behaviouralists argued that there are discoverable uniformities or regularities in political behaviour and that these can be expressed in systematic generalizations or theories with explanatory and predictive values.

### **(b) Verification**

The behaviouralists emphasized the need to make the study of politics as factual, empirical and scientific as possible. They argued that just as the natural and physical sciences are based on actual and observable events, political science must also be based on factual or empirical processes. They, therefore, contended that all statements, generalizations or theories about political behaviour must be based on factual observation and must be testable or verifiable by reference to actual political conduct. This process of empirical verification is the most important criterion for assessing the validity, acceptability or utility of any generalizations or statements about political behaviour.

**(c) Techniques** The observation of political behaviour and the verification of statements and generalizations arising from the observation must be based on the use of reliable and sophisticated scientific techniques, including well-structured interviews, sample surveys, statistical measurements and mathematical models. In short, the behaviouralists argued that reliable and effective means must be developed for observing, recording and analyzing political behaviour.

### **(d) Quantification**

The use of statistical and mathematical measurements can help to achieve adequate precision or accuracy in observing, recording and analyzing political behaviour. There must, therefore, be a shift in methods from the qualitative judgments that dominated the Normative-Philosophical Approach, to the quantitative measurements that are usually associated with the natural and physical sciences. Behaviouralists however, resolved that quantitative methods must be used not for their own sake, but only where possible, relevant and meaningful in the light of other objectives. This is why David Truman asserted that the political scientist should perform his research in 'quantitative terms if he can, and in qualitative terms, if he must'.

## **3.2 Value Freeness, Systematization, Pure Science and Integration**

### **(a) Values Freeness**

Values or ethical evaluations are a feature of the Normative-Philosophical approach to the study of politics and must be deemphasized in the scientific behavioral approach. The behavioral approach is not guided by ethical evaluations. Rather, it is based on empirical and scientific explanation. While the student of political behaviour may sometimes make ethical judgments or evaluations, he should for the sake of clarity not confuse them with empirical observations or generalizations. In other words, empirical political research must be kept analytically distinct from ethical or moral philosophy.

### **(b) Systematization**

Any piece of empirical political research, or any attempt at the observation of political data, must not be seen as an end in itself but as a means to the development of a systematic theory or generalization. In other words, empirical research should be 'theory-oriented and theory-directed'. Indeed research and theory should be 'developed as mutually indispensable parts of the scientific study of political behaviour. As David Easton put it, 'research untutored by theory may prove trivial, and theory unsupported by data, futile'.

It is important to note that a theory is an empirically testable statement that is designed to explain certain events or facts. It is an important element of any scientific enterprise or endeavor. At the most basic level, a theory can take the form of such testable generalizations as: 'Issues do not have a significant influence on the party preferences of the electorate ethnic affiliation is the most important determinant of voting behavior'. 'An electoral system based on proportional representation encourages a multi-party system'. These are hypothetical mainly, but they are also theoretical too.

In essence, systematization means that any research on political behaviour must be pursued not as an end in itself but as a means to prove or disprove the kind of generalizations indicated above.

### **(c) Pure Science**

Applied research, or the application of scientific knowledge to the solution of social problems, is as much a part of the scientific enterprise as is theoretical understanding or explanation. However, the scientific explanation of political behaviour logically precedes and provides the basis for any efforts to utilize political knowledge to the solution of urgent socio-political problems. To the behaviouralists, this implies that greater importance should be attached to pure research or scientific explanation than applied research, policy formulation or 'political engineering'. Indeed the behaviouralists argued that a political scientist should be contented with understanding and explaining political behaviour even if the resultant knowledge cannot be applied to solve specific socio-political problems.

### **(d) Integration**

Finally, the behavioral approach seeks to promote the unity of the social sciences, namely political science, economics, sociology, psychology and geography. It expresses the hope that someday the walls which separate political sciences from the other social sciences will crumble. Behaviouralists argued that because the social sciences deal with the totality of social existence, political research can ignore the findings of other social science disciplines only at the risk of undermining the validity and relevance of its own results or generalizations.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Assess the individual principles of behaviouralism and justify their necessity in advancing the course of political studies.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The principles upon which the behavioral school stands can be summed up in eight places. As formulated by David Easton who refers to them as the foundation stones of behaviouralist, they include regularities, verification, techniques, quantification, values, systematization, pure science and integration. The essence of standing on all these is to achieve objectivity and strong generalization in the study of politics in such a way that will make political science more modern and interactive towards other disciplines

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In the foregoing we stated and highlighted the eight pillars of behaviouralism viz a viz the ultimate aim that they are poised to achieve in the study of politics. These principles are values, systematization, pure science, integration, regularity, verification, techniques and quantification. They respectively emphasize the need to separate ethical evaluation from empirical explanation, to direct empirical research towards systematic theories or generalizations, to give autonomous importance to pure research and to integrate political science with the other social sciences..

#### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

- (a) Identify and discuss the foundation stones of political behaviour
- (b) Advance an argument for or against the need to use scientific method in the study of politics

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 3:**

### **CHALLENGES TO THE BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **3.1 Complexity of Human Behaviour, Difficulty in Verification, Rigidity of Technique and Over glorification of Quantification**

##### **3.2 Inevitability of Values, Politics is not Science and Possible Loss of Identity**

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

#### **5.0 Summary**

#### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

#### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The traditionalists have always picked loopholes in the principles of the behaviouralists, an act which have also led to academic discuss. Therefore, in this unit we shall highlight, identify and describe some of their criticisms, especially against those that David Easton described as the eight foundation stones of behaviouralism.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

This unit teaches you to:

- (a) Understand and appreciate the intellectual tradition of constructive criticism
- (b) Identify the traditionalists' criticisms of the behavioral approach to the study of politics
- (c) Asses the relevance or merit of these criticisms
- (d) Be familiar with methodological debates in the study of politics.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Complexity of Human Behaviour, Difficulty in Verification, Rigidity of Techniques and Over Glorification of Quantification**

### **(a) Complexity of Human Behaviour**

Critics of the behavioral approach have questioned the argument that the political behaviour of individuals is characterized by certain uniformities and generalities which can be discovered through systematic and scientific study. These critics argue that human behaviour is so complex and fluid in nature that it cannot be subjected to rigorous scientific inquiry. They contend that there are so many uncontrollable, inexplicable, unique and changing factors guiding human behaviour that any theoretical generalizations are bound to be very weak or trivial. Under these circumstances, the critics or traditionalists argue, descriptive approach may in fact, more rewarding or successful than a so-called scientific approach which merely attempts to impose artificial and neat generalizations on very unique and complex patterns of political behaviour.

### **(b) Difficulty in Verification**

The behaviouralists, as we pointed out in the preceding unit, argued that all statements, generalizations or theories about political behaviour must be based on factual observation and must be testable by reference to actual political conduct. The traditionalists, however, maintain that only a small segment of political conduct can actually be observed in behavioral terms. They argue that there are so many institutional, normative and ideological variables that affect human political behaviour which cannot be observed or recorded even when the most sophisticated data gathering techniques in the social sciences are used. Any adequate, study of political life, the traditionalists conclude, must therefore accommodate the many forces and processes that are not directly, observable or empirically verifiable.

### **(c) Rigidity of Techniques**

According to critics, the emphasis of the behaviouralists on the use of sophisticated techniques has led to the glorification of technical methodologies at the expense of real knowledge and understanding. Thus, the traditionalists accuse the behaviouralists of neglecting or ignoring vital areas of political life which are not directly amenable to scientific techniques and focusing, instead, on relatively trivial and narrow issues that are hardly fundamental to politics.

### **(d) Over glorification of Quantification**

While the behaviouralists argued for the use of quantitative measurements and mathematical models in the study of political behaviour, the traditionalists argue that political life is essentially unquantifiable. The most important political questions, the critics argue, require description and ethical evaluation, rather than quantification and measurement. The critics contend that much of political life is so imprecise, complex and unpredictable that any attempt at quantification can only produce very limited and trivial results. To sum up, in this section of the lecture we have attempted to describe some of

the criticisms of the behavioral approach to the study of politics. Specifically, we have focused on those criticisms relating to regularities, verification, techniques and quantification. Basically the critics or traditionalists contend that political processes are too complex and unpredictable to permit any useful theoretical generalization, empirical verification, application of sophisticated scientific techniques or quantification. How would you assess the merit or validity of the aforementioned criticisms? To answer the question, you will need to refer to our discussion in lecture two on the principles of behaviouralism. However, for more discussion of these criticisms, as well as the various responses and counter - arguments of the behaviouralists, read chapter three of S.P Verma's very useful work, *Modern Political Theory*.

### **3.2 Inevitability of Values, Systematization, Politics is not and cannot be Science, Possible Loss of Identity**

#### **(a) Inevitability of Values**

Critics of the behavioral approach argue that the contempt of behaviouralists for value judgments is unjustified and misleading. The critics make two main points. In the first place, they argue that the most important political issues today are closely bound up with ethical and moral judgments. For instance, issues like racism, war, peace, justice, democracy, freedom and development, which dominates political debates in the world today, can only be studied and resolved within an ethical framework and not in a moral vacuum.

In the second place, the critics argue that the behaviouralists themselves have hardly been able to escape from making value judgments and preferences. Thus, in selecting a subject for investigation, the behaviouralist is guided by his personal or ideological biases and judgments rather than by any scientific criteria. Some critics have even gone further to argue that, in pretending to avoid value judgments, the behaviouralists have actually become conservative defenders of the status quo, steadfastly opposing any attempt to raise moral and critical questions about existing political arrangements.

#### **(b) Systematization**

The behaviouralists, as we pointed out in the last lecture, argued that empirical research should lead systematically to the development of appropriate theories and generalizations about political behaviour. Critics, however, argue that the behaviouralists have not done much to develop systematic theories of political behaviour. The behaviouralists, the critics conclude, have hardly been able to move beyond the experimentation with, and proliferation of, basic concepts, hypotheses and techniques which cannot enhance the reliability and integrity of political studies.



### **(c) Politics is not, and cannot be Pure Science**

Critics of the behavioral approach have denounced any attempt to elevate pure science into an end itself. The critics argue that scientific research is useless unless it can be utilized in solving urgent socio-political problems. They accuse the behaviouralists of trying to abandon their social responsibilities as researchers. The critics or traditionalists contend that an adequate approach to the study of politics must recognize the need to use knowledge to increase the general level of welfare in the society.

### **(d) Possible Loss of Identity**

The critics of behaviouralism are not opposed to the suggestion that the study of politics can be enriched or enhanced by closer collaboration with the social sciences. They, however, argue that care must be taken not to jeopardize the identity, integrity and independence of politics as a discipline. Rather, politics, while borrowing from concepts and knowledge developed in the other disciplines, must be allowed to develop as a distinctive and respectable field of study.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Briefly assess the criticisms of the traditionalists against the realistic nature of behaviouralists' postulations and note one or two aspects of their criticisms strike you most?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Remi Anifowose observes that "there have been disagreements among the behaviouralists on a number of issues. Some of them were satisfied with political science as it had been practised before behavioral revolution and saw no cogent reason for such drastic change proposed by the behaviouralists. Others were less complacent with the state of the discipline". In cogent terms the behavioral approach to the study of politics has been subjected to sharp criticisms. The traditionalists feel that the scientific goals of behaviouralism are premature and counter-productive. They argue that political life is too complex and unique to permit systematic generalizations, verification, quantification or the use of sophisticated scientific techniques. They also raise questions about the desirability, validity or feasibility of such principles of behaviouralism as value-neutrality, systematization, pure science and the integration of the social sciences. For instance, the traditionalists argue that value-neutrality is both undesirable and impossible, that relatively little has been achieved by behaviouralism regarding the development of general theories of political behaviour, that research that cannot be utilized to promote the greater interest of society is useless, and that the integration of political science with other social sciences should be pursued with the greatest caution.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In the unit we have considered those criticisms of behaviouralism relating to complexity of human behaviour, rigidity in techniques, difficulty of systematization, non scientific nature of political science, difficulty of integration among other things. All these were argument raised by the traditionalists against the behavioral approach.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

- (a) Evaluate the traditionalists' assertion that human behaviour is complex and cannot be summarily systematized as the behaviouralists proposed.
- (b) Explain in your own word the argument that integration of political science with other disciplines may lead to loss of the former's identity.
- (c) Briefly discuss how the excessive emphasis on quantification reduces the quality of political findings.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 4:**

### **POST BEHAVIOURALSIM**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 Substance, Social Change, Realism and Values**

#### **3.2 Social Relevance, Actions, Politicization**

### **4.0 Conclusion**

### **5.0 Summary**

### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

What will be discussed in this unit is the giant step taken by some behaviouralists themselves to address and probably correct some of the shortcomings and limitations they perceived in behaviouralism. This is the attempt made by behaviouralists to reform behaviouralism based on their own perception and in response to criticism of the traditionalists. It is known as post-behaviouralism. There are seven principles of post-behaviouralism as will be discussed in what follows. Please note that the post behaviouralists are different from anti behaviouralists. The former are themselves behaviouralists while the latter are their critics.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should:

- (a) Be more deeply familiar with the role of criticism and dialectics in intellectual tradition.
- (b) Be able to describe the contribution of the post-behavioral movement to the study of politics
- (c) Be able to distinguish the criticisms of the behavioral approach by the traditionalists from the criticisms of the approach by the post-behaviouralists themselves.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Substance, Social Change, Realism and Values**

The same David Easton, you will remember, the leading American political scientist who formulated the eight foundation stones of behaviouralism is the very one

who started the post behavioral movement. The principles are seven, and what we do in this unit is discuss them in turn.

