The Understanding and Perception of the Political Culture of the Modern Mongols

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To study political culture, it is important to have a clear definition of it. At the same time, it is important to define the role of political culture in society. We need to measure to be challenged role of political culture in society and then measure it in detail. We have studied the concept and perception of political culture in order to justify the real political situation in our country, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The main purpose of this article is to clarify the real situation of political culture and the picture of how they represent and express their voices. One of the main assumptions of the study of political culture is considered to be the need for it and the impact of its adequacy.

Keywords: political culture, political knowledge of citizens, political values, political participation, political sphere, democracy, Mongolia, Mongolians, democratic governance

To study political culture, it is important to have a clear definition of it. At the same time, it is important to define the role of political culture in society. We need to measure to be challenged role of political culture in society and then measure it in detail. The indicator of political culture in the World Democracy Index is a key indicator that takes into account the nature, maturity, and prospects of the political culture of countries. This is a major attempt to combine different theoretical concepts and definitions of what is meant by “political culture” as a result of research in political science. As far as definitions are concerned, in general terms of their general classification, it can be divided into broad and narrow categories.

Broad categories include definitions of citizens’ political knowledge, values, attitudes, models of action, political organizations, legislation, and so on. In fact, it can be assumed that these definitions cannot be used for research because they dilute the true nature of the phenomenon of political culture, whereas narrow definitions can be used as research tools. Although they differ from each other, they are mostly the same and, taking into account different definitions, generally agree that “political culture is the attitude of citizens to politics and the political system”. On the other hand, the results of our research show that political culture is unable to explain everything about politics, and that life experience can change people’s attitudes (Almond, Verba, & Powel, 2005, p. 63).

That is why, in the interest of research, we conduct various scientific studies, which examine the definitions of each type, taking into account comparative analysis, limited within the political science, only in

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this case it will be clear what the subject of studying political culture is. So, first of all, the political culture includes the following:

- political knowledge of citizens,
- political values,
- assessing the activities of state and political organizations and political events,
- political sphere, operational behavior during activities, etc.

It is therefore important to identify indicators that can be used to assess the composition of political culture and the role of society in a given society, particularly in Mongolia. In other words, in the current situation, in people’s political knowledge, the quality of political culture and the degree to which the political life of our society is becoming more complex and contradictory, there is a clear trend of both positive and negative aspects. Although in fact the topic of the influence of political culture on the development of democracy is great, but it is not new and does not require guarantees.

In this regard, Inglehart once came to the conclusion that “it seems that culture is much more about building democracy than democracy is culture” (Inglehart & Christian, 2005, pp. 245-271). The formation of the institution, its implementation and maintenance in more cases, indeed, depend on culture. This does not mean that culture is the cause and the institution is the consequence. The relationship between culture and institute is very complex, and the nature of interaction depends on when they are more dynamic. This is clearly evident in the process of civilization. When we understand the institution as a state, the state spreads culture and educates citizens through its various activities. At the same time, it acts as a cultural adaptation. In this sense, the political culture, as defined by Juan Linz and Donald Horovitz, has drawn up a number of its own conclusions, which were necessary to discuss the improvement of the relationship between the constitutional, presidential, and parliamentary systems and lay the foundation for a sustainable democracy (Lipset, 1990, pp. 80, 83).

Juan Linz, on the other hand, put forward his own idea based on his many years of experience in Latin America and noted that the presidential system has repeatedly collapsed. According to his research into the political situation in Asia and Africa, he assumed that after the war some new nation-states in most African and some Asian countries will be focused on parliamentary governance (Lijphart, 1992, pp. 207-211). As both the social and economic situations have changed over time, he has also sought to show a closer look at the causes of the political and cultural phenomena of modern Mongolian society in a changing society. Thus, politics and political culture have had and continue to have a profound impact on the lives of people, states, and peoples throughout history. Political culture is based solely on the character of a person who is a social animal, able to live a full life in society and interact with other people (Sodnomgombo & Naidansuren, 2000, p. 2).

