

STATE LEVEL THEORIES

Political Culture Theory and Decision-Making Process Theory



STATE LEVEL THEORY # 1

Political Culture Theory



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

We move now from *system level* theories (**realism, liberalism, class system theory** and **postmodernism**) to *state level* theories.

Levels of Analysis

- ▶ *The System Level*
- ▶ *The Nation–State Level*
- ▶ *The Individual Level*

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

A **state** or country (these terms are synonymous) is a political, legal, and territorial entity. A state consists of an internationally recognized territory, a permanent population, and a government that has control over people within its acknowledged boundaries.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

In theory, states are *sovereign*.
Sovereignty is recognized by international law and by other states through diplomatic relations.

Sovereignty



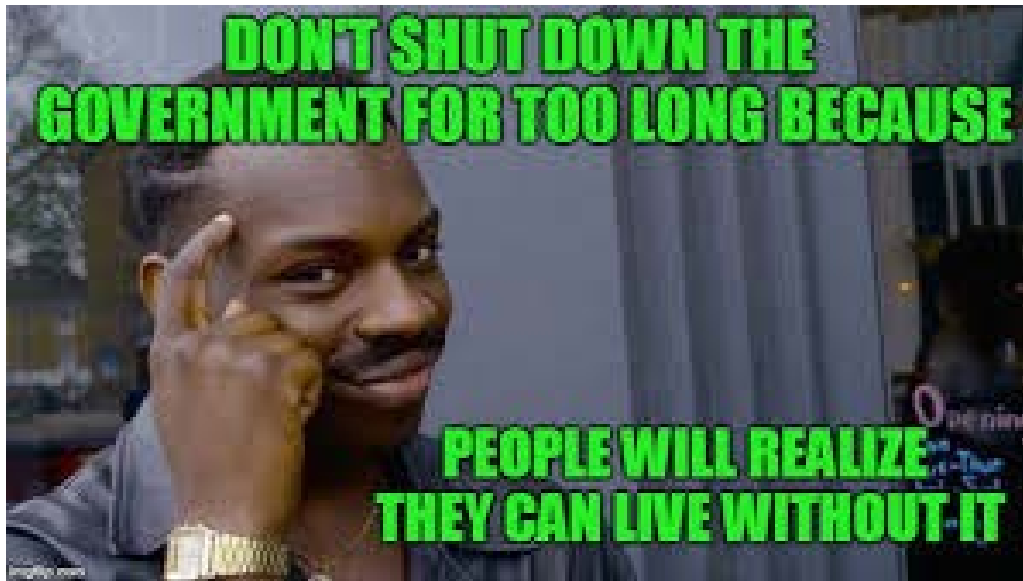
Definition: the ability to rule absolutely within a given territory

Because of sovereignty...

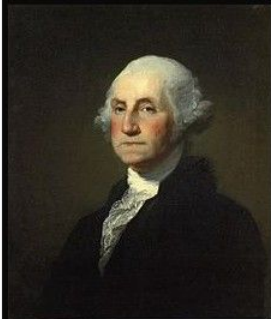
- states can set their own foreign policy and agendas.
- states are all equal in theory, but in reality that isn't always the case.

Question: Is Iran a sovereign nation-state?

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY



On a broad level, the interaction of states is guided by each state's **government**, which is a public institution that has the authority to create, implement, and enforce rules, laws, and decisions within a state's territorial borders.



Government is not reason; it is not eloquent; it is force. Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master. Never for a moment should it be left to irresponsible action.

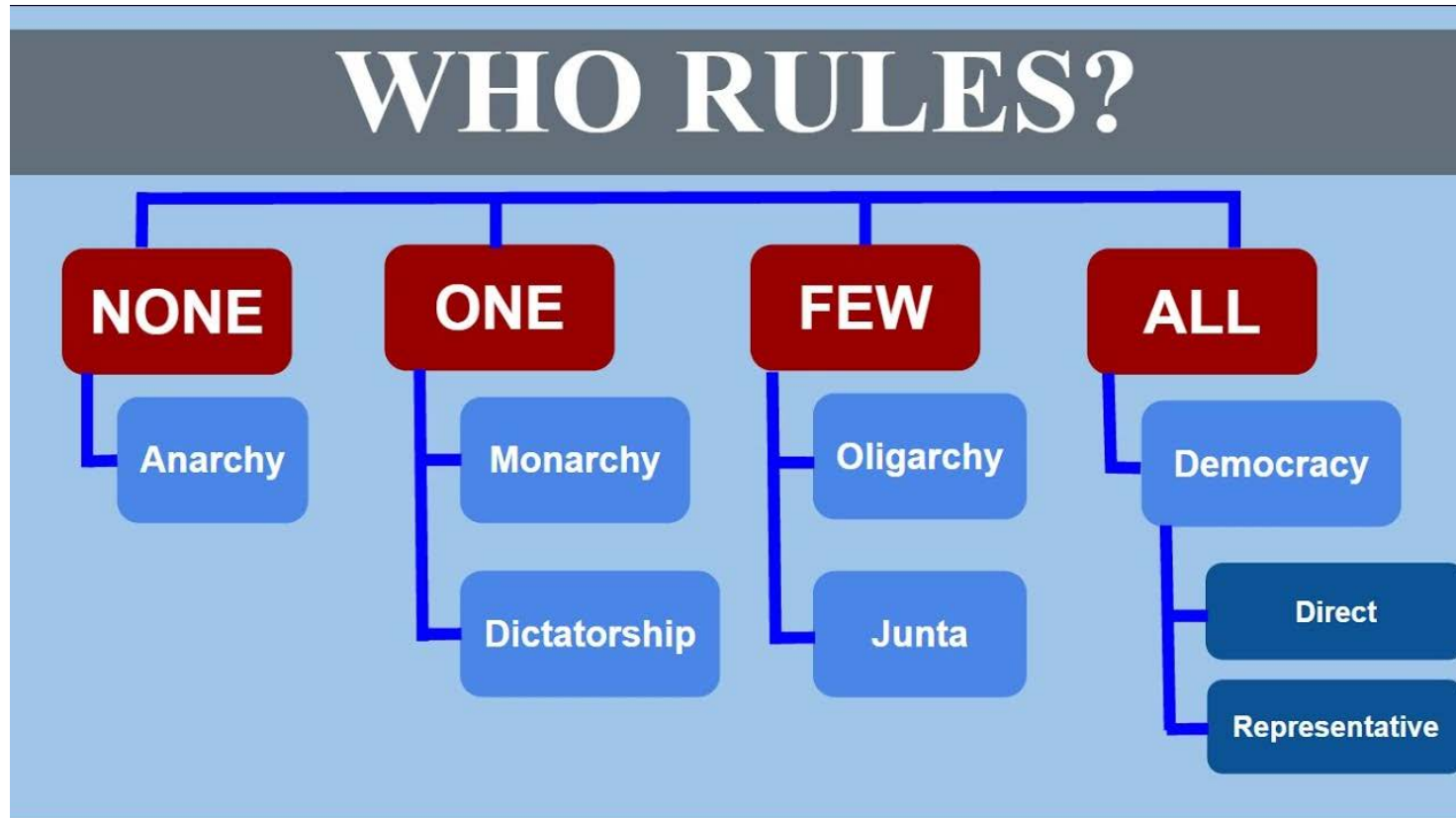
(George Washington)