### **(a) Substance**

The behaviouralists turned post-behaviouralists, acknowledged the need to give greater primacy to the substance or subject of political investigation than the techniques of research and analysis. They argued that the use of scientific and sophisticated tools of research and analysis, while desirable and rewarding, is not the most important thing in the study of politics. A far more important consideration, the post-behaviouralists argued, should be the ability of these tools to contribute to the development of knowledge about the fundamental issues of politics.

### **(b) Social Change**

The behaviouralists, as we pointed out in Lecture 3, have been accused of defending the existing social order or status quo under the guise of value-neutrality. The post-behaviouralists, on the other hand, argued that political science should transcend the social conservatism of the behavioral movement and, instead, help to achieve and sustain progressive and constructive change in the society.

### **(c) Realism**

The post-behaviouralists recognized that the one-sided quest for scientific sophistication in the heyday of behaviouralism had led to a political science that was hardly in touch with the crises and conflicts of actual political life. The post-behaviouralists argued that contemporary political science could not afford to ignore the grim or unfortunate realities of political existence. Instead, it must address these realities and contribute to their resolution.

### **(d) Values**

The behaviouralists tended to downgrade the role of values in the study of politics and often upheld the need for value-neutrality. The post-behaviouralists, on the other hand, argued that the study of politics must be guided by such positive and progressive values as justice, equality and freedom. The post-behaviouralists indeed argued that if knowledge was to be relevant in the solution of societal problems, then values had to be given a primary *or* central place in the scientific process. The idea of value - neutrality, they concluded, is not only a myth, but is also socially and politically undesirable.

## **3.2 Social Relevance, Actions, Politicization**

### **(a) Social Relevance**

The post-behaviouralists argued that political scientists must be socially relevant by contributing to the solution of the major problems of society. In other words, the post-behaviouralists were of the opinion that it was the responsibility of political scientists to do their best to create and sustain a better society and to uphold such progressive and humane values as egalitarianism, freedom, welfarism and justice.

### **(b) Action**

Following from the principle of social relevance discussed above, the post-behaviouralists argued that political scientists must act to reshape society for the better. In other words, the post-behaviouralists were of the view that political scientists must not only be guided by a sense of social commitment and relevance in executing their research agenda, but also take practical and immediate action to reform and improve the conditions of socio-political existence.

### **(c) Politicization**

The post-behaviouralists conclude that political scientists not only have a responsibility to undertake socially relevant research, but that they must also take practical steps to improve society. The implication of this argument is that political science, and indeed any area of scientific and systematic knowledge, must be politicized or actively and closely involved in the society's political processes.

In essence, all seven principles of post-behaviouralism discussed in this unit basically revolve around the need to make the study of politics more socially relevant and politically active. It is important to add that the political behaviouralists, unlike the traditionalists, did not oppose the desirability viability of a scientific approach to the study of politics. On the contrary, the post-behaviouralists argued for a *science* of politics that is more socially relevant. There is no doubt that the criticisms of behaviouralism by the traditionalists and post-behaviouralists overlap or coincide in some respect. Yet, as already indicated, the post-behaviouralists, many of who were fact former behaviouralists, were very committed to the scientific study politics, while the traditionalists were not.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Outline and briefly discuss the principles of Post-behaviouralism.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The post behaviouralist movement arose from the acknowledgement of the limitations of behaviouralism by the behaviouralists themselves. To transcend these limitations, the behaviouralists turned post-behaviouralists proposed the following seven conceptual principles , namely, substance, social change, realism, values, social relevance, action and politicization. The post-behaviouralists differ from other critics of

behaviouralism in the important sense that they (i.e. the post-behaviouralists) did not oppose the scientific aspirations of behavioral political science. Rather, they called for a science of politics that is more socially relevant and active.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, we have identified and described the major principles of the post-behavioral movement and concluded that the post-behaviouralists did not oppose the scientific aspirations of behavioral political science. Rather, they called for a science of politics that is more socially relevant and active.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- 1.** Evaluate the arguments of post behaviouralism as different from the earlier criticism of behaviouralism by traditionalists.
- 2.** Critically assess the similarities between the positions advanced by critics of behaviouralism and Post-behaviouralists.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 5:**

# **MAIN THRUSTS OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR**

## **1.0 Introduction**

## **2.0 Objectives**

## **3.0 Main Content**

### **3.1 Political Socialization**

### **3.2 Political Culture**

### **3.3 Political Participation**

### **3.4 Political Communication**

### **3.5 Elections and Electoral Behaviour**

## **4.0 Conclusion**

## **5.0 Summary**

## **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

## **7.0 References/Further Reading**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

While in the foregoing units we have defined political behaviour, traced its origin, identified its limitations and challenges, it is quite important at this juncture to touch the major areas, or main thrust of the subject matter itself, political behaviour. However, what is done in this unit is identify these main thrusts of political behaviour and discuss them in brief. However, because they are the core issues that the subject of political behaviour focuses on, they shall be fully explored and discussed in latter units of this material.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

The student should, at the end of this unit:

- (a) Be able to identify the main issues that the study of political behaviour focuses on; and

- (b) Command understanding of all these issues: political socialization, political culture, political participation, political communication and Elections. Possess the understanding of how all these thrusts interact with one another.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

The main issues covered by political behaviour are political socialization, political culture, political participation, political communication; then, elections and electoral behaviour

#### **3.1 Political Socialization**

Political socialization is the process of transferring knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and general dispositions about politics from one generation to the other. It accumulates almost unconsciously through citizens and people's interactions with social institutions such as the family, the religious houses, the schools, the tertiary institutions, the media, and political parties and so on. These institutions through which people are socialized into political values are called agencies of political socialization. Social scientists, especially those favorably disposed towards social learning theories, believe strongly that whatever a man behaves like in the society and its politics- from activism to its other extreme of apathy- is primarily a function of how he or she was socialized by these agencies.

#### **3.2 Political Culture**

Political culture refers to the dominant state or situation of citizens' awareness of issues and stakes in the political system, their evaluation as well as acceptance or rejection (as the case may be) of the system, and, in the third part, their expectations about the relationship among actors and participants in the political system. Unlike political participation that is a process; political culture is a state, and the dominant state among various states. This means that when we say that a country has a particular political culture, the true situation is that that culture so identified is the major one among others that exist. Like political socialization, political culture also largely determines political behavior, and the method with which the behavioral school investigates political phenomena often focus on it.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Briefly explain what you understand by Political Socialisation.

#### **3.3 Political Participation**



Political participation has to do with the involvement of the people or citizens of a country in the political affairs of that country. People participate by influencing, directly or indirectly, the composition of government, the policies they make, and the practices they institute. Election is a major way of political participation. However, participation in politics also includes many other ways in which citizens try to influence governmental decisions. Such ways, apart from voting, include campaigning, attending meetings, funding political parties, lobbying, protesting, forming social movements, belonging to nongovernmental organizations of civil society groups, and, to mention but just a few, joining social movement. All the foregoing activities influence politics in one way or the other, so, they are aspects of political participation.

Political participation is a wide concept, and in the subsequent unit where it will be fully discusses, efforts will be made to highlight the several dimensions it takes as well as the factors that often determine it. In summary however, participation basically involves the attempts by private citizens to influence the composition and decisions of government, a process which goes beyond just voting or participating in electoral activities.

### **3.4 Political Communication**

According to Rotimi Suberu, “Political communication is the dissemination of information, ideas and attitudes about government or public affairs”. In other words, what is said, ideas that are shared and the attitudes that spreads about politics and government of a political community are what political communication concerns itself with. In today’s world where citizens are becoming critical of political power and the way it is used, all governments, especially those operating under democratic dispensation, care very much about the information disseminated in their polity, and they often take certain steps to control it. Government often does this through the media (print, electrons, and social media that is). The main purpose of monitoring political communication, on the part of the government, is to control public opinion. Same goes for the members of the public, though with different stakes and interests.

### **3.5 Elections and Electoral Behaviour**

This is the aspect that has so far commanded the highest level of attention from behavioral researchers, perhaps because it is often contained in the constitutions of democratic states, or it is a device instituted by the ruling class for peaceful and conservative transfer of political power, as against revolt and revolutions which are often not in their interest. Election refers to organization of voting and its allied activities such as party registration, candidates’ background checks and campaigning. According to Nie and Verba in their 1975 work, elections are “one of those legal activities by private citizens which are more or less aimed at directly influencing the selection of government personnel and the actions they take”. Today, as another scholar has observed, “there are more and more democratic elections all over the world in which candidates must decided not only which candidate they wish to support, but also, and perhaps more fundamentally,

whether they wish to support anyone, that is, whether they wish to vote or not”. These are the words of Blais in his 2007 article titled *Turnout in Elections*.

On the other hand, the ways people behave towards election as well as the various factors that affect or determine their behaviors under different circumstances are all issues of electoral behaviour. The systematic and scientific study of elections is known as psephology.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

In your own words, explain how citizens of a country can influence the composition and decision of government.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

There are five major issues that are critical and central to political behaviour. They include political socialization, political culture and political participation, which, on its own can be regular and irregular, then, political communication as well as elections.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

What we have done in the foregoing is identify the main thrusts of political behaviour: political socialization, political culture, political participation, political communication and elections. Each of these aspects is merely mentioned and briefly discussed. They have several factors that determine them and many dimensions they take. These wider issues will be covered in the subsequent units.

### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

- (a) Identify and explain the main aspects or thrusts of political behaviour
- (b) Examine why you think that behaviouralists may be interested in political participation
- (c) Identify the main difference between political culture and political participation.

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## **MODULE 2:**

### **Political Socialisation and Political Culture**

#### **Unit 1: What is Political Socialisation**

#### **Unit 2: Political Culture**

#### **Unit 3: Major Agents of Political Socialisation**

#### **Unit 4: Effects of Political Socialisation on Political Behaviour**

#### **Unit 5: Functions of Political Socialisation**

## **UNIT ONE:**

### **POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION**

## **1.0 Introduction**

## **2.0 Objectives**

## **3.0 Main Content**

### **3.1 Definitions of Political Socialization**

### **3.2 Factors Affecting Political Socialization**

## **4.0 Conclusion**

## **5.0 Summary**

## **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

## **7.0 References/Further Reading**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The definition earlier given of political socializations positions it as the process of transferring knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and general dispositions about politics, from one generation to the other, and that accumulates almost unconsciously through citizens and people's interactions with social institutions such as the family, the religious houses, the schools, the tertiary institutions, the media, political parties and so on. These institutions through which political socialization accumulates and transfers are, in social sciences called agencies of political socialization. This definition is borne of various ones given by various scholars in the discipline.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After this unit you should be able to:

- (a) Define political socialization from broader perspectives
- (b) Highlight the various factors that determine political socialization

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

Here we define political socialization from many scholarly perspectives and period and we equally provide some factors that determine it.

### **3.1 Definitions of Political Socialization**

Beginning from the old, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba define political socialization as a 'learning process by which the norms associated with the performance of political roles as well as fundamental political values and guiding standards of political behaviour are learned'. This is contained in their article entitled, 'The Comparative Study of Political Socialization'. Apart from this, Robert Levine asserts, the process of political socialization as involving the acquisition by an individual, of behavioral dispositions relevant to political groups, political systems and political processes. Let us put other definitions in more direct forms.