We have studied the concept and perception of political culture in order to justify the real political situation in our country, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The quantitative and qualitative analysis and public opinion study with civil society representatives and high-level independent experts in the form of a focus group and in-depth interviews to clarify “Understanding and perception of the political culture of modern Mongols” based on the results of the survey. The results were largely analyzed. We asked representatives about their position in political life and the current state of political culture. The main purpose of this article is to clarify the real situation of political culture and the picture of how they represent and express their voices.
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One of the main assumptions of the study of political culture is considered to be the need for it and the impact of its adequacy. Democracy does not belong to the people when their standard of living is too low. While any human needs are most important, the needs of higher-ranking people seem to be “hidden”. In other words, it is assumed that values change to some extent as the standard of living improves and that it is influenced to some extent by the state of education. In fact, even if the standard of living does not reach the middle class, it is likely to be valued as freedom. It can be said that the links between needs and universal values and their supply and accessibility will also serve our country. In this context, to consider the political culture or social culture that has emerged in the political sphere should be seen as a method of action. Because in the definition above, political culture is defined as a set of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and approaches to justification that people in the political community work together and communicate with each other.

In other words, this definition of political culture allows us to better observe the forms of human relations in political life and the methods of participation in politics. In this way, we can determine how people’s attitudes to democracy are reflected in their actions. In fact, it is a real service, manifested in the activities of people of political culture. Therefore, beliefs and values must be based on a certain amount of knowledge, both right and wrong. If the content of this knowledge can be defined to some extent, it will be possible to define the concept that forms the basis of political culture.

Another problem that needs to be addressed in the study is that, as we study how democratic values are perceived in this cultural context, we need to focus on the characteristics of democracy that should be reflected in people’s perceptions and actions, not on culture as a whole, because democracy is not just a set of rules and regulations. In other words, healthy democracy depends to a large extent on the development of civic culture, says researcher Diana Ravich. He noted that culture is not art, literature, or development, but “customs, rituals and norms” that determine people’s ability to governing.\(^1\)

Therefore, this phase of research is very important, and if the study misinterprets people’s perception of culture, especially political culture, from the very beginning of research, observation, interpretation, and conclusions at the emotional and operational level will be incorrect. Therefore, it is important to think carefully about studying the phenomenon under study and choose the right tool. It has been a long time since both quantitative and qualitative research was used in parallel.

As the social and economic situation changes over time, we can better understand the causes of political and cultural phenomena in today’s changing society, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. For example, a qualitative method provides a detailed causal link behind any phenomenon studied, while the quantitative method gives a picture of this phenomenon. Recently, the psychological processes of a person are studied by psychological methods and seek to determine what the impact of ideas on the personality and on the public sphere. In this context, the current quality analysis includes qualitative analysis of public opinion and expert questionnaires, data from focus groups and in-depth interviews with experts, as well as analyzed situations. To this end, we seek to clarify the understanding and perception of

\(^1\) A healthy democracy depends in large part on the development of a democratic civic culture (usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem/whatdm6.htm-26k).
political culture by representatives of organizations in the political life of civil society who have taken part in group discussions, most of which are trying to take an active part in politics. Thus, political culture is unique in terms of time and space. The core values and beliefs of citizens are determined by the personal experience and influence of agents of political socialization (Almond, Verba, & Powel, 2005, p. 81). Young people, on the other hand, are not sufficiently involved in this issue and try to express their opinion, but to no avail. This is because young people working in civil society lack the courage to take an active part in politics and work independently, and it may be important to avoid participating in any political party or political force.

Although human society lasts a lifetime, the most intense periods of socialization occur in childhood and adolescence. The results of socialization vary according to many factors, such as the living conditions of people in a busy period of society, the influence of the family and other micro groups, and the presence of obvious or hidden contradictions in relations with power. Despite the general tendency among young people to pursue the interests of a particular political force or party or a particular person or group, the panelists noted that the situation had been gradually declining in recent years. The group discussion showed that there is a widespread tendency among young people and citizens to express their views and voices through social media as an effective way to develop into a broader “wave” rather than to participate directly in politics.