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Governments present themselves and their interests to the international community using *foreign policy*. **Foreign policy** consists of decisions and strategies used by governments to guide their interaction with other states in the international system.

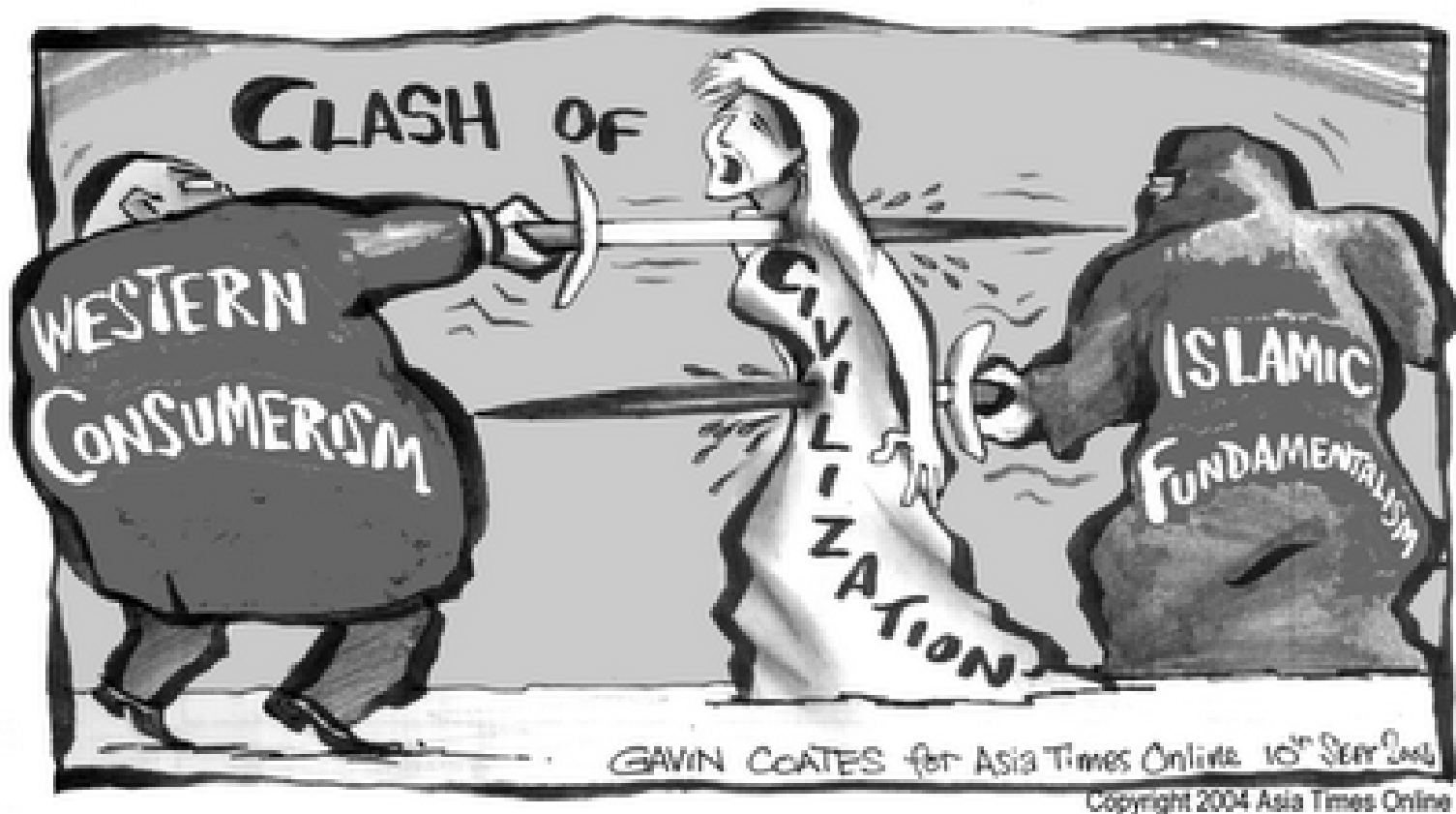


POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY



The **regimist perspective** emphasizes the nature of a state's government – democratic or authoritarian – as a vital factor in its foreign policy and behavior within the global system.

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY



The **civilizationist perspective** of political culture theory acknowledges some points made by proponents of the regime category, but stress the importance of *culture* and *civilization* in determining a state's behavior in I.R.

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Culture refers to a particular social group's commonly shared behavior patterns, including language, traditions, values, customs, institutions, and beliefs.

Political culture points specifically to the dominant values, attitudes, and beliefs that affect the politics and behavior of individual governments.

WHO WOULD WIN?

