Political Culture

Sodaro’s components:
- values as political ideals: e.g., liberty & individualism v. belonging & community
- moral norms: e.g., gift-giving v. corruption
- beliefs about politics: e.g., adversarial v. consensual

Reflected is “mass attitudes”
- measured by public opinion surveys
- dominant political culture v. political sub-cultures

What Does “Political Culture” Explain?
- Democratic “consolidation”: Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*
- Democratic participation: Almond & Verba’s *Civic Culture*
- Institutional performance: Putnam’s *Making Democracy Work*

Problems with Political Culture (Laitin, 1995)
- poor predictive record: e.g., Italy had no “civic culture”
- tautological use: e.g., political culture “explains the subjective attitudes of citizens”
- conceptually fuzzy variable: how do you define and measure it?
  - Putnam’s *measure* of “civic community” draws on newspaper readership, association membership, and turn-out for referenda
  - Does that capture the “qualitative” aspect of community?
- Difficult to measure *across* polities
- Data-less distortion of PC (“civilizations”)

Political Socialization
- how are political cultures transmitted?
- how do political cultures shape attitudes and political conduct and decisions?

Social Psychology Approaches
- Adorno’s “authoritarian personality”
- Festinger’s “cognitive dissonance”
Political Ideologies

- Ideologies are:
  “systems of political thinking, loose or rigid, deliberate or unintended, through which individuals and groups construct an understanding of the political world they, or those who preoccupy their thoughts, inhabit, and then act on that understanding.” (Michael Freeden)

- Nationalism is a political ideology taking a variety of forms
  - nationalist ideologies rather than the nationalist ideology

- General Political Ideologies (Sodaro)
  - Liberalism
  - Socialism
  - Fascism
  - Islam?

- Is this set sufficient?
  - Are all forms of authoritarian rule Fascism?
  - Are laissez-faire liberalism and social welfare liberalism similar enough politically to be usefully grouped intellectually