**Eric Rowe (1969):** “political socialization is the process by which the values, beliefs and emotions of a political culture are passed on to succeeding generations”.

**Harry Eckstein:** Political socialization is the “process through which operative social norms regarding politics are implanted, political roles institutionalised and political consensus created, either effectively or ineffectively”.

**Roberta Sigel (1972):** “Political socialization is the learning process by which the political norms and behaviors acceptable to an ongoing political system are transmitted from generation to generation”.

**Gerald Bender (1967):** “Political socialization is the process through which the individual internalizes politically relevant attitudes, beliefs, cognitions and values”.

More recent definitions of political socialization include those of **Eric Siraev and Richard Sobel (1995):** “Political socialization is a lifelong process by which individuals learn political attitudes and behaviors. It is part of the broader socialization process whereby an individual becomes a member of a particular society and takes on its values and behaviors. Social and cultural conditions mediate political socialization”.

**Powell & Cowart (2003):**” Political socialization is the study of the developmental processes by which children of all ages (12 to 30), and adolescents acquire political cognition, attitudes, and behaviors”.

It is through the performance of the function of political socialization that individuals are inducted into the political culture and their orientations towards political objects are formed.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Evaluate the definition of political socialization by Gerald Bender.

### **3.2 Factors Affecting Political Socialization**

Although political socialization is made possible through certain agencies (this is discussed in another unit), certain factors still determine whether or not a person will be socialized and in whatever direction. The factors are:

- (A) **Strength of Socializing Agency:** It has been argued often that some socializing agents are stronger and more effective than others. The family for instance is the first agent of political socialization that a child is exposed to at a tender age when his or her personality is still being formed. This is followed by the Schools (elementary and secondary). These two agencies are more effective in socializing people compared to the media and the political party.
- (B) **Proximity to and Interaction with Socialization Agency:** Agencies of socialization become effective in the lives of those who are close to as well as who interact with them. An atheist who has no religion is not, for instance likely to be socialized by the church or the shrine, while an illiterate introvert may miss the socializing opportunities offered by the school and the peer group.
- (C) **Reinforcement System:** Socialization patterns can sometimes depend on reinforcement system. An agent that has a system of positive reinforcement is more likely to be more effective in socializing people in certain directions; vice versa. This is particularly true in families and schools. If interest in politics is positively reinforced in the family and school, children in the two institutions have better chances of political socialization than where it is not.
- (D) **Period and Age of Socialization:** Although socialization is a continuous exercise in the life of man, social scientists agree that personalities, beliefs and attitudes of people are often fully formed when they are young, say below 20 years. The interpretation of this is that socialization tends to be more effective when it occurs to people of tender ages, and at the period of their lives during which their personalities are being developed.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Critically analyse the factors that affect political socialization and mention how they are applicable to your country

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Political socialization refers to the processes and ways in which political values, beliefs and orientations are handed down from one generation to the other through structures and institutions that are called agents of socialization. This socialization depends on certain factors.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In the foregoing we discussed the meanings of political socialization as given by scholars of the old and new traditions. Noting the dichotomies among them we also highlighted the different factors that can determine or affect political socialization in the society.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

- (a) Examine some four definitions of political socialization and identify the one that appeals to you most. Give reasons.
- (b) Critically outline how socializations may differ on the basis of places and time

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTEHR READING**

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## **UNIT 2:**

### **POLITICAL CULTURE**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 Definitions of Political Culture**

#### **3.2 Political Culture and Political Socialization Compared**

#### **3.3 Forms of Political Culture**

### **4.0 Conclusion**

### **5.0 Summary**

### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We earlier identified political culture as one of the main thrusts of political behaviour. Here we offer a host of definitions of the subject; we also compare it with political socialization, another main thrust of political behaviour earlier discussed. This comparison is necessary because both political culture and political socialization work together and they share determining relationship in the society, thus making them somewhat and somehow mistaken for each other.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this unit is to help you:

- (a) Understand the concept of political culture as a main thrust of political behaviour
- (b) Appreciate the similarity of, and difference between political culture and political socialization.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Definitions of Political Culture**

Let us look at political culture from the two words that make it up: ‘political’ and ‘culture’. What is political concerns itself with politics, and culture simply refers to a well established way of life of a people in a particular community. (Please read the 1963 work



of Clyde Kluckhohn titled “ Mirror of Man” for further understanding of the nexus between culture and politics). In a simple sense therefore, the concept of political culture refers to the dominant political way of life of a people in a particular political community. The following definitions will make your understanding clearer and richer.

Tylor (1924) defined political culture as “the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts morals, laws, custom, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society”.

Lucian Pye, (1962) defined political culture as “ the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provides the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity”.

Some leading scholars of behavioral tradition, Gabriel Almond and S. Verba (1963) also defined political culture as “the patterns of individual political orientations, the attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and to the role of the self in the political system”.

In the words of Sydney Verba, (1965) political culture can be defined as “a system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols and values which defines the situation in which political action takes place”.

From the above definitions, the concept of political culture has such common characteristics as the attitudes and values of man towards politics in a particular environment. So apart from the first definition given in this unit (before citing the foregoing four), we may crown up with the description of political culture by the Encyclopedia Britannica as an “attempt to uncover deep-seated, long-held values characteristic of a society or group rather than ephemeral attitudes toward specific issues”, of course issues that are political.

### **3.2 Political Culture and Political Socialization**

Now that you have a broad, yet synergized understanding of political culture, let us compare it to its indispensable partner, political socialization. In an earlier unit we defined political socialization as the *process of transferring knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and general dispositions about politics from one generation to the other*, and that it *accumulates almost unconsciously through citizens and people’s interactions with social institutions such as the family, the religious houses, the schools, the tertiary institutions, the media, political parties and so on*. The knowledge, values and beliefs that are transferred, and that accumulate through agents mentioned above are nothing but political

culture, because political culture is what political socialization transfers. So, while political socialization is a process, a culture is a state.

Furthermore, while political socialization refers to process, and a process is a means of achieving some end, culture as a state is not sacrosanct, it operates at different levels. So, as elementary sociology will assert that we have cultures and subcultures within a particular cultural community, when we say political culture what we also mean is the dominant political culture, as there will always be other cultures around dominant ones. So, you need to note that when we refer to political culture in any literature, what we mean is just the way of political life that is dominant among a people. There are other non dominant ones.

Another thing you probably need to know is that while we say both political culture and political socialization refer to values and they are not empirical, method of studying them can be, and, as a matter of fact, empiric zed by way of information and data gathered through public opinion surveys and other methods.

### **3.3 FORMS OF POLITICAL CULTURE**

#### **Almond and Verba's Classification: Parochial, Subject and Participant**

The earliest and most prominent attempt to categorize political culture was made by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963). They compared five democratic nations and surveyed 1,000 persons as samples in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and Mexico, and they came out with three levels of political culture: Parochial, Subject and Participant. These three levels of political culture shall be discussed in what follows.

- (a) **Parochial Political Culture:** A parochial political culture exists where there are no specialized political roles and people's knowledge of politics does not go beyond their immediate environment. In this kind of culture, religious and ethnic considerations are often put beyond general interest, and people participate in politics mainly because of them, not because of wider socio economic reasons. Where parochial political culture is dominant, citizens hardly make demands from their governments either because of ignorance of what governance is all about, or because they lack trust for the political leaders. Parochial political culture is found among many poor and developing nations that are pre disposed to contradictions such as ethnic rivalry, indigene settler dichotomy, and primordial sentiments.

- (b) **Subject Political Culture:** In a subject political culture, majority of people merely simply align with policies and practices of government almost as obedient servants. The hardly participate in making, amendment or implementation of those policies. This kind of political culture is common where the government expects absolute obedience from the people and they institutionalize means of achieving it. People therefore have little choice but to follow suit because they are just subjects.
- (c) **Participant Political Culture:** In a participant political culture, people understand politics and governance and make several attempts to participate in it. Their participation ranges from voting, attending meetings, joining associations and forming organization. They also mobilize people to participate in protest, social movements where necessary, and they educate others around them on the roles of the government in their lives and how they can make government perform them. Tunde Babawale adds that where participant political culture is dominant, people “manifest attitudes of personal political competence and they participate in active political process. Advanced countries such as Britain and the United States are found in this category.

It is good to re-emphasize that these political culture levels are not sacrosanct in any society, they are the dominant one that have other forms at peripheral levels. In addition, it is possible to have a country that has more than one, or even all of these political cultures in it, especially a country that is highly stratified along ethnicity and tribes. In Nigeria for instance has three major ethnic nationalities, and research has shown that political culture differs each of these ethnic nationalities to the others

There are other categorizations of political culture apart from the popular one made by Almond and Verba. A key one is that of Daniel Elazar who defines political culture as “what people believe and feel about government, and how they think people should act towards it” and, in another dimension, “the particular pattern of orientation to political action in which each political system is imbedded.” In his 1970 work titled *the metropolitan frontier and American politics*, Daniel Elazar studied the states in the United States and came out with three categories of political culture there in: Moral political culture, individual political culture and traditional political culture. Let us again examine each of them.

(a) **Moral Political Culture.**

Where this culture is dominant, people consider the entirety of their society more

important than their individual self, and they allow this to guide them in all their dealings with the political authorities. Government tends to be seen as a positive force. The moral political culture, according to Elazar's findings, was dominant in Upper New England, the Upper Middle West of the United States. This emphasizes the commonwealth conception as the basis for democratic government. Politics is considered one of the great activities of man in the search for common good of the society, and good government is measured by the degree to which it promotes the public good. In a moral political culture, actions and inactions are based on issues, not personal considerations, and politics is often engaged in for record setting and not personal profiteering.

### **(b) Individual Political Culture**

This is the political culture that was dominant in the Middle-Atlantic States through Illinois, and to the West where government has a very practical orientation and is instituted for utilitarian reasons. Emphasis is not on the common good of the society, but on how to restrict the powers of the state in intervening with the private lives of the citizens. In other words, in an Individual political culture, government exists for the purpose preserving and protecting private lives of the citizens. This type of political culture is not unconnected to the political history of the federalist/anti federalist, abolitionist and anti abolitionist movement in the United States.

### **(c) Traditional Political Culture.**

In this political culture, certain families run governmental activities and while others appear to be spectators, just like in a hierarchical and natural order system. Although government is seen as performing positive roles in the society, yet, people perceive the roles mainly in terms of maintaining social order and the general status quo. In this political culture, the ruling elite is indulged into mere conformism instead of innovation, and there is a strong interplay of class conspiracies. The Southern part of the United States was noted for this kind of political culture.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Attempt a comprehensive definition of political culture and highlight its relationship with and difference from political socialization.

### **Finer's Classification: Minimal, Low, Developed and Mature**

Another scholar, Finer, made invaluable contribution towards categorizing political culture. Unlike Almond & Verba and Daniel Elazar tripartite dimensions of

political culture, Samuel Finer, in his book, *The man on the Horse Back*, written in 1962, identifies four levels of political culture: Minimal, Low, Developed and Mature, and like Almond and Verba, he situated the different levels in different socio political environments. Finer's typology of political culture is however based on political institutions, procedures and legitimacy of rulers. Detailed discussion of his categorization is as follow.

#### **(a) Mature Political Culture**

This refers to a system in which institutions of government are very effective to the extent that majority follow appropriate procedures to recruit political leaders. In such a system, a political aberration such as military coup will not only be unwarrantable but also inconceivable. Countries such as Britain, Canada, United States and Australia are full of this political culture.

#### **(b) Developed Political Culture**

In this kind of system, there is high level of administrative and bureaucratic stability. Institutions of government may also be very effective e but people do not really concerned about the procedure of attaining governmental powers as well as how it is retained. Germany, Japan and the defunct Soviet Union rightly belong here.

#### **(c) Low Political Culture**

A low political culture is that in which one may not confidently call people citizens because they are very poorly organizes and are not pro active towards governmental activities. People do not also agree on bureaucratic and administrative position of the state, so, issues such as military coup, perverted revenue sharing and intra structural relations within the country may be subjected to prevailing pulse of the people rather that legitimate or established procedures. According to Finer, Egypt, Syria, South Korea, Turkey and Iran belong here.