*TOTAL GLOBAL CULTURAL
HEGEMONY OF THOUGHT*



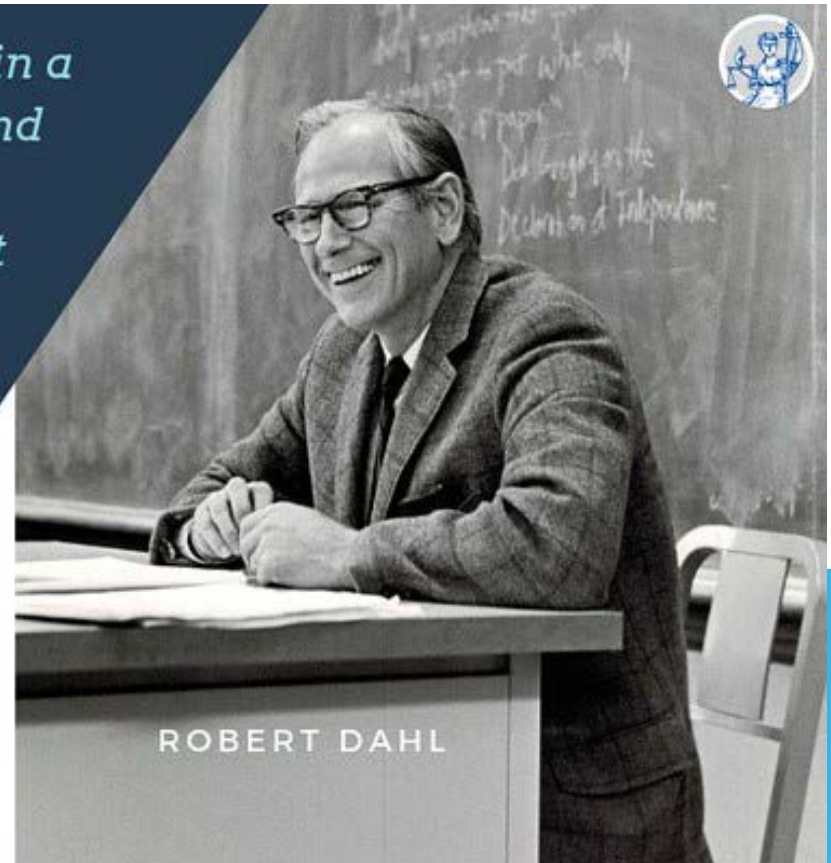
*HASTILY REPURPOSED
COMMUNIST MEMES*



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Political culture theorists – both **regimists** and **civilizationists** – argue that a state's *political culture* has a substantial influence over its foreign policy.

"The prospects for stable democracy in a country are improved if its citizens and leaders strongly support democratic ideas, values, and practices. The most reliable support comes when these beliefs and predispositions are embedded in the country's culture and are transmitted, in large part, for one generation to the next. In other words, the country possesses a democratic political culture."



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Regimists

Political culture theorists who emphasize the importance of **regimes** argue that it is the inherent differences between various types of government that can influence state behavior on the world stage and international politics.

Authoritarian Regimes
Case Study:
Communist Russia



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Regimists

Unlike *system-level* theorists who point to the characteristics of the system as a whole as the central force in international politics – **political culture theorists** suggest that the *domestic characteristics of state governments* are key determinants of world politics.

Determinants Of The Foreign Policy

▪ Internal Determinants

- Historical Influence
- Size and Geography
- Natural Resources
- Economic Development
- Industrial Development
- Military Power
- Population
- Good Governance and Leadership
- Quality of Diplomacy
- Political Organization
- Role of Media & Think-tanks

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Regimists

Liberal democracies (or “open” societies), where citizens have a voice in government through representatives and political parties, generally take a more pluralistic approach to foreign policy-making.



America is “liberal,” but are we a democracy?

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Regimists

“Our very unity has been strengthened by our pluralism. We establish no religion in this country, we command no worship, we mandate no belief, nor will we ever. Church and state are, and must remain, separate. All are free to believe or not believe, all are free to practice a faith or not, and those who believe are free, and should be free, to speak of and act on their belief.”

~Ronald Reagan



Pluralism describes a political system in which decisions and policies are formulated on the basis of many different viewpoints or interests.

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Regimists

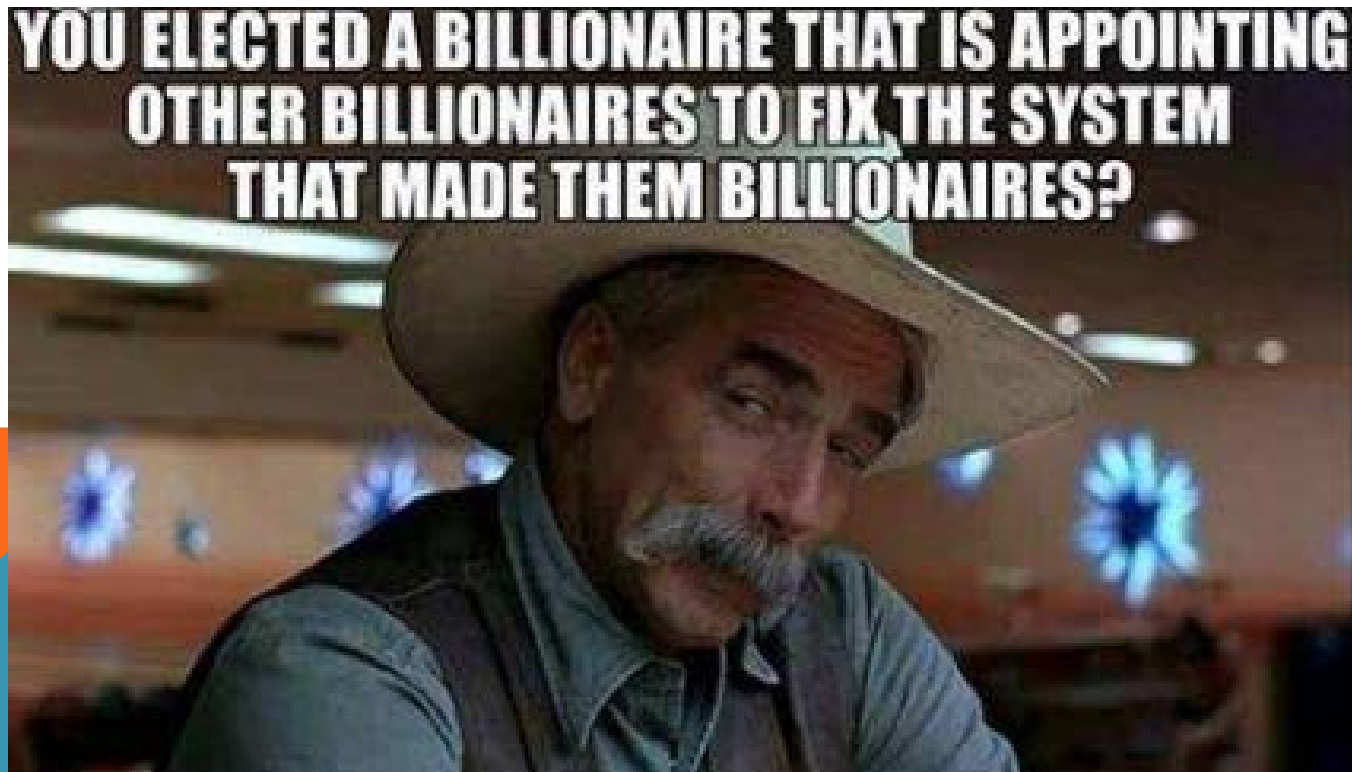
Conversely, in **authoritarian regimes** (or “closed” societies), decisions and policies are made by an individual or small group of leaders. People in these types of regimes generally have no meaningful impact on the political agenda or foreign policy of the country.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Regimists