It shows that a member of a particular society is connected not only with the relevant social culture, but also with the political and cultural environment in the process of socialization; he can say a lot about politics, although it does not matter, because the political world in one way or another affects the interests of all members of society and each (Sodnomgombo & Naidansuren, 2000, p. 42). People must therefore be involved in the multifaceted and dynamic process of relationship management and strive to develop as subjects of political culture in the form of a dominant political culture about the political world and its mechanisms of action, as well as on the decision-making process, problems, and responsibilities faced by politicians. An important manifestation of this is the fact that today’s youth view political society in a narrow sense as a process of integrating the basic elements of political culture, as they have become members of society and citizens of the state. Our qualitative research shows that it is typical for them to express their opinions through social networks and that their perception of direct expression of their opinion is relatively weak. For some young people, however, political socialization is the right political behavior that allows political values, beliefs, and practices to be introduced consciously and purposefully. It is widely understood as a system of targeted and non-targeted political education that is formally or informally directed at all stages of life, including non-political training that influences political ideology. On the other hand, some young people know that political socialization is the introduction of political values, beliefs, and practices into conscious, purposeful, political life and informal and targeted systems of political education in a broader understanding.
To resolve this situation, representatives of the more active NGOs stress the need to raise awareness of human rights issues in the development of society. In addition, civil society and non-governmental organizations can be seen to be actively involved in promoting their activities to the public. On the other hand, qualitative research shows that CSOs have a general tendency to take an active role in drafting human rights, women’s rights, and domestic violence laws, participating in, expressing their views, and taking measures to protect their interests.

On the other hand, one in three young people, who limit their political participation only to politics in terms of the electorate, i.e., by voting in political elections every four years, responded in a group interview as follows. To be clear, the panelists said that empty promises made by political parties during elections, an overly politicized platform and a unilateral bias gradually alienate the masses from politics.

It’s been a long time since there was a group of young people in politics who were only interested in voting in elections. For them, if they do not like a candidate in a political election, they will express their views by holding a “clean vote” without voting for anyone. In fact, it is a form of political non-interference, indicating a preference for “observer” approach to issues. On the other hand, there are conflicting problems in public life. Especially when it comes to the interests of the people, many principles are ignored, such as the rule of law, respect for the independence of the judiciary, respect for the majority and the minority. This can also be explained in the context of social theory. This may be directly due to the fact that they limit their opinion to a small number of comments and expressions only through social networks. However, most local participants have left their political parties as full-time public servants and have been elected as representatives of the aimags and sums to the Peoples’ Representative Khural, but there is a risk that political parties will exert some influence on them. On the other hand, when asked about the situation of local residents in political life, most of them focused on the activities of the aimag and sums representatives of the Peoples’ Representative Khural as members of law enforcement committees and monitoring their implementation.

In addition, we focus on bringing government and local sums resolutions to the attention of citizens, determining the level of implementation, addressing implementation deficiencies, and holding them accountable if necessary. In other words, it was concluded that there were no obstacles in principle in the exercise of citizens’ right to vote and to be elected. However, after regular political elections, there are some
problems with freedom of expression and transparency. In addition, public servants are limited in their ability to critically address the aforementioned leadership deficiencies. Further, although as a citizen there will be a direct barrier to their own analysis of the situation from a personal point of view, gradually there is a more or less negative attitude.

As part of the goal of local development, residents stressed the need to change the environment and spiritual condition of citizens, and then determine the level and quality of life, and other conditions of social access for people living in the capital. This is directly related to the results of the parliamentary elections held every four years. On the other hand, the main focus of the Peoples’ Representative Khural at the level of aimags and sums of citizens is to plan an effective and feasible policy at the local level and implement it in practice.

Source: Department of Political Sciences and Legal Studies, Institute of Philosophy of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. “The Current State and Trends of the Political Culture in Mongolia”. Report on qualitative research. Ulaanbaatar, 2019, pp. 13-14.

On the other hand, it is important to receive comments and suggestions from citizens through representatives to create opportunities for further policies and activities. However, due to excessive politicization at the local level, the implementation of the planned activities has been slow. In addition, there are drawbacks because of the dependence on the state budget on the point of view of local development and the development of aimags, job creation, as well as the quality and access to other social services such as education and health. Based on the above ideas, the great theorists of modern political science, including Gabrielle Almond, Sidney Verba, and L. Pai, eventually developed politics as a cultural dimension and therefore recommended a certain system of concepts of political culture, values, and beliefs. They point out that “when we talk about the political culture of society, we mean a political system that has become the knowledge, feelings and values of its members”. Researcher L. Pai also noted that

political culture is a set of fundamental values, feelings and knowledge that define the content and shape of a political system. Thus, the elements that make up the political culture will be the beliefs, thoughts and emotions of people in relation to the government. (Smorganov, 1997, p. 173)

In this context, they define political culture as “set of beliefs and orientations of the political actor on political objects” (Khatanbold, Khishigdavaa, Jargal, & Bayanmunkh, 2020, p. 16). There is no political or social phenomenon or process that does not contain elements of culture.
According to the results of the survey, experts prefer the level of cognition, believing that the concept of political culture should not be limited to certain definitions, but should be manifested first, at the cognitive level, secondly, emotional and third, active. In other words, levels of emotion and participation are relatively low.