#### **(d) Low Political Culture**

This is a system where the ruling class acts with impunity because they are brutal and more coercive than the unorganized and politically passive people. In this place military intervention in politics is perceived as normal, and leaders can fidget with public opinion at will. Nigeria belongs here. Note that at a time in Nigeria's history, intellectual and the political class proposed what they called diarchy, a system that enables cooperative operation of military and civilian rule. This shows how much the people had

been used to military rule. Many other countries of West Africa can also be put under this category.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Highlight the characteristics that are common to the three categorizations of political culture you have studied in this unit. Identify the ones you think best describe (1) your country (2) your ethnic nationality.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Political culture is another main thrust of political behaviour, just as political socialization. It means the totality of people's worldviews about political institution. It shares a dependent relationship with political socialization but still differs significantly from it. Let us conclude by making certain clarifications and assertions. First, from all written above you will notice that the issue of political culture categorization was much a discourse of the past, even though political culture itself has contemporary relevance. What this supposes is that what contemporary scholarship does is use dominant political behaviour in particular community to analyze issues there in because having subjected the early categorizations to empirical testing, it has slippery validity in many cases. It is therefore possible to identify new political culture categorization in each political community that is studied. In addition, you also need to note that the three categorizations used here, with the Almond and Verba's as the most widely used, are not the only ones in scholarship. There are a few other ones. Finally, what you should grasp firmly is that the ways people interact with politics differ from one cultural setting to another, so, political culture can be as many as these cultural settings if we want to categorize it across the globe.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

What we have done above is define and describe political culture through a few scholarly perspectives that run from the 1900s down to recent period. We have also compared political culture with political socialization and concluded that though the two concepts share dependent relationship, they have their different identities. In summary, there are many ways scholars have categorized political culture. Almond and Verba has the parochial, subject and participant, Daniel Elazar has moral, individual and traditional, while Samuel Finer has mature, developed, low and minimal. There are other categorizations from other scholars. The most important point to grasp in this unit is that just as peoples' culture differs from one society to the other, political culture also differs from one political community to another.

## 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Identify a definition of political culture that you appreciate most amongst the ones given
2. Highlight the difference between political culture and political socialization
3. Explain how Samuel Finer categorize political culture
4. Identify the Almond and Verba's three types of political culture

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## UNIT 3:

# **MAJOR AGENTS OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION**

## **1.0 Introduction**

## **2.0 Objectives**

## **3.0 Main Content**

### **3.1 Primary Agents of Political Socialization**

### **3.2 Secondary Agents of Political Socialization**

## **4.0 Conclusion**

## **5.0 Summary**

## **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

## **7.0 References/Further Reading**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Although there are many agents of political socialization, including but are not limited to Family, Media, Peers, Education, Religion, Race, Gender, Age and Geography, and in fact every point where man meets man, only a few major ones shall be discussed in this unit. The unit categorizes them into two: primary and secondary. The two categories shall be fully discussed.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

Knowledge of this unit shall assist the student in:

- (a) Identifying the various agents of socialization
- (b) Distinguishing between the primary and the secondary ones
- (c) Understanding how they work to socialize people into politics

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

The main content here discusses the major agents of political socialization. These agents refer to institutions and structures that socialize people into politics; the agents that people are introduced to as they grow up, and that affect their political views throughout the rest of their lives. In a sense we can divide the agents of political socialization into two broad categories: the primary and the secondary.



### **3.1 Primary Agents of Political Socialization**

The primary agents of political socialization are those that people first come across when they are children and they unavoidably interact with as they grow. Almost all human beings pass through these agents, though not necessarily on their will. The primary agents of political socialization in today's world include the family, the school, the peer group and the religious gatherings. In the contemporary world these socialization agencies can hardly be avoided, and they affect people's beliefs and attitudes towards politics. In what follows we shall discuss these agents one after the other.

#### **(a) The Family:**

The family is a principal agent of political socialization, or any other form of socialization at all. In fact, M. Kent Jennings in his 2007 work titled **Political Socialization** asserts that "from the early scholarly inquiries on through to the present time, the role of the family as a prime agent of socialization has occupied an important place in the literature". This is because the family is a relatively small and enduring institution that makes the processes of learning and imitation easier. Apart from this, the family is the first point of call of the individual, and, to that extent, it determines a lot about individual's behaviour; including the political. Above all, every human being, by no choice of theirs, is presumably born into a family, so, except in few cases, every human being passes through the socialization of the family.

#### **(b) The School**

Formal educational system organized in forms of schools and colleges is a common phenomenon in the modern world. In fact, most advanced countries of the world are beginning to lay claim to zero percent illiteracy level in their society while third world countries are following suit. The implication of this is that everyone in the society will now have to pass through one form of school or the other. Thus, the school, like the family, is an agent of socialization that is almost impossible to escape. Some societies deliberately teach subjects such as civics, political history and government to educate their citizens on politics. National anthems and other extra curriculum exercises are basically performed in schools to expose students to certain values about politics. What most people know and believe about politics is therefore, especially in today's world, a function of school attendance. The school then qualifies as a primary agency of political socialization.

#### **(c) The Peer Group**

Man, by nature, Aristotle has long insisted, is a political animal. What you get from this is that man is a gregarious being that love to live with, and around other men. In the process of this social interaction peer groups are formed. These groups consist of people of same or close age brackets, and members of the groups learn many things socially from one another through emulation and reciprocal determinism. If a person belongs to a peer group that is politically conscious for instance, the tendency of the person to become very active and interested in the politics of his nation is very high due to the kind of socialization received in the course of interacting with his or her peers. Peer group is also a primary agent of political socialization because it is difficult to escape in the process of existing in the society. Even schools where the child is socialized is full of peer group influence, though many peer groups also exist outside the school.

#### **(d) Religious Gatherings**

Apart from the family and the school, organized religious gathering is another very strong agency of political socialization in the modern world. It is almost inescapable today. When people gather in the name of religion, they often inevitably discuss socio political issues that concern them directly or indirectly, politics being, according to David Easton, “authoritative allocation of values in the society”. Values that may be authoritatively allocated to, or omitted from people’s homes, families, streets, work places, states of residence, international relation and so on, often make people relate with politics even in religious gatherings where they are supposed to be worshipping. Today is universities, religious associations sponsor candidates into elective positions in order to gain influence. Citizens of some countries consider the religious affiliation of a political candidate as determinant of his or her capacity to rule, and such beliefs color behaviour even in elections. The discussions and decision on these political issues are often taken in religious gatherings; hence, religion becomes a strong agent of political socialization.

In summary, take a look at your life today, the foregoing four structures family, school, peer groups- that is friends and colleagues- as well as your religious gathering are four structures that you constantly interact with almost on weekly basis, and in all of them, it is almost certain that politics is discussed either directly or indirectly. This makes the four of them primary agents of political socialization. In what follows however, we shall discuss four more agents of socialization that are not as central to man as the ones considered as primary.

### **3.2 Subordinate Agents of Political Socialization**

Structures and institutions such as the media and political parties are not common to all men; they are optional, so they belong to the secondary political socialization agents. Other ones in this category are gender and age which are though common to all men, yet, do not command strong organizational political influence that, say, the church

and the school may have. Let us examine these four agents of political socialization in details.

### **(a) The Media**

The media is a strong agent of political socialization. The print media produces newspapers and magazines while the electronic media comes in forms of radio and television. In all of these media politics and political issues are discussed in daily basis. In fact, it has been argued by Allan Smith that the 21<sup>st</sup> century press media is a political media as majority of the news items are either completely political or are connected to politics. The most recent one is the social media: the facebook and the twitters that are fast penetrating the whole world. Issues discussed in all these media create values, attitudes and believes in people, and as such, stand as means of socializing them into politics as well as influencing their political behaviour.

### **(b) Political Party**

A political party is an organized body of people who participate in political activities with the sole aim of getting political power. Membership of a political party automatically translates to discussion and practice of political activities, with all the pranks, and the intrigues. People who belong to political parties learn a great deal of their political tricks, values, orientations, opinions and believes from them, so, the political party is a very strong agent of political socialization. In specific terms, political parties have orientations and ideological divides. There are left wing parties, right wing parties, mass parties and so on, and the orientation that is dominant in each of these parties are systematically handed down to their members from one generation to another. In Britain you have the conservative (right wing) and the labour (left wing) political parties. In the United States it is between the Republican (right wing) and the Democrat (left wing) parties. Although Nigerian political parties have been unstable and episodic since independence, the current ideological divide still stands between the PDP and the APC.

### **(c) Gender**

Until recently when universal adult suffrage has permeated the whole world, gender was a very key issue in political socialization. In the earlier Athenian society in Greece, women were not allowed to participate in politics, and so it was in some other parts of the world. The implication is that men would be differently socialized to form different believes opinions and orientation of politics, compared to women. Now that the dichotomy is changing rapidly, and universal adult suffrage is gaining popularity around the world; women's socialization in politics is fast taking different dimension. Conversely, in the old Oyo kingdom where women were known to occupy important political positions such as

Iyalode, Iyaloja and Iyalaje, and where they exerted great influence in the politics of their people, there was a difference in gender relationship with politics, and this created egalitarian and democratic values among the people. You may wish to read Eesuola's *Using Indigenous Political Structures to Facilitate Democratic Ideals in Nigeria: Lessons from Pre Colonial Yoruba Kingdom*, published in the University of Lagos, Nigeria, Sociological Review, Volume 9, 2011.

#### (d) **Age**

Also unlike gender, age was and is still a strong factor in the politics of courtiers. Today, as a result of universal adult suffrage, most constitutions allow citizens of eighteen years to vote and be voted for. In some countries where gerontology is common in political activities, only old people take certain electoral positions in politics. These different practices in different societies often shape opinions and orientations of people towards politics, so, age is equally an agent of political socialization.

Let us also quickly add that socialization may involve an individual's formative years, or his mature years, or both. Political socialization through the primary agency is not only latent, but also tends to occur during the formative years of an individual. Political socialization through secondary agencies, on the other hand, tends to be manifest and to occur during an individual's relatively mature years.

Political socialization can produce either systemic or non-systemic change. Systemic change refers to a fundamental or far-reaching change in the distribution or exercise of authority in the political system. Non-systemic change, on the other hand, refers to relatively insignificant or incremental changes in the patterns of political participation and association which do not alter or upset the existing distribution of power and authority in the polity. Indeed, generally speaking, political socialization is essentially a stabilizing process and hardly produces systemic change. The political socialization process becomes destabilizing, or produces systemic change, only under conditions of rapid modernization or general societal crisis.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Compare and contrast the super ordinate agents of socialization to the subordinate ones. Identify the most effective agents amongst all of them.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Socialization is driven by certain agents in the society. Some of these agents are primary, and in this unit we also refer to them as super ordinate and principal. They are family, school religious groups and peer groups. Others are secondary, otherwise referred to as subordinate. They are media, age, gender and political parties. All these

agents are the channels through which people are socialized into politics from one generation to another, and they produce systematic and non systematic changes in people's behaviour. .

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

We have discussed agents or agencies of political socialization. We stress that these agencies are many, but some are more central than the others. The central ones we call the principal agent, while the less central ones are called the subordinate agents. All these agents influence the opinions of citizens towards politics and policies in the state, so they are all regarded as agents of political socialization.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Describe what you understand as the agents of political socialization
2. Attempt an explanation that distinguishes the principal agents of socialization from the subordinates.

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## **UNIT 4:**

### **IMPACTS OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION ON POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content: Major Agents of Political Socialization**

##### **3.1 Family Socialization and Political Behaviour**

##### **3.2 Socialization in the School and its Effects on Political Behaviour**

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

#### **5.0 Summary**

#### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

#### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit discusses the impacts of political socialization on political behavior; that is how people behave, the totality of their dominant attitudes, values and orientation in the day to day relationship of individuals and groups with their political environment. As asserted in the earlier units, the family and the school are the principal agents of political socialization in the modern world, and they are the ones specifically isolated for discussion and analysis in this unit. However, while using the socialization in the family and the school to assess political behaviour of individuals and groups, we do not underrate the other agents of socialization. School and family are just used as models, so, students should, in their personal studies, apply the peer group, religious institutions, age, race, etc for analysis, using similar methods.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you are expected to gain the knowledge of:

- (a) The relationship between political socialization and the behaviour of people towards politics.
- (b) How the family and the school socialization specifically affect people's political behaviour

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Patterns of Socialisation in the Family**

There are several ways in which patterns of socialization in the family can influence political behaviour exhibited by children who are raised in that family. Some four of these ways are authority patterns, socio-economic status (SES), civic orientations or knowledge, and political participation patterns all in the family. In what follows we offer detailed discussion of these four factors.