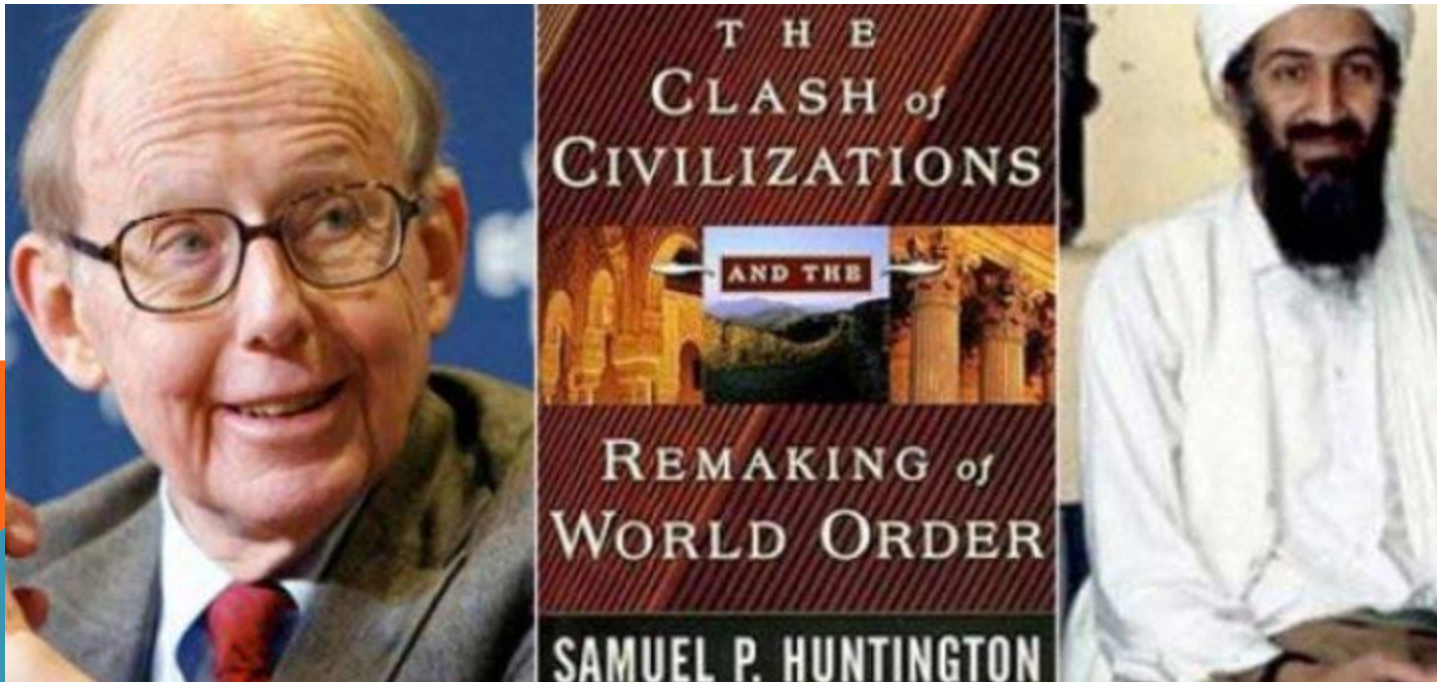
Under this system of decision making, sometimes called **elitism**, the policies that control the actions of the state and those who live within it are created and directed by a small ruling elite.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Civilizationists