Experts are wondering: “What kind of person is a man with a political culture?” The answer is that the following characteristics need to be developed. Table 1 shows the answer rating with the highest percentage.

Table 1

| What Kind of Person Do You Think Has a Political Culture? (Percentage) | Valid copy | Percentage of cases |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| National interests should take precedence over personal interests      | 21.8      | 61.5                |
| We adhere to legal and ethical standards in our operations            | 18.2      | 51.3                |
| The ability to objectively assess and evaluate political and social processes | 14.5      | 41.0                |
| He believes in the well-being of his country and people               | 12.7      | 35.9                |
| He is responsible and assimilates his words                           | 9.1       | 25.6                |
| Be honest and loyal                                                  | 8.2       | 23.1                |
| High political and legal knowledge and education                      | 6.4       | 17.9                |
| Recognize mistakes, take responsibility, and be able to correct them  | 4.5       | 12.8                |
| Respect the opinions of others and puts them into practice           | 1.8       | 5.1                 |

Table 1 to be continued
As can be seen from Table 1, the abilities to analyze the social and political processes in the country, to uphold the rule of law, and to defend national interests are the three main indicators of political culture. Asked if there are politicians in our country who have developed their own characteristics, one in five said that they do not have them, and the highest percentage was given to R. Amarjargal. Figure 3 shows the political culture of politicians who received more than 3 percent of the vote.

Figure 3. Who is a politician with a political culture (percentage)? Source: Department of Political Sciences and Legal Studies, Institute of Philosophy of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. “The Current State and Trends of the Political Culture in Mongolia”. Expert report. UB, 2019, p. 20.

Explaining the reasons why politicians are considered to have a political culture, 13.6 percent said that these people are based on research, have a high level of knowledge of politics and law, respect the law, are professionals, are recognized, give real results, and are charismatic politicians, educated, knowledgeable, and engaged a lot of time. He felt that he had the right attitude, that he was capable of leading, and that he was committed to his work. 22.7 percent said they have a political culture because they are right, moral, responsible, have a culture of communication, listen to the public, make decisions for people, words become actions, are aware of their responsibilities, and strive to deliver on their promises.

However, S. Erdene tops the list of politicians with a lack of political culture: 22.7 percent of the reasons for the lack of political culture are inequality in the distribution of power, political parties, business oligarchic groups, self-serving, and self-serving laws. 25 percent are unprepared as politicians, immature as people, lack of beliefs and values, and lack of responsibility for themselves, unethical, irresponsible, and a state governed by the rule of law. 4.5 percent of them have no basic knowledge, no education, no speech, no education, 4.5 percent of them are not open and transparent, 2.3 percent of them are related to Mongolian Democratic Party and corruption, and 2.3 percent of them are humanitarian in the preamble of our 1992 Constitution. There are four ways to build a civil democratic society, no matter how you work for people by the main criterion (Figure 4).

To date, it is not clear how citizens’ comments are reflected in the laws, regulations and decisions of public bodies. Citizens cannot explain and defend the basis of their proposals, and decision-makers cannot ask and explain the ambiguities in written proposals of citizens, nor can they verify the basis of their proposals.

A majority or 60.1 percent of citizens believe that decisions made by government organizations should be implemented, 20.6 percent said they did not know, and 19.0 percent said they should not comply. There is no doubt that the state mentality of the Mongols is rooted in the mentality, views, coexistence, and customs of steppe nomads. For example, the concept of space occupies an important place in the Mongolian perception of the world, and it is embedded in the traditional notion of state superiority through the worship of heaven, homeland, mountains, water, fire, and ancestors. Internal beliefs in subordination to the state were a
characteristic feature of Mongolian political culture, and because of the uniqueness of living with nomads, morality and customs played an important role in regulating relations between relatives, communities, and society as a whole (Dovchin, 2002, p. 127).