#### **(a) Authority Patterns in the Family**

The individual's predisposition to participate in, or withdraw from politics may be influenced by his early relationship with his parents. In a family situation where authority is dispersed, where there is warmth between the child and his parents, and where disciplinary control is more liberal, flexible and permissive, where children are encouraged to engage in debate and analysis of issues before important decisions are taken, offspring and other members of the family will ideally turn out active in politics. They are more likely to engage authorities, query facts, policies and decisions, and, in short, operate with a high sense of political efficacy: the degree to which an individual feels he can influence or determine political decisions. Children raised in a liberal family environment will tend to develop either transitional or gladiatorial participant attitudes (these shall be discussed under political participation); not likely to be spectatorial.

Conversely, however, a family setting where authority is concentrated in one person (usually the father), where there is no closeness or warmth between the child and his parents, and where disciplinary patterns are extremely severe, the child may become too subservient, too passive and too psychologically insecure in life. Scientifically speaking, such child is most likely to grow up as a conservative being. He or she sees whatever the people in authority do as final and may not have any effrontery to challenge it. His political participation is likely to be spectatorial, his ideology conservative and his attitude either docility or mere endorsement.

#### **(b) Family's' Socio-Economic Status (SES)**

The socio economic condition of the family as a socializing agent contributes to children's ultimate political behaviour. People of high socio economic status often tend to be more active and prominent in politics because in most cases they would have conquered hunger and most material deprivations, so, they have enough time to sit, theorize and query issues around them. The lower-status people, on the other hand, are often preoccupied with resolving material contradictions and other basic needs in their lives, so, they have little time to sit and think about politics. Justin Labinjoh captures this class dimension to political behaviour when he declared that "socio economic circumstances always constrain members of various classes to relate differentially to the social structure," and that such has "implications for individual dramaturgical skills and therefore for the individual's perception of social reality"

Moreover, because children from higher status families are in a better position to benefit from other socializing institutions such as the mass media and elite schools which encourage civic or participant attitudes, at least compared to children of poorer parents, the political behaviour of the former tends to be pro active. In addition, socio economic condition greatly influences authority patterns in the family, to the extent that liberal child-rearing practices tend to characterize higher status families, while authoritarian practices tend to typify lower-status families. As a result of this, people from higher status backgrounds may be better disposed psychologically and normatively to participate in politics than those from lower backgrounds.

### **(c) Family's Civic Knowledge and Orientations**

The dominant knowledge of politics or overall orientation towards socio political events in a family often carries serious weight in how offspring of the family are socialized. Politically conscious or ideologically deep parents may be more likely to encourage the discussion of politics in their homes, and by so doing they increase the interests and understanding of politics in their children and other people living and around the family.

### **(d) Family's Political Involvement or Participation**

Biographical accounts of famous political leaders are full of instances of children who have followed in their parents' footsteps by becoming very active politicians because an intensely politicized family atmosphere stimulates activist tendencies or attitudes in the offspring in the family. Consequently, offspring in politically active families eventually turn out as activists themselves; a situation made possible through a principle of social learning called imitation. A good example is that of the Nigerian musician/political activist called Fela Anikulapo Kuti whose counter cultural and anti establishment political disposition was largely imitated from the activities of his mother and father. At this point you may want to read about social learning principles and theories, especially that of Albert Bandura. The 2011 University of Lagos doctoral dissertation of Eesuola Olukayode, as supervised by Professor Remi Anifowose also



promises to be a useful source of how the family socializes people into certain pattern of political behaviour. So, this part of the unit has identified how socialization patterns in the family, especially the issues concerning authority patterns, socio-economic status, civic knowledge and political involvement influence political behaviour of people

### **3.2 Socialization in the School and its Effects on Political Behaviour**

Apart from the family, the educational system of a country plays an important role in the inculcation of attitudes and values that can shape the nature and degree of people's political behaviour in the society. This is where the school comes in. The relationships between the school authorities and students, the pattern of relations among the students themselves, the content of civic courses and the general organization and administration of the school system all play significant roles in implanting or inhibiting certain attitudes and dispositions of people towards politics. In two specific ways this can be done:

#### **(a) Content of Curriculum**

A school where civic education, politics, political history or subjects of revolution cuts across classes and levels of learning is likely to socialize students into a more active political behaviour; vice versa. In like manner, if, instead of the foregoing subjects, students are generally thought religiosity and doctrines under the guise of mission schools for instance, it is not unlikely to socialize students into dogmatic and conservative political attitudes. Formal learning in schools, in the forms of cognitive engagement of students, affects the political behaviour of students who school there.

#### **(b) Dimensions of Extra Curricular Activities**

Another major means by which the educational system can tangentially influence students' political behaviour is through involvement in school activities, particularly at the secondary and, or tertiary levels. Secondary schools that have organizations such as the press club, literary and debating society, as well as para military organizations such as Man o War will often periodically discuss issues of and around politics. Selection of prefects in the school can also be made through free and fair elections. In tertiary institutions also, activities such as students unionism, faculty and departmental associations as well as membership of special committees can also greatly combine to influence the political behaviour of students therein, compared to a university where all these are not permitted to occur. In essence, involvement in school activities can be an important influence on the individual's subsequent political behaviour at the larger strata of the society.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Let us conclude with a reminder that other agents of political socialization discussed in this booklet, the mass media, religious groups, political parties, age and

gender; as well as others not discussed: race, occupational groups and government agencies also play an important role in influencing an individual's dispositions attitudes and behavior towards politics.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

Two principal agents of political socialization: the family and the school have been used in this unit to explain how they can influence the political behaviour and general disposition of people. At the family level we highlighted authority patterns, socio-economic status, civic knowledge and political participation, while at the school level our focus is on content of curriculum and extracurricular activities. All these make or mar the political behaviour in the society.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Briefly describe ways schools socialize students into politics.
2. Critically evaluate the role of the family as an agent of political socialization.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTEHR READING**

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## **Unit 5:**

### **FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **3.1 Analysis of the Functions**

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

#### **5.0 Summary**

#### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

#### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Our discussion so far, about political socialization clearly suggests that political socialization performs certain roles in the socio political development and continuity of a nation. Some of these functions shall be discussed in this unit.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the time you learn the content in this unit, you shall be able to:

- (a) Understand the various functions of political socialization
- (b) Appreciate the reasons political socialization should be deliberately encouraged in the society

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Analysis of the Functions**

##### **(a) Intergenerational Transmission of Political Values**

Political socialization assists every society in preserving political culture across time. It also helps to inculcate political values and orientation in people. This is the function we call intergenerational transmission of political norms, and, by extension, values, symbols and ideas. For instance, a person who attends the university, majors in engineering and later gets employment in an engineering firm may not at all understand the workings of law making and recall except he or she witnessed it at the level of students union which the school as an agent of political socialization offers. In an increasingly complicated world where politics is fast becoming everyone's business even though we do not all major in politics, agents of socialization serves the purpose of transmitting political values and norms from one generation to the other, and this helps in ensuring stability in the society.

##### **(b) Stability of Polity**

By virtue of performing the foregoing function of intergenerational transmission of values and inculcation of political culture, political socialization helps to maintain continuity and stability in the society. Such stability is needed to advance the course of the society from all walks of life. To the extent that political socialization is a means of role-training therefore, it, at any time equips the members of a society with the basic skills necessary for political participation or the performance of important political roles.

##### **(C) Creation of Hegemonic Order**

Political socialization helps the society to create hegemonic order. Every political environment needs hegemony to stabilize and develop, hegemony being a subtle, non coerced assimilation of how things are done in a society. Political socialization helps a society to foster this, and every member of the society needs only little push or coercion to obey the law and promote good values.

##### **(d) National Discipline**

Political socialization makes it easy to ensure some degree of discipline among members of a political community. In other words, political socialization curbs or controls disruptive political behaviour by ensuring that members of a society behave in a manner that is socially acceptable to the majority of the people, and especially the hegemonic class.

(e) Political socialization assists in promotion of patriotism and nationalism. People, who learn the political values, beliefs and orientations of their people and hand the same down from one generation to the other tend to become obsessed with it. They see themselves as being embedded in such values and ideas and are often willing to defend and promote it at any time necessary. This is called patriotism, and it is useful for the domestic and international aura of a state.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss in details the roles that political socialization plays in the society.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Political socialization performs some functions in the polity. These functions are basically for continuity and stability, and they affect not only the political, but also the economic and social strata of a political community.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

We have identified some functions of political socialization such as intergenerational transmission of political values, the maintenance of continuity in society, the regulation of the behaviour of members of a political community, creation of hegemonic order, role-training and patriotism and so on. . This is based on the assumption that political socialization is a process, and a continuum too. At every point in time in a society it transforms, and only that way it plays the roles ascribed to it above.

### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. In your words explain how political socialization creates hegemonic order.
2. Identify the ways political socialization assist in political development.

### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **MODULE THREE: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Unit 1: Definitions and Scope of Political Participation

Unit 2: Levels of Political Participation

Unit 3: Factors Affecting Political Participation

Unit 4: Dimensions of Political Participation

### **UNIT 1:**

#### **DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

##### **1.0 Introduction**

##### **2.0 Objectives**

##### **3.0 Main Content**

### **3.1 Definitions of Political Participation**

### **3.2 Scope of Political Participation**

### **4.0 Conclusion**

### **5.0 Summary**

### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

## **UNIT 1: DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Recall that in the previous units we asserted that political socialization of a people determines their attitudes and values towards politics, that is, whether they participate at all or not, the dimensions of their participation, the degree and the period. This is what we broadly defined as political behaviour of people. Here we now focus on political participation per se. The unit is divided into two parts, the first covering an array of definitions of political participation by known scholars, while the second addresses its main scope.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- (a) Define political participation from various scholarly viewpoints
- (b) Discuss the main scope of political participation

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Definitions of Political Participation**

Like most political science concepts, political participation has attracted several definitions and meanings from several scholars. Some of these definitions are generic, that is, they try as much as possible to capture all aspects and dimensions in which people can participate in politics. Some are however limited, in that they discriminate against some aspects of participation as irregular or abnormal. We consider a few of them in what follows. While the following definition is seemingly restrictive:

- (a) Political participation refers to those legal activities by private citizens which are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and/or the actions they take (Norman H. Nie and Sidney Verba).

What follows here is a group of broader senses of meaning.

- (a) The activity of private citizens designed to influence government decision making. (Samuel Huntington and Jorge Dominguez).
- (b) Those voluntary activities by which members of society share in the selection of rulers and, directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy (H. McClosky).
- (c) Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government.

What is of utmost important to contemporary study of political behaviour is that political participation can include both legal and illegal attempts to influence governmental decisions. It is concerned with influencing the composition and conduct, or personnel and policies. It is not limited to voting at elections but includes many other ways in which citizens try to influence governmental decisions. It is based on this that we discuss in what follows, the various dimensions that political participation can take in human society.

### **3.2 Scope of Political Participation**

By scope of political participation we mean those broad of activities that political participation covers, or that can be regarded as forms of political participation. When people campaign for candidates during elections, or they attend constituency meetings or cast their ballot during voting period, we often consider their actions as political participation. Remember however, that not doing all these, or doing them for certain reasons are also forms of participation in politics. A renowned professor of philosophy, Jim Una once wrote that “even nothing is nothing”, and a very popular slogan in party electioneering politics is that “failure to vote for a candidate is a ballot cast for the opponent of the candidate”. Based on this logic, the scope of political participation shall be bi patterned: direct or action based, as well as indirect or attitude based political activities.

#### **(a) Direct or action based Political Activities:**

These activities refer to those that people deliberately engage in as standards of participation in politics. They include voting, attendance of meetings, campaigning, sponsorship of candidates, money and material donation, attending rallies and committee meetings, etc. These actions are clear cut, and need no further interpretation before they



are recognized as forms of political participation. Those who participate in them often have defined political goals, even when not disclosed.