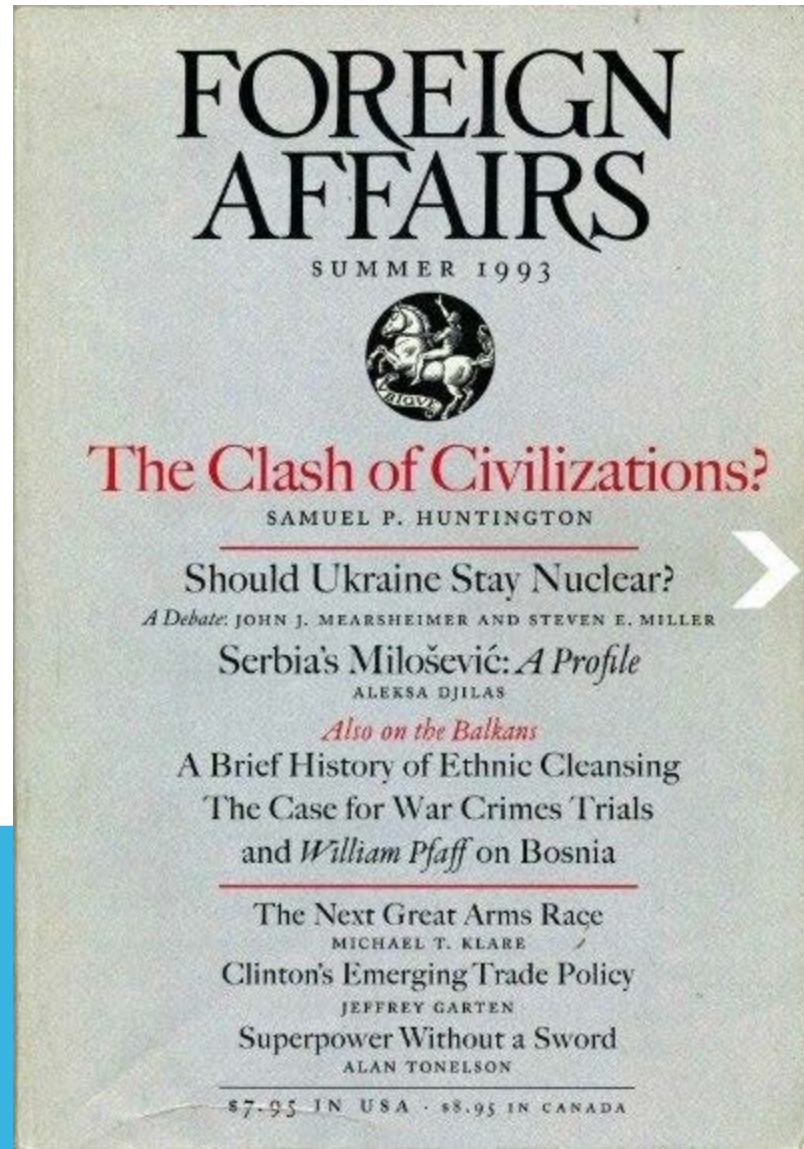
The second perspective on **political culture theory** focuses on **Samuel Huntington's** examination of the impact of broad *cultural* factors on the behavior of individual states, or even groups of states that share a common culture.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Civilizationists

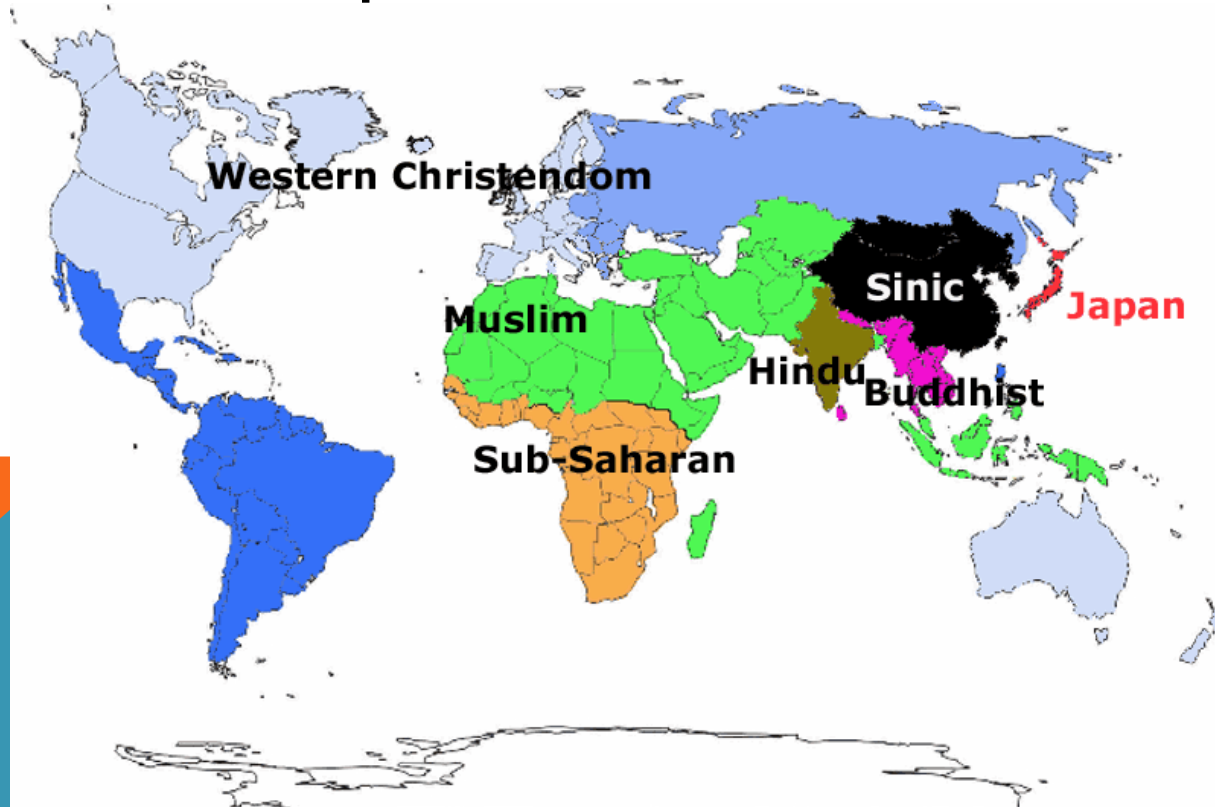
Huntington outlined this new theory of international politics for the post-Cold War world in his 1993 *Foreign Affairs* article titled “The Clash of Civilizations.”



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Civilizationists

Huntington defines **civilization** as the “highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have, short of that which distinguishes them from other species.”



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Civilizationists

“The Clash of Civilizations” lays out a theoretical framework suggesting that cultural differences have overtaken ideological differences as the most important source of conflict among peoples and states.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Civilizationists

The argument centers on the idea that cultural differences between the eight civilizations – **Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and African** – are more serious and could be even more dangerous than the traditional ideological and economic clashes characterizing past wars.