As for the possibility of civil rights, 56 percent of respondents said it was moderate, while 25 percent said it was bad. However, 12.7% said they had a good chance of realizing their rights. This indicates that Mongolia does not have a good opportunity to exercise its civil rights and that in some respects civil rights are being violated, which is becoming increasingly apparent in the media. It is noteworthy that the number of answers about the ability of citizens to perform their duties and exercise their rights is very close. In other words, they lack the capacity to carry out their civic duties in the same way that they exercise their rights. 53.2 percent of respondents said that their ability to perform their civic duties was moderate, of which 59.6 percent or a high percentage of rural residents replied that their ability to perform their civic duties was “moderate”. Therefore, in order to initiate change and reform, it is important to set clear goals and objectives and to find the shortest and most appropriate way to achieve them. It is no coincidence that Friedrich Engels said: “Nothing in the history of society happens without purpose, without conscious thought” (Marx & Engels, 1956, p. 306). If experiments can be used in the natural sciences to produce results, no problems can be tried in society. In other words, the process of abandoning socialism, the historic transition to a social organization that was to take place in its place, and the revolutionization of society was carried out without a well-thought-out concept and a reasonable “philosophy” (Khatanbold, Khishigdavaa, Jargal, & Bayanmunkh, 2020, p. 302), so it can be counted. Thus,
the main subject of political science is governance, while political attitudes and actions are essentially a struggle for the other side; the nature of the relationship between governance and power depends on the active participation, role, and influence of the political leadership, which is the main entity. A striking example of this is the famous French political scientist J. Blondel, who called “political leadership is a governance phenomenon”. He said that

that leadership is the ability to act positively or negatively, except for those who have reached the peak of power (or groups of people). The main component of governance is the political force that forces members of society to act. (Blondel, 1987, pp. viii, 15)

Max Weber also stressed that “everyone who participates in politics aspires to power” (Weber, 1978, p. 215). In other words, R. Tucker states that “political leadership is always an eternal companion to the desire to gain power or influence others” (Tucker, 1995, p. 44), and that political leadership and governance are inextricably linked.

| combined percent | in the city | in the countryside |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Good             | 12.7        | 12                  |
| Average          | 56          | 51.4                |
| Not good         | 25          | 30.3                |
| I don’t know what to say | 6          | 5.9                |
| Didn’t answer    | 0.3         | 0.4                 |
| **sum total**    | **100**     | **100**             |

| combined percent | in the city | in the countryside |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Good             | 13.2        | 16.2                |
| Average          | 53.2        | 46.7                |
| Not good         | 25.6        | 29.7                |
| I don’t know what to say | 7.6        | 6.9                |
| Didn’t answer    | 0.4         | 0.4                 |
| **sum total**    | **100**     | **100**             |

The analysis provides a broader understanding of political culture, but in the real world it emphasizes the
relationship between the electorate and the electorate, the conditions of mutual respect, and the unique psychological and intellectual “living relationships”. Political culture, on the other hand, is a priority skill for modern leaders in building relationships based on culture, education, knowledge, and emotions for both actors and relationships. Moreover, the combination of the two factors reflects the culture and nature of thinking that moves in the same direction and is an effective step based on balanced and equal relations.

The legitimacy of the actions of a democratic state is ultimately based not on a democratic order, but on the prerogatives and norms of that leader, which derive from a moral framework that goes beyond the rule of law. Only the state can mobilize and deploy law enforcement agencies (Fukuyama, 2011, p. 142). These forces are also necessary for the rule of law in the country. We will support democracy, self-government, respect for human rights, and any attempt to dominate other peoples, not only the desire to dominate, but also the art of nation-building as an essential component of national power.

In this sense, it can be concluded that social virtues, including honesty, reliability, the ability to work together, and a sense of responsibility to others, are fundamental to the formation of personal virtues. In general, state law should apply to all citizens, and a law designed to take into account the interests of a party or group has no basis in state or state law. Instead of state law, party law, in other words, a law that protects the interests of certain groups and deviates from the middle, should not be included. At the same time, the judiciary, which ensures the rule of law, must be fully independent. It can be concluded that only when the judiciary becomes truly independent will it be possible to implement the state law without bias, corruption, and extremism.

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