### **(b) Indirect or Attitude Based Political Participation:**

These refer to people's attitudes and dispositions that indirectly influence politics around them. This form of political participation is not necessarily clear cut, and it is often unclear if those who display them are aware of their impact as political participation. These attitudes include but are not limited to agitation, resistance, apathy, endorsement, docility, skepticism, cynicism, etc. Those who display resistance attitude towards politics for instance complement chance of leadership in extra electoral forms, while apathetic persons allow other citizens have field days fielding and electing their own candidates. If they apathetic person had voted, his vote only could make any difference in number, and as he or she refuses to vote, the attitude displayed increases the chances of a candidate in opposition. This aspect is also covered by political participation.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Attempt a holistic definition of political participation and highlight its main scope.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, political participation is a concrete activity or behaviour, and not simply a psychological orientation or disposition as political culture and socialization. It refers to the totality of ways and means through which people react to and relate with issues in governance and politics. It is neither sacrosanct nor immutable, but its scope covers both direct (action based), and indirect (attitude based) participation.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

We have, in the above discussion, defined political participation from the legalist and liberal perspectives. We asserted that political participation covers both legal and anti legal activities. After this we explored the scope of political participation. In specific terms, we identified two scopes: Please note that these are dimensions not levels or categories. Political participation still has dimensions and levels, and they will be addressed in other units.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Political participation is a concrete activity or behavior. Discuss.
2. Identify and explain the role socialisation in actions of political participants

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Dowse, R and Hughes, J. (1972) *Political Sociology*, London, John Wiley.

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## **UNIT 2:**

### **LEVELS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND THEIR CORRESPONDING ACTIVITIES**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **3.1 Gladiatorial political participation**

##### **3.2 Transitorial Political Participation**

##### **3.3 Spectatorial Political Participation**

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

#### **5.0 Summary**

#### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

## **7.0 References/Further Reading**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Apart from the forms which focus on the interpretation of attitudes as participating in politics, political participation can also occur at various levels. Getting involved in political participation entails costs in time, energy and resources, yet individuals and groups differ in the amount of resources that they are able or willing to devote to political participation. Thus, while most people engage in one kind of political participation or another, not all persons are able to participate in politics to the same degree. In other words, participation of some people can be more holistic than others. These levels of participation shall be discussed in this unit.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- (a) Understand that political participation occurs at different levels
- (b) Identify the different level of political participation

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

In his 1965 book titled Political Participation, Lester Malbraith, categorized political participation at the spectator-level, the transitional level and the gladiatorial level. This unit shall use this categorization in anti-climax, and will also attempt certain activities that are corresponding to them.

#### **3.1 Gladiatorial political participation**

This is the highest level of political participation a man can attain in a society. People who participate at this level engage in activities such as presenting themselves as candidates for political offices, or holding the offices at particular times, getting financial grants from political parties for the purpose of elections, and politicking through caucus formations, faction formation or kitchen cabinet. Political participation at this level takes so much time and resources that those engaged in them hardly do other things aside politics. So, if you look around you today, those people like your country's president, governors, senators, presidential and gubernatorial aspirants as well as other very active political figures even at the local government levels, can be considered participants of politics at gladiatorial level. They can also be called members of the political class, and they constitute about 5 percent of the population of any political community.

#### **3.2 Transitorial Political Participation**

Transitorial political participation is next in hierarchy to the gladiatorial. Participants at this level often engage in activities that mostly facilitate ground for

gladiatorial participants most likely with the hope of getting political appointment after their candidates are successful. People who participate at transitorial level are often very charismatic as much as gladiatorial participants, but due to lack of other political logistics such as money, zoning, godfathers' preferences (where they play active roles in politics), and such people may choose to work behind the scene. Major activities at the level of transitorial participation are meeting organization and attendance, communication, advocacy and campaigns, liaising with incumbent power, as well as making of monetary donations to candidates at the gladiatorial level.

### **3.3 Spectatorial Political Participation**

Spectatorial political participation includes but is not limited to voting, attending campaign rallies, displaying party symbols and influencing friends and family to vote in certain direction. These are activities that every citizen is expected to engage in as civil responsibility, aside from those having some things at stake. This kind of participation is quite common amongst people. It is relatively less expensive in terms of time and resources, so, it a majoritarian kind of political participation.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Critically compare and contrast the three levels of political participation as highlighted in this unit.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Our conclusion is that political participation is a diverse and complex process which embraces a wide range of activities. Lester Malbraith classified these activities into spectatorial, transitional and gladiatorial, each one unique to the population and class that are likely to engage in it. Specifically, majority of people participate at the spectatorial level because it is cheaper and less time demanding, then it flows up like that.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

Participation in politics comes at different levels. There are the spectatorial, transitorial and gladiatorial levels of political participation in every society, and each of the levels comes with its cost and capabilities.

### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Analyse Lester Malbraith's categorization of the levels of political participation.
2. Explain how the levels of political participation differ from one another.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Dowse, R and Hughes, J. (1972) *Political Sociology*, London, John Wiley.

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## **UNIT 3:**

### **FACTORS AFFECTING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **3.1 Political Culture and Institutional Electoral Arrangements**

##### **3.2 Party System, Political Leadership and Socio-economic Status**

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

#### **5.0 Summary**

#### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

#### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The last unit discussed political participation and identified the different level scholars have made of it. However, political participation does not just vary from level to level and dimension to dimension, certain factors determine these differences, and such

factors are what provide explanation for why some people and countries engage in politics at different levels. More particularly, third world countries of the world do not have the same number of people participating at transitorial level for instance, as one may get in advanced countries. The factors that determine this difference are what will be discussed in this unit.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- (a) Identify and analyze the factors behind differences or variation in political participation across nations and among social groups within nations; and
- (b) Assess, in a more detailed and competent manner, the nature, sources and conditions of political participation in various political systems.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Factors Affecting Political Participation**

This unit identifies five determinants of political participation, namely political culture, institutional and electoral arrangement; then party system, political leadership and socio-economic status.

#### **(a). Political Culture**

Political culture includes 'the state of attitudes, beliefs emotions and values of society that relate to the political system and to political issues'. Writers like Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba have attempted to explain participation and apathy in terms of national differences in political culture. Some countries are said to have participatory or participant cultures, and others subject or non-participatory cultures. Where cultures are participatory, citizens display great enthusiasm for politics, exhibit a high degree of pride in national political institutions and have a high sense of political efficacy and civic duty. Non-participatory or subject political cultures, on the other hand, foster attitudes of passivity, isolation, deference and citizen-withdrawal.

In their book, *The Civic Culture*, for example, Almond and Verba describe the United States of America and Britain as having participant culture, and Germany and Italy as having a largely non-participant or subject culture. It is, however, significant to note that a higher percentage of the electorate participate in voting in Italy, where voter turnout in the seventies was about 94 per cent, than in the United States, which had an average voter turnout of 54 percent in the same period. This suggests that there may be other factors, apart from political culture, which influence political participation.

#### **(b) Institutional and Electoral Arrangements**

Institutional and electoral arrangements have a significant impact on political participation, particularly voter turnout. An electoral system based on proportional representation, whereby all parties are represented in parliament in proportion to the number of votes they receive, encourages parties and candidates to mobilize voters everywhere and, therefore, increases voter turnout. On the other hand, however, the use of the majority or first-past-the-post system - which is based on single-member constituencies, with the party with the highest votes in a constituency winning the seat for that constituency - leads to an imbalance in the translation of votes into legislative seats and creates a disincentive to voting and Voter turnout.

A multi-party system, by encouraging coalition governments, gives elections a less decisive role in government formation and, consequently, depresses voter turnout. By the same token, a two-party system will tend to encourage voter participation. Unicameral legislative system, by providing a clearer link between electorates and legislation, encourages citizen participation. And because this link is relatively less visible in bicameral systems, participation in elections tends to be lower in such systems

Finally, mandatory voting laws induce increased voter turnout, while difficult eligibility or voting registration requirements dampen voter turnout. For example, countries like Australia, Belgium and Italy have laws that compel voting, as did the Netherlands until 1970. In the United States of America, on the other hand, electoral regulations requiring relatively stringent residency and other eligibility requirements have inhibited voter differently.

In other words, we have identified the impact of political culture and institutional and electoral arrangements on political participation. Participant political cultures tend to encourage greater citizen participation than subject cultures. Similarly, the proportional representation principle, two-party system, unicameralism and mandatory voting laws encourage the participation of citizens in voting. The first-past-the-post electoral system, multi-party system, bicameralism and difficult voting registration or eligibility requirements, on the other hand, discourage voter turnout.

### **3.2 Party System, Political Leadership and Socio-economic Status**

#### **(c) The Party System**

Political parties are extremely important in encouraging citizens to become politically active. In some countries, the party system presents rather drastic choices of policy, ideology and group benefits. In other countries, however, the parties do not offer sharply contrasting alternatives to voters. Where choices are sharply divergent and parties are clearly linked to particular groups, the stakes of participation are very high, and citizens are more likely to get politically involved.

Furthermore, some parties do make considerable efforts to get citizens to vote. In India and Mexico, for example, political parties, especially the governing parties, have often sent out trucks to round up voters in the rural areas. In many other nations, party officials make elaborate efforts to contact voters and to ensure that they actually vote. Because these party mobilization strategies are well developed in some nations, such as Austria and Netherlands, moderately developed in others, such as Western Germany and France, and quite weak in others, including most parts of Nigeria and the United States, voting turnout is shaped accordingly.

#### **(d) Political Leadership**

Leaders or candidates with a particularly strong personal appeal can bring many apathetic or apolitical people into political activity. Dwight D. Eisenhower, a hero of the Second World War (1937-45), enjoyed such personal popularity or appeal in the United States in the 1950s. Julius Nyerere in Tanzania and Fidel Castro in Cuba are two charismatic leaders of developing countries who have mobilized their respective citizens into often intermittent, and sometimes sustained, political activity.

#### **(e) Socio-economic Status (SES)**

Studies have repeatedly shown that better-educated, wealthier and occupationally-skilled citizens are more likely, on the average, to develop participant attitudes. These citizens invariably tend to be more politically enlightened, more attentive to political information, more politically efficacious and better able to make use of opportunities for participation, than less socio-economically privileged citizens. In short, better off citizens tend to be the most active in politics. This tendency is, however, less pronounced in voting participation and far more visible in the forming of pressure groups to influence governmental decisions. This lecture has, however, concentrated more on voting participation than any other form of political participation because voting is the simplest and most common form of participation in virtually all political systems.

In conclusion, we should note that there are many factors, other than the five discussed in this lecture, that affect political participation. Some of these other factors can be stated as follows: sex (men are more likely to participate in politics than women), residence (the longer a person resides in a given community, the greater the likelihood of his participation in politics), location (urban dwellers tend to be more active in politics than rural dwellers) and social involvement (those who participate in trade-union or voluntary activities are more likely to participate in politics than those who do not take part in such activities).

#### **SELF ASSESMENT EXERCISE**

Enumerate the different factors that determine political participation and emphasize how each factor does it.



## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

There are many factors affecting political participation. This unit has focused on five of these factors, namely political culture, institutional and electoral arrangements, the party system, political leadership and socio-economic status. Essentially, political participation will be higher in political systems where a participant, as distinct from subject, political culture prevails, where institutional and electoral arrangements compel or induce participation, where parties make efforts to mobilize voters and are ideologically and socially differentiated, and where the political leadership is charismatic. Furthermore, participation tends to be higher among higher-status than lower-status groups. A number of other factors, apart from the five enunciated above, which also affect levels of participation, particularly among social groups, can include: sex, residence location and social involvement.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit has attempted to show the impact of the party system, political leadership and socio-economic status on political participation. It has also very briefly identified the role of such other factors as sex, residence, location, and social involvement. Apart from the relevant sections of Almond and Powell's book referred to in the last section, you will also find a useful and exhaustive discussion of the factors affecting political participation in chapter nine of *Political Sociology* by Dowse and Hughes.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Evaluate how party systems and political leadership determine political participation.
2. Identify any two major factors that affect political participation.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## **UNIT 4:**

### **DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **3.1 Conservative / Radical**

##### **3.2 Active/Passive**

##### **3.3 Aggressive versus Non Aggressive**

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

#### **5.0 Summary**

#### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

#### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Recall that you have learnt the definition, scope as well as factors that determine political participation. This having being done, it is also important to discuss the dimensions that political participation can take in human societies. Political participation is another way of expressing human relation with politics. Take note that these dimensions are not to be taken as type of political participation, rather, whether at the level of gladiator or spectator that basically typifies political participation, any of the dimensions to be discussed here can be dominant.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to do the following:

- (a) Distinguish between forms and dimensions of political participation;
- (b) Identify and explain dimensions of political participation;
- (c) Compare and contrast each dimension of political participation; (and)
- (d) Be able to explain the dimension of political participation of your colleagues and you.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

Behaviouralists of the old regarded political participation mostly as those legal activities that are permitted by the state for the citizens to use in influencing leadership, governance and politics. They even seem to assert, almost sacrosanct, that political participation only occurs in a democratic setting. But Lam, W. (2003) has asserted that “Political participation refers to lawful and unlawful activities of supports, making demands, debates and other forms of expression communicated verbally or through the media, and targeted at the rulers. He adds that it also includes “activities that are designed to pose challenges to existing rules, norms and practices”

Operating from the foregoing sense, political participation is not necessarily those actions that are legal, violent or non violent, electoral or not electoral, as some scholars attempted to cage it. Rather, it is a variety of attitudes that an individual or a group decides to use to act or react to politics and policies. Methods of political participation are unlimited, and they often depend on several factors on ground. This is probably why Kayode Eesuola’s study of the political protest of Fela Anikulapo Kuti of Nigeria concludes that “Actions of political protest may take several dimensions, ranging from street march, strike, writing, law suite, song, self immolation, suicide bombing and so on; all depending on the socialization, ideological worldview, exposure and skills of the protester, as well as the prevailing socio-political environment.” To address this complex issue of political participation and its dimensions, we shall, in this unit, have three radically opposing classifications.