Why civilizations will clash

8 main civilizations

- ▶ Western
- ▶ Confucian
- ▶ Japanese
- ▶ Islamic
- ▶ Hindu
- ▶ Slavic Orthodox
- ▶ Latin American
- ▶ African

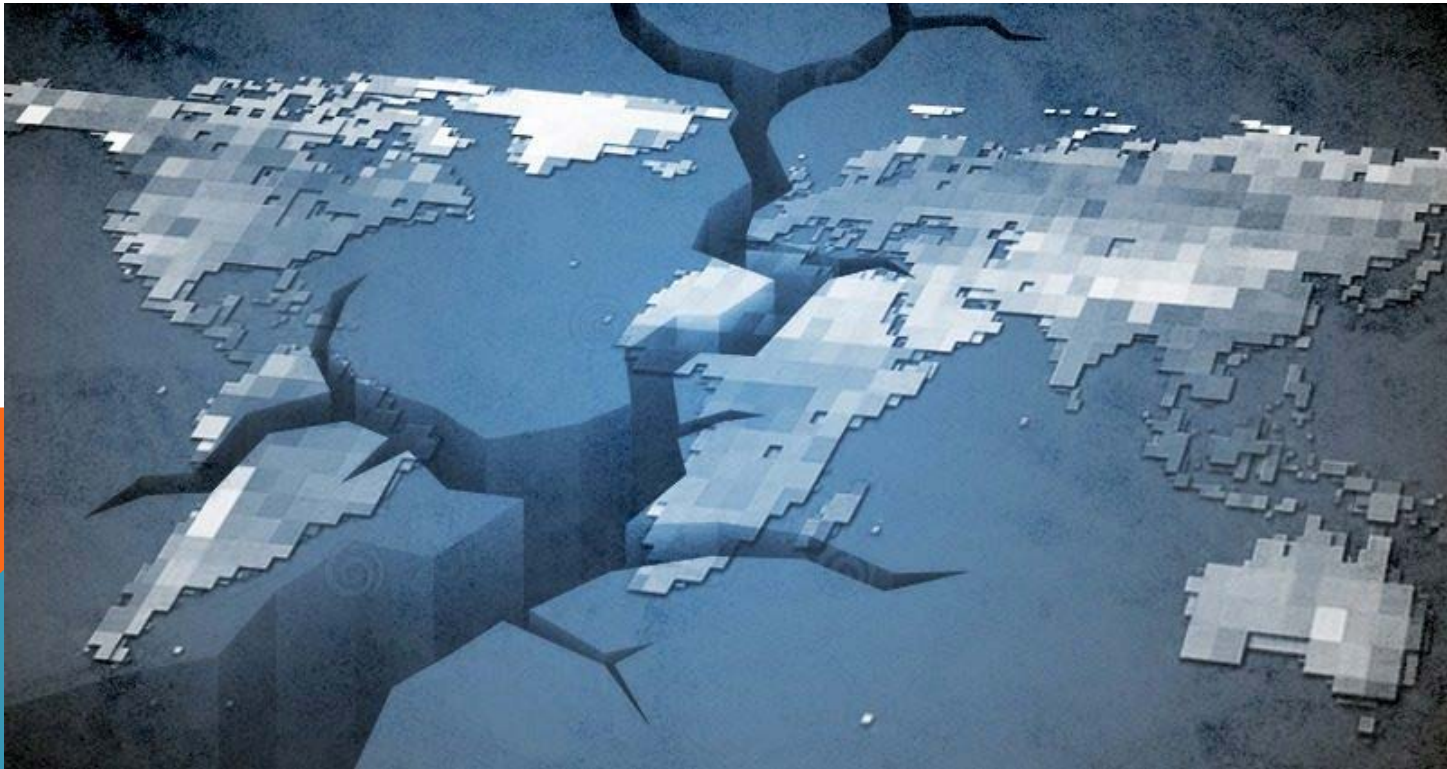


The slide features a central collage of eight images, each representing one of the civilizations listed in the bulleted list. The images are arranged in a grid-like fashion. The top row includes Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, a stone statue of Confucius, and a Japanese Aikido symbol. The middle row shows the Kaaba in Mecca, a Hindu deity, a map of Europe, and a map of Latin America. The bottom row features a savanna scene with giraffes. The slide has a dark blue background with a light blue and orange geometric design on the left side.

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Civilizationists

A **cultural fault line** is found where different civilizations share a common border. According to **Huntington**, cultural fault lines now represent the most probable new “flash points for crisis and bloodshed.”



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

The Components of Political Culture Theory



We have a political culture of intimidation, of favoring, of patronage, and of fear, and that is no way for a community to be governed.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Focus of Analysis

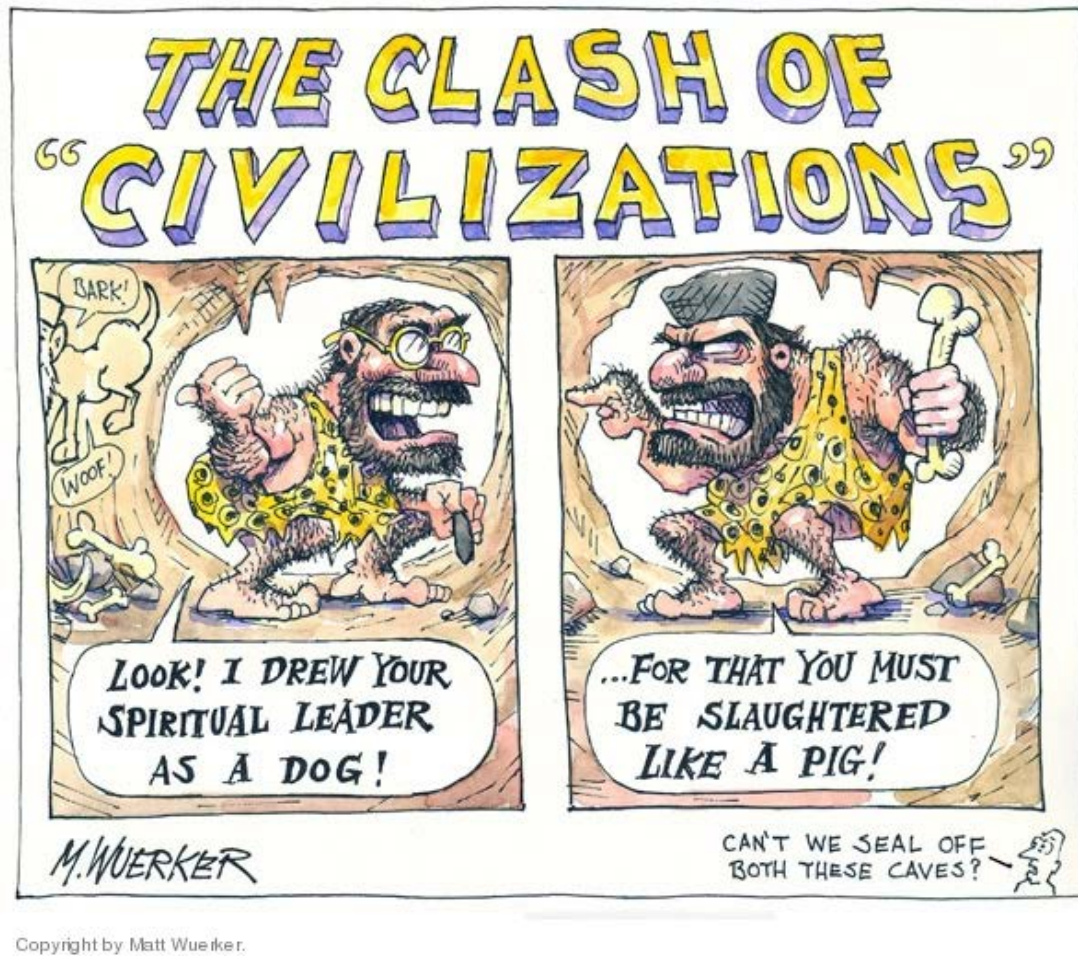
Domestic political and cultural characteristics of states or civilizations