However, one main concern is whether people can have two or more, or even mixed dimension. While it is true that we cannot box human beings to a particular sacrosanct description, what we often do is identify the dimension that is dominant, or that constantly occurs in a man, and then identify the man with it. In other words, the dimension of a man’s political participation is nothing from the dominant one among other that may be traceable to the man:

- a. Conservative versus Radical Political Participation
- b. Active/Passive Political Participation

## c. Aggressive/Non Aggressive Political Participation

### **3.1 Conservative versus Radical Political Participation**

We can perceive political participation from these two opposing dimensions. Conservative participation has to do with adhering strictly and unquestionably to the laws and the way it prescribe that people should participate, often with very poor or no understanding on the part of the participant. It has been constantly argued that law and rules in any society are often crafted in the interest of the dominant class though, yet, a conservative participant follows them almost with malice aforethought. For instance, some countries' constitutions make voting a compulsory civic responsibility, a norm which demands that people support the policies of government because they are made in the interest of all: and it is patriotic to mast national flag and sing national anthem, and so on. In the reverse however, radical political participation is what you get where participants do not accept laws and abide by rules without deliberately querying them. In this case, voting is a civic responsibility but radical participant will not vote where he perceives something wrong. Policies of government may only be respected to the extent that they serve public interests, national flags and national anthems may be turned down where political circumstances so demand. This dimension of political participation is radical.

### **3.2 Active/Passive Political Participation**

By active political participation we mean deliberate participation in political activities with vested interest. Attending a campaign rally to support a candidate or gain political knowledge, campaigning and voting for the purpose of ensuring victory for a candidate, attending town and constituency meetings and other forms of involvement in political activities can all be regarded as active political participation. Passive political participation, in the reverse, will refer to withdrawal from all active participations as highlighted above, getting to the stage of skepticism, cynicism and apathy due to political disappointment, refusing to act politically in time, and, in the extreme, becoming apolitical. This is based on the philosophy that even nothing is something, that is, not participating at all, or participating in ways not active are still dimensions of participation.

### **3.3 Aggressive versus Non Aggressive Political Participation**

This is the third dimension in which we can perceive political participation. Some people are, due to socialization and other factors, often more quickly disposed to aggressive attitude to politics, than others. Such people believe that actions such as riots, demonstration rallies, arson, terrorism and even revolution are the best ways of handling political issues. The self immolation of Benuazi of Tunisia in 2010 was an extreme example of aggressive political participation. In the contrary, some people prefer non

aggressive ways such as campaigning, street talks, writing letters, debates, sit-ins, hunger strike and so on. Gandhi of India and King Junior of the United States are revered as advocates of non violent non aggressive political participation, especially protest. Gani Fawehinmi and Fela Anikulapo Kuti also are.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Compare and contrast the three dimensions of political participation and articulate your thought on factors that may predispose people to each of them and, highlight which dimension you often participate in politics.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Finally, political participation does not only refer to concrete human activities, but also to their psychological orientation or disposition. It refers to the totality of ways and means through which people react to and relate with issues in governance and politics. It is neither sacrosanct nor immutable. Rather, it flows in different dimensions depending of several factors that colour the personality of participant.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

We have, in the above discussion, asserted that political participation comes in three radically opposing dimensions namely, the Conservative versus Radical Political Participation, the Active versus Passive Political Participation, and Aggressive versus non Aggressive Political Participation. Please note that these are dimensions, not levels or categories of participation.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Differentiate between dimension and form of political participation
2. Discuss the three dimensions to political participation

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Lam, W. (2003) "Alternative Understanding of Political Participation: Challenging the Myth of Political Indifference in Hong Kong" in International Journal of Public Administration, Vol.26.

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## **MODULE FOUR**

Unit 1: Meanings and Characteristics of Election

Unit 2: Functions of Elections

Unit 3: Approaches to the Study of Elections

Unit 4: Determinants of Electoral Behaviour

### **UNIT 1:**

#### **ELECTION:**

#### **DEFINITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

##### **1.0 Introduction**

##### **2.0 Objectives**

##### **3.0 Main Content**

###### **3.1 Definitions of Elections**

###### **3.2 Characteristics of Election**

##### **4.0 Conclusion**

##### **5.0 Summary**

##### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

##### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The central concern of this unit is to acquaint the student with the concept of election and some other basic issues that surround it. The unit is divided into meanings and characteristics. Under meanings we examine some definitions of the concept in order to provide you with broad views. Under the characteristics we discuss the political circumstances and situations that can produce elections

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

You should be able to do the following at the end of this unit:

- (a) Have an adequate insight into the meaning of elections;
- (b) Have good knowledge of the kind of political process used in election

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Definitions of Elections**

Although elections are fundamental and very common in modern political discourse and there is hardly any dispute about their meaning, they have, like many other social science concepts, been discussed from several perspectives. In what follows we consider some of the definitions

A good one to begin with is the definition by R. Dowse and J. Hughes (1972) who assert that “Elections are one type of social mechanism, amongst others, for aggregating preferences of a particular kind. An election is, therefore, a procedure recognized by the rules of an organization, be it a state, a club, a voluntary organization or whatever, where all, or some, of the members choose a smaller number of persons to hold an office, or offices, of authority within that organization”.

By analysis, this definition assumes that every political organization is democratic, and goes through the mechanism of elections in arriving at the smaller number of leaders that hold her offices. It is quite easy to describe this definition as impressionistic and hastily generalizing, considering the fact that it was given in 1972 when only about forty two percent of world’s nations were democratic and produced their leaders through elections.

Ball, A. (1977) can be accused of similar thing based on his definition that “elections are the means by which the people choose and exercise some degree of control over their representatives”. This simply suggests that wherever people are chosen to lead other people, the mechanism used is election.

### **3.2 Characteristics of Elections**

It is quite important for the behavioral scientist to clarify that to the extent that there are many forms of political system, ranging from monarchy, to totalitarianism, election is not, and cannot be the only way of choosing political leaders. The work however, is made easier as it limits the scope of elections to government at the level of the state. We shall discuss the circumstances of election in government in the following part.

**Electoral System:** Elections often hold under clearly defined electoral system.

**Suffrage:** The electorate does not generally include the entire population; for example, many countries prohibit those judged mentally incompetent from voting, and all jurisdictions require a minimum age for voting. While in Nigeria the voting age is 18, in other countries it is sixteen.

**Used in Democracy:** Because democracy is often regarded as government of the people by the people and for the people, election is often the main mechanism used to ensure that leadership is arrived at based on the wish of the people. Under democracy, election often means majority, mostly in number and sometimes in agreed forms of representation. In democratic systems, elections are based on certain electoral systems that are products of the evolution and history of the society. In the electoral system voting pattern, vote counting and winner declaration are the main issue. While we can have major electoral systems as proportional and majoritarian, other ones include party-list proportional representation, additional member system, First Past the Post (otherwise called relative majority) and absolute majority.

**Used in Constitutional Monarchy:** Elections are also used in constitutional monarchies where leadership is not arrived at through voting, but heredity, but, at the same time, operations of leaders are subjected to certain constitutional provisions. Elections in this type of political arrangement may not therefore necessarily follow any of the identified electoral systems

**Periodicity** Elections come periodically. While in certain countries they are held every four years as in the United States and Nigeria, other countries use five or six years. Nigeria at present is proposing six years single term for political office holders. Whatever it is, the period of elections is often also contained in a government's constitution.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Define elections from your view point and enumerate some of the ways its working is endured in democracies and constitutional monarchies.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Whichever way it is defined , what is certain is that elections are the means by which a wider body of persons chooses a smaller group of representatives to undertake



specified tasks, and though it takes place in a wide array of human organizations governmental and non-governmental, elections are used mainly in democratic system and constitutional democracies. It also has certain characteristics, some of which are suffrage and electoral system.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

We have discussed the concept of elections, highlighted some definitions and restricted our scope to the governmental aspect. We also identified certain characteristics and conditions under which elections operate.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Compare and contrast two of the definitions of elections provided above
2. Highlight some characteristics and conditions surrounding elections

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 2:**

### **FUNCTIONS OF ELECTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content**

### **3.1 Functions of Elections**

### **4.0 Conclusion**

### **5.0 Summary**

### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Even from the definitions and characteristics given in the past units, it is quite obvious that elections play a number of interrelated roles in the political systems. We shall discuss some of these roles in this unit, doing so under the assumption that a political system is a democratic political system.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

What you should be able to do after going through this unit are:

- (a) Understand the various functions of election in a political system;
- (b) Appreciate why democratic systems work with fewer contradictions compared to non democratic ones.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Functions of Elections**

#### **(a) Political Recruitment**

Elections provide people of a political community with the opportunity to vote and be voted for in the process of choosing representatives in government. This process is systematized, and it provides, at least in theory, platform for fair participation of many people. Perhaps without elections, only one family or clique will dominate political offices in a political community.

#### **(b) Peaceful Transfer of Power**

This systematization of recruitment process in elections is open and competitive, and therefore promises to eliminate unwarranted grudges and agitation. This means that

elections provide the basis for the orderly and peaceful transfer of power in a political system. It facilitates crisis free political succession if the rules guiding it are followed.

**(c) Interest Articulation**

During elections people are able to articulate their political interest either as individual candidates where allowed by the constitution, or as representative of a political party. Interest articulation is a very vital aspect of the workings of a political system.

**(d) Interest Aggregation**

As political interests and preferences differ in politics, elections help to aggregate them in political communities. It is through elections that the views and opinions of people are organized, translated and consolidated into definitive electoral choices and mandates that will eventually produce leaders and representatives at different levels.

**(e) Enhancement of Political Equality.**

Elections are very good means of are a means of bringing together the rich and the poor before the ballot box, making them equal at least for that moment, in their duties of politics. But for a mechanism like elections, the poor may never have any opportunity to mix up with the rich at all, especially in highly stratified societies.

**(f) Citizens' Control of Government**

Major role that elections play is provide means and mechanisms through which the people who are governed can influence the ways those who govern them conduct themselves. It is one sure way among "violence, in the form of riots and political assassination, and the exercise of pressure groups influence" through which, as Dowse and Hughes (1972) puts is, "the governors are controlled".

**(g) Sense of Political Community**

Elections help to integrate people into a strong sense of community spirit through the interaction it provides. This can assist a people in ameliorating contradictions such as ethnicity, religious dichotomy and indigene settler rivalry as we have in Nigeria and other parts of the world.

**(i) Extra Party Political Participation**

Elections often provide the opportunity for people outside political parties to participate in the political system, while enabling the government to lay claim to some degree of popular support or legitimacy. This is particularly so in one-party states where competition for elective offices is dominated and even controlled by the only political

party, and where the people merely support candidates chosen, or reject him or her if they like. They alone do not have direct choice.

### **(j) Political Communication**

Conduct of elections also ensures political communication between the citizens and those who govern them. People of a country, during electioneering campaigns have ample opportunities to ask their leaders how they have governed them over years. Without this kind of opportunity, governance will be esoteric and clandestine, and democracy will be reduced to conspiracy.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Elections play all sorts of roles in development of a people and their nation. People are developed by means of interaction within themselves and their leaders, and as a result of this, there is likely to be strong national bond that may translate to political and even economic development of the system.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Highlight why you have, or have never voted in any elections held in Nigeria, and articulate whether or not elections in Nigeria have lived up to the functions they are supposed to perform.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

Elections as a means by which representatives are chosen to perform specified tasks by, and on behalf of a wider body of persons has some functions in the political society of man. These functions include intra people development and people-government relation as detailed in the above highlights.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Explain the role that elections can play in developing the political attitudes of a people.
2. Enumerate how elections can build good governance

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Ball, A. (1977) *Modern Politics and Government*, London, Macmillan.

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## **UNIT 3:**

### **APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF ELECTIONS**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **3.1 The Case-Study Approach**

##### **3.2 The System Approach**

##### **3.3 The Sample Survey Approach**

##### **3.4 Nuffield Approach**

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

#### **5.0 Summary**

#### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

#### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

There is a wide variety of approaches to the study of election. However, the following ones identified by Denis Cohen have been quite dominantly used by many behavioral scientists and shall therefore be chosen for highlights in this unit.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to, among other things:

- (a) Understand some popular methodological approaches to the study of elections;
- (b) Compare and contrast these methodological approaches for use in practical political analysis

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 The Case-Study Approach**

This methodological approach 'relies on intensive case studies of small areas - a single constituency, town or district - in order to obtain a clearer picture of mass reaction to, and participation in, the elections'. This approach is quite popular in electoral studies but because it studies particular case in time, it often focuses on a single constituency of region, and the researcher may, in the process, gloss over important linkages between the case studied and the wider system. The case study approach is also susceptible to excessive emphasis on the cultural history and ecology of the local arena, rendering the electoral contest itself downgraded. In addition, conclusions reached from the case study approach may suffer adequate capacity for general applicability since they are often not generated from empirical premises.

### **3.2 The Nuffield Approach**

Named in line with the Oxford University' Nuffield College which has played an important role in encouraging research into elections in Britain as well as in Africa, this approach focuses on the wider national political and historical contexts of elections, making attempt to examine key issues in elections, number and nature of the political parties in elections, nature of electioneering campaigns, as well as background peculiarities of the parties, constituencies, and candidates involved in elections. This approach however tends to overlook developments, events and sentiments below the national centre of government, such as in single constituencies, towns or rural areas where elections are held. The case study approach is not known to have such limitation or challenge.

### **3.3 The System Approach**

The main distinction of this approach is that it is primarily concerned with the functional impact of the election on the wider political system than with the election itself. In other words, the System Approach focuses essentially on the structural functions - such as political legitimacy, recruitment and communication - which an electoral event may perform for a given political system, rather than on the autonomous importance of the electoral event itself.

### **3.4 The Sample Survey Approach**

This approach relies heavily on quantitative techniques and is based on the use of sample surveys or the collection and analysis of electoral data derived from a small, but very representative sector of a wider population. Taking its roots from the behavioral revolution in the United States of America, the sample survey approach is highly scientific and in terms of generating reliable generalizations, compared to, say, the Nuffield or the Case-Study approach. This is because sample survey is based on empirical values. The approach however requires quite enormous material and human resources that may be luxury to many poor countries. This has been widely considered as its main weakness.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

We can conclude that although many approaches to electoral studies there are, the Case Study, Nuffield, System and Sample Survey as identified by Denis Cohen, are quite common. Each of these four approaches has its strengths and limitations and researchers should consider ecology and other contextual factors before choosing any of them. Student may particularly read Denis Cohen's contribution on 'Elections and Election Studies in Africa' for detailed understanding of these issues. Details of the book are given in the references below.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Critically examine the four different approaches to the study of election and identify the one that you consider best for use in your country.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

We have discussed four major approaches to electoral studies in this unit. They are the Case Study Approach, the Nuffield Approach, the System Approach and Sample Survey Approach. These four approaches emphasize respectively the national political and historical context of an election, the intensive investigation and analysis of elections in small areas, the use of quantitative techniques for collecting and analyzing electoral data, and the examination of the functional consequences of an electoral event for the total political system.

### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Enumerate the four methodological approaches to electoral studies as identified by Denis Cohen.
2. Compare and contrast the various approaches.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Alan R. Ball, (1977) *Modern Politics and Government*, London, Macmillan.

Denis L. C. (1983). "Elections and Election Studies in Africa", in Yolamu Barongo (ed.) *Political Science in Africa: A Critical Review*, London, Zed

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## **UNIT 4:**

### **DETERMINANT OF ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Objectives**

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **3.1 Issues and Party Identification**

##### **3.2 Ethnicity and Class**

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

#### **5.0 Summary**

#### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments**

#### **7.0 References/Further Reading**



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We are, in this unit, mainly concerned with the factors which affect or determine electoral behaviour, and the question we shall attempt to answer is why people vote in particular pattern or manner. The unit has two interrelated segments that attempt to answer these questions.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, it is expected that the student is able to do the following:

- (a) Discuss the various factors that determine how people vote and in what manner
- (b) Put these factors in particular contexts, especially in the politics of their own country

### **3.1 Issues and Party Identification**

#### **(a) Issues**

The predominant viewpoint in the literature on electoral behaviour today is that issues are of relative insignificance in determining the way people vote. The majority of the electorate, according to this view, is, not attentive to, or motivated by, substantive policy issues. The parties themselves do not present clear policy positions or issue preferences to the electorate. Consequently, therefore, issue orientations are relegated to the background in the electoral process, with only a very small proportion of the electorate devoting any attention to whatever programmes or policies may be canvassed by the parties.

This position has, however, been attacked by some political scientists. For example, V.O. Key in his work, *The Responsible Electorate*, argued that the electorate has been more responsible, rational and issue-oriented than earlier accounts had implied. He observed that between 1936 and 1960 there was a degree of correspondence between the American voter's stated policy or issue preference and his reported presidential vote.

Other writers have argued that issue-voting is always very high among those citizens or groups for whom a particular issue is salient - i.e., the issue motivated public - and that it is unrealistic to expect all citizens to be interested in, and informed about, all the issues in a campaign.

Quite obviously, more empirically based research and more precise and widely accepted criteria are needed before we can arrive at a definitive conclusion regarding the relative weight of issue" orientation in voting behaviour.

Nonetheless, most behavioral researchers tend to support the conclusion that this orientation is not an important factor in the voting behaviour of the majority of the electorate.

## **(b) Party Identification**

Party identification has continued to receive considerable attention as probably the single most important determinant of voting behaviour. A great deal of research has shown that once formed, a voter's party identification becomes a very stable psychological attitude. Thus, it has been shown that the majority of the electorate consistently vote for the same party over time, with newer voters simply inheriting party loyalties from their families. The initial source of party identification may be class, religion, race or any other factor. However, over time, this identification tends to acquire an autonomous importance of its own and to become the principal determinant of voting decision. In essence, party identification is a politically decisive emotional, psychological and traditional attachment, rather than a choice based on policy preferences.

Recently, however, some behaviouralists have contended that the use of party identification as an independent factor in electoral analysis has tended to exaggerate its impact. These behaviouralists also contend that party identification merely provides a psychological or non-political explanation for political phenomena. Nonetheless, party identification is still widely used.

Some advanced democracies: the Britain and the United States for instance, have always had their electoral behaviour coloured by political parties. In the United States people cast vote mainly for either the Republican or the Democrats while in Britain, the struggle for votes is mainly between Labour and the conservative parties.

## **3.2 Ethnicity and Class as Determinants of Voting Behaviour**

### **(a) Ethnicity**

The feeling of attachment to a racial, national or tribal group is often regarded as ethnicity. Ethnicity is an important factor in voting behaviour, particularly in plural or ethnically divided societies. An individual's ethnic identification influences much of his life. It influences his self-conception and the manner in which other people respond to him. According to some researchers, nothing is as important to the electorate of an ethnic community as the involvement of a member of the community in an electoral contest. Indeed, otherwise inactive citizens may become enthusiastic voters when a member of their community is contesting. Many politicians have also found that whipping up ethnic sentiments and resentments are an effective strategy for mobilizing electoral support and loyalty, especially in societies where these factors are quite strong in political consideration.

In most multi-ethnic and plural polities such as Nigeria, political parties invariably come to be perceived by the electorate in ethnic or communal terms, regardless of the

ideological or programmatic orientations of such parties. A good illustration of this tendency is provided by the electoral performance of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) during the Second Republic (1979-83). Despite the party's coherent and attractive programmes, and the vigorous efforts made by its leaders to sell these programmes to *all* Nigerians, the UPN was virtually unable to win any significant electoral support outside its core base in the Yoruba - dominated Western Region.

In plural societies, therefore, ethnicity would appear to be a far more important factor than issues in determining voting behaviour. Ethnicity would also appear in these societies to be the most important factor in the development of an individual's party identification.

### **(b) Class**

Defined loosely in terms of occupation, income and education, class is also widely regarded as a significant factor in voting behaviour. In Britain in particular, class is regarded as the most important factor influencing party identification and voting behaviour. Here working class elements tend to identify politically with the Labour Party, while the middle and upper sectors of the society usually identify with the Conservative party. Even in America, where class is a less significant element in the electoral process than in Europe, the lower income class tends to support the Democratic Party, while the more privileged groups tend to back the Republican Party.

Class has, however, been a relatively insignificant factor in multi-ethnic Third World countries like Nigeria. Events in these countries do not appear to lend credence to the argument that with Western education, modernization and urbanization, class would replace ethnicity or tribalism as the basis of political cleavage. On the contrary, the modernization process has led to the intensification of ethnic or tribal differences. This situation has arisen from the fact that socio-economic competition in these countries have tended to be organized along communal, rather than class lines. Thus, ethnic and tribal groups have become interest groups competing for scarce economic resources, with political leaders finding it increasingly necessary to speak and act as the protectors and promoters of the interests of their respective groups. In essence, class has not yet become a significant determinant of party identification or electoral behaviour in Nigeria and other multi-ethnic countries of the Third World.

Class and ethnicity may therefore contribute to the shaping of electoral behaviour. In some industrialized or developed countries, class may provide the basis for party identification. In many multi-ethnic or plural societies, however, ethnicity is a relatively more important determinant of voting behaviour or party identification.

It is important to add that we have not exhausted the list of possible determinants of electoral behaviour in this unit. Other factors that may influence the behaviour of voters include religion and charisma. Finally, it is important that you should be able to

relate the discussion in this lecture to the Nigerian experience. Chapter six of Billy Dudley's *An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics* will be useful for this purpose.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Politics being a game of who gets what where and when must have values and sentiments in many of its processes. Election is one of these. Voters consider a whole lot of factors before they vote, and these factors, which include ethnicity, class, issues and party identification as indicated in the foregoing, are generally considered as those affecting electoral behaviour.

The dominant position in the literature on electoral behaviour is that issues do not constitute a significant influence on the way people vote. Although this position has been attacked by V.O. Key, among others, it is still widely held by behavioral researchers. Party identification is generally regarded as probably the single most important influence on electoral behaviour. Studies have repeatedly shown that most people vote for the same party over time, and that this traditional and psychological attachment to a specific party is the most reliable factor for explaining and predicting voting behaviour. However, while party identification has often been portrayed as an independent psychological factor, there can be little doubt that this identification is ultimately or partly rooted in other factors. In many countries, class and ethnicity may provide the basis for party identification and voting behaviour. Specifically, class may be of some importance in industrialized societies, while ethnicity is usually decisive electoral ally in culturally divided societies of the Third World, including Nigeria.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Critically discuss the four major factors affecting electoral behaviour and make cases for which of them will be dominant in making people vote in your Nigeria and the United States.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

Four main factors have been specifically identified and discussed in this in this unit as those that affect electoral behaviour, that is, those that determine whether people will vote at all or will not, as well as the pattern or dimensions which their voting will take. These factors are issues, party identification, ethnicity and class.

#### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Discuss the four factors that voters often consider before they vote.

2. Advance an argument on why ethnicity is a strong determining factor of voting in your country Nigeria.

## **7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**

Alan R. B. (1977) *Modern Politics and Government*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) London, Macmillan.

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