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Major Influences

Type of government or civilization



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Behavior of States

(Regimists) Behavior based on type of government

(Civilizationists) Competitive, based on cultural values



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Basis of a State's Foreign Policy

Assumes that a state's foreign policy reflects the dominant values, attitudes, and beliefs of society/civilizations.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Authoritarian Regimes

Societies in which dominant political authority and power resides in an individual or small group of leaders who are not responsible to the people under their control.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Civilization

Composed of elements that bind people together such as common language, religion, customs, institutions, and identification with a particular culture. **Huntington** defines civilization as the “highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes them from other species.”



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Civilizationist Perspective

One of two major divisions of **political culture theory** and is based on the theory set forth by **Samuel Huntington** in his article “The Clash of Civilizations?” The **civilizationist perspective** stresses that the “principle conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations.”



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Cultural Fault Line

The area where different civilizations share a common border; this includes both borders between different states as well as the more tenuous ones found within states. This term was also coined by **Samuel Huntington**.

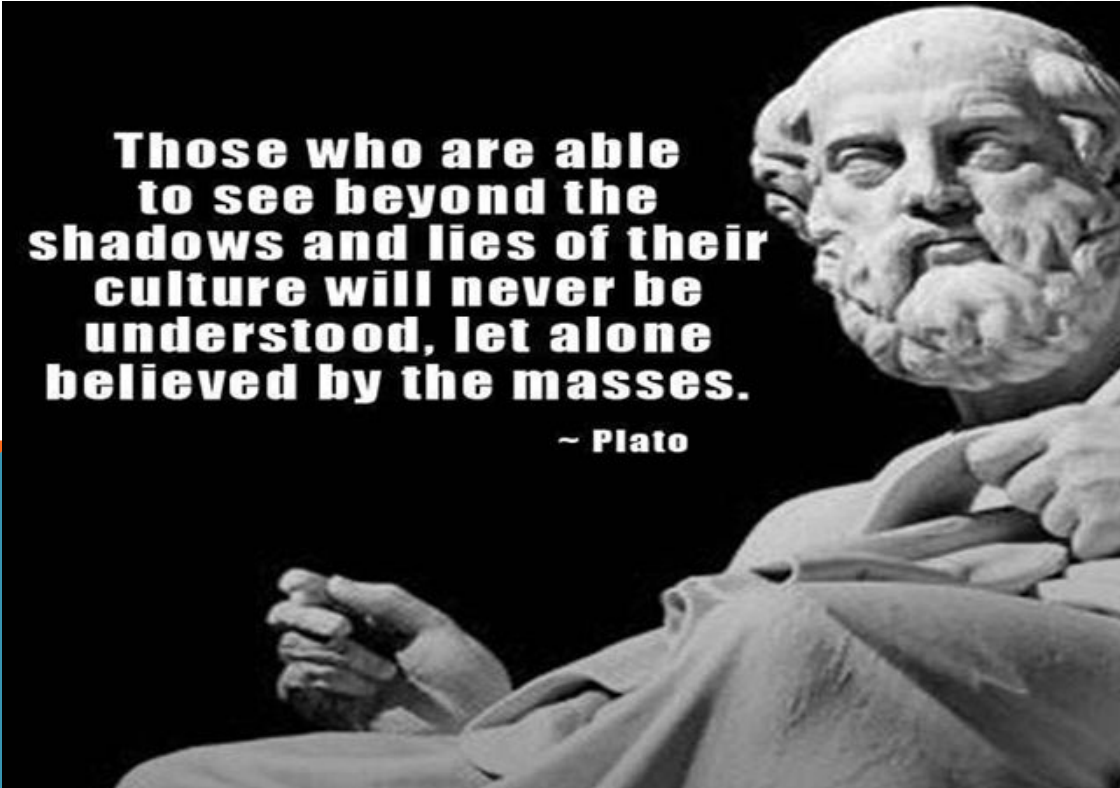


POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Culture

Refers to commonly shared behavior patterns, including language, traditions, values, customs, institutions, and religious beliefs of a particular social group.



**Those who are able
to see beyond the
shadows and lies of their
culture will never be
understood, let alone
believed by the masses.**

~ Plato

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Elitism

A condition where a small group of people control, rule, or dominate the actions of a state. This group formulates both the domestic and foreign policy agendas.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

End of History

A phrase used by **Francis Fukuyama** to describe the triumph of western economic and political **liberalism** over its ideological alternatives, such as **fascism** and **Marxism-Leninism**, and the coming universalization of western liberal democracy.



What we may be witnessing is not the end of the Cold War but the end of history as such; that is, the end point of man's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy.

(Francis Fukuyama)

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Foreign Policy

The strategy used by a government to make decisions and guide its interaction with other states in the international system. Typically, foreign policy promotes the political, economic, and military interests of the state.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

THE GOVERNMENT

**I CAN OFFER YOU SECURITY
I REQUIRE ONLY THAT YOU KNEEL**

FREE THINKERS

NOW SEE, THATS GONNA BE A PROBLEM

Key Concepts

Government

A public institution that has the authority to create, implement, and enforce rules, laws, and decisions with a state's territorial borders. These rules, laws, and decisions maintain order within society, as well as project and protect the state's interests abroad.

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Liberal Democracies

States in which the citizenry has a voice in government through duly elected representatives from two or more political parties.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Pluralism

A political system in which decisions and policies are formulated on the basis of many different viewpoints or interests.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Political Culture

Refers to the dominant values, attitudes, and beliefs that affect the politics and behavior of individual governments.

American Political Culture

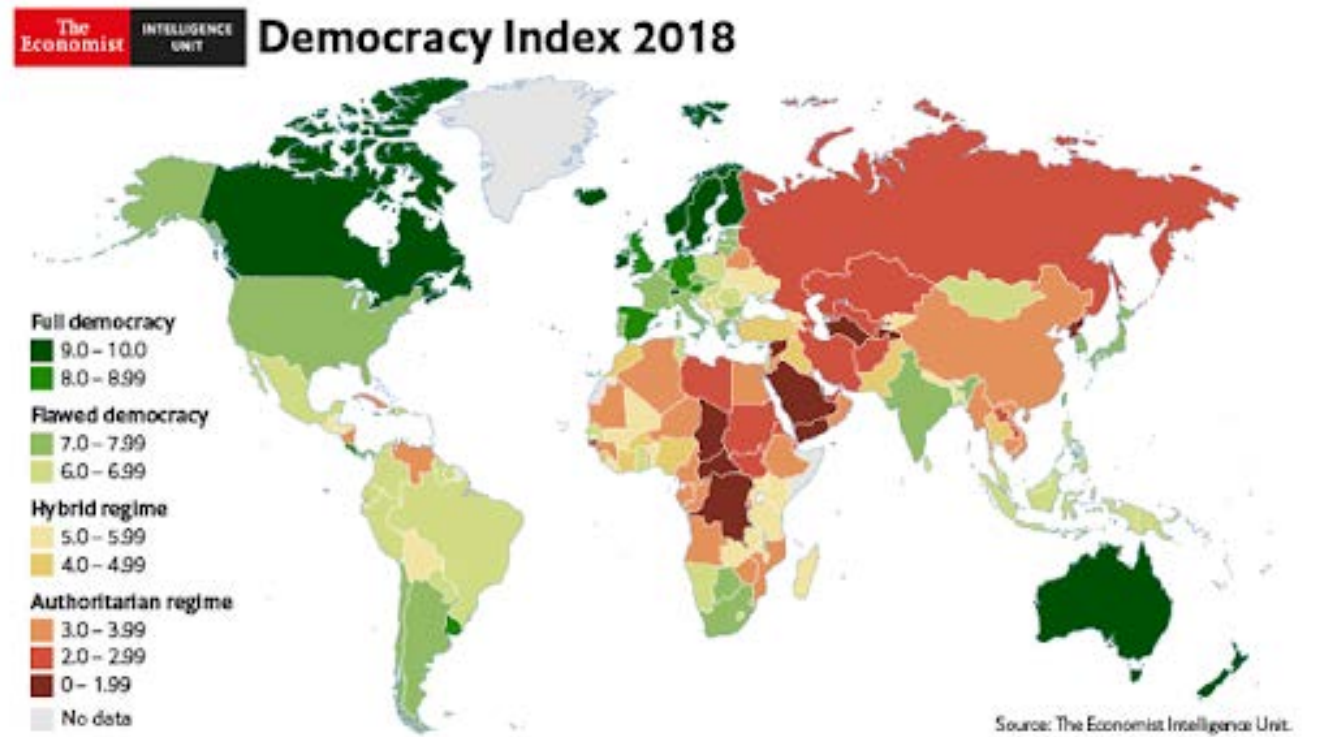
- Definition: "a patterned set of ways of thinking about how politics and governing ought to be carried out"
- Includes beliefs, attitudes, and opinions people have about how well our government works, how much influence they have over it (political efficacy), and how tolerant they are of other's views
- Internal efficacy (personal competency): "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."
- External efficacy (governmental responsiveness): "I don't think public officials care much what people like me think."

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Regimist Perspective

One of two major divisions of political culture theory. Regimists argue that democracies and authoritarian regimes behave differently in foreign affairs. Their analysis focuses on regime type as a vital factor in determining a state's foreign policy and behavior within the global system.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

Sovereignty

A situation in which the domestic government is the supreme authority within a state and does not answer to any outside power. This sovereignty is recognized by international law and by other states through diplomatic relations and often by membership in the United Nations.



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Key Concepts

State

A political, legal, and territorial entity. A state consists of an internationally recognized territory, a permanent population, and a government that has control over the people within its acknowledged boundaries.

STATE

- “Recognized” boundaries
- Independent Political Unit
- Internationally recognized by others (UN? US?) as sovereign
- Has official currency
- Is defended / can be sustained (Iraq?)

NATION

- Group of people sharing certain characteristics (usually cultural)
- Common identity
- Not recognized as sovereign
- No official boundaries
- No official currency
- Often unable to defend

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

**Critiques of
Political
Culture Theory**



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Critiques of Political Culture Theory

As far as **regime theory** goes, critics argue democracies can find themselves in conflict, and the so-called “peace among democracies” may be the result of particular geopolitical factors rather than the influence of shared common values.



Democracies don't go to war against each other, and by and large they don't sponsor terrorism. They're more likely to respect the environment and human rights and social justice. It's no accident that most of the terrorists come from non-democratic countries.

— William J. Clinton —

AZ QUOTES



Democracies don't war; democracies are peaceful countries.

— George W. Bush —

AZ QUOTES

POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Critiques of Political Culture Theory

Is civilizational consciousness truly a uniting or dividing force among states? Are cultural, religious, and ethnic factors vitally important sources of states' actions? Can the principles of liberal democracy bring states and peoples together...?



POLITICAL CULTURE THEORY

Critiques of Political Culture Theory

...or could the actions of states be shaped more by systemic factors, compelling all governments – irrespective of regime or civilization – to act in similar manners?



The Extinction Rebellion?