

POLITICAL CULTURE AND POLICY-MAKING: HOW CULTURAL NORMS INFLUENCE GOVERNANCE MODELS

Prof. Dr. Samina Saeed

Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Karachi

ssaeed@uok.edu.pk

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15788467>

Keywords

Political Culture, Policy-Making, Governance, Cultural Norms, Political Ideologies

Article History

Received on 26 May 2025

Accepted on 26 June 2025

Published on 02 July 2025

Copyright @Author

Corresponding Author: *

Prof. Dr. Samina Saeed Dean

Abstract

Culture significantly shapes the ways societies think about authority, participation, justice, and collective identity, thus influencing political ideologies and institutional design. Gender norms, religious norms, traditional norms, and individual or collective values dictate what is legitimate or acceptable within a political system. These cultural models tend to shape public expectation, prioritize policy, and affect government-citizen engagement. With societies increasingly diverse and interconnected, it becomes harder to develop effective and culturally responsive governance models. A single, universal approach to governance frequently neglects the deeply entrenched cultural values that shape behaviour, political participation, and policy reaction. Familiarity with these cultural factors is thus essential for developing inclusive, responsible, and sustainable governance. This research critically analyses the extent to which cultural values and political culture combine to influence governance outcomes in different sociopolitical settings. Informed by exploratory, empirical, argumentative, and narrative approaches, the research reviews extant literature and utilizes a multidisciplinary frame to evaluate to what extent culturally responsive governance can lead to increased legitimacy, policy effectiveness, and social cohesion. The results emphasize the need to harmonize governance practices with cultural circumstances in order to guarantee not just compliance and stability but also the active engagement of all social groups in the political process.

INTRODUCTION

Political culture, defined as the collective beliefs, values, and norms that shape a society's political behaviour, serves as a cornerstone of policy-making and governance. These cultural underpinnings influence how citizens perceive authority, engage in political processes, and prioritize policy issues, ultimately shaping the design and implementation of governance models. In an era of globalization and cultural diversity, understanding the interplay between cultural norms and governance is paramount for addressing the complexities of pluralistic societies (Muers, 2018). The significance of this research lies in

its potential to inform policymakers about the importance of cultural sensitivity in crafting effective and equitable policies. Cultural norms, rooted in religion, tradition, history, and social structures, shape political ideologies and policy preferences, often determining the success or failure of governance initiatives. For instance, in Pakistan, Islamic values and tribal traditions create a unique governance landscape, while the UK's individualistic culture supports robust democratic institutions (Rizvi, 2018). This study explores this dynamic relationship by examining how cultural norms influence policy-

making and governance models, specifically by delving deep into analysing diverse political and cultural contexts for comparative analysis. A critical analysis synthesizes findings, and the conclusion offers recommendations for culturally sensitive governance. This structure aims to bridge gaps in understanding the cultural determinants of policy-making and governance, contributing to both academic discourse and practical policy design.

Background of the Study

Political culture encompasses the collective attitudes, beliefs, and values that define a society's approach to governance and political participation. It serves as a lens through which citizens interpret political authority, engage with institutions, and respond to policy initiatives. Cultural norms, deeply embedded in religion, history, and social practices, shape governance models by influencing policy priorities, institutional designs, and citizen engagement. For instance, collectivist cultures, prevalent in many Asian and Middle Eastern societies, emphasize communal welfare and social cohesion, often leading to interventionist policies (Clark et al., 2018). In contrast, individualistic cultures, such as those in the UK and USA, prioritize personal liberties and limited government intervention, resulting in market-oriented policies (Dror et al., 2017).

The interplay between culture and governance is particularly pronounced in pluralistic societies, where diverse cultural norms coexist and sometimes conflict. In Pakistan, Islamic values and tribal traditions shape a hybrid governance model blending democratic aspirations with authoritarian tendencies. The legacy of British colonialism has left a bureaucratic framework that often clashes with local cultural expectations of participatory governance (Hudson et al., 2019). In the Middle East, religious and collectivist norms underpin authoritarian governance structures, while in France, the principle of secularism (*laïcité*) shapes policies on education and public expression (Shaikh, 2018). These variations highlight the need for a comparative analysis of how cultural norms influence governance across different contexts.

Historically, political culture has been a key determinant of governance models. In the UK, a long tradition of parliamentary democracy, rooted in the Magna Carta of 1215, reflects cultural values of civic

participation and accountability. The USA's political culture, shaped by its frontier history and emphasis on individualism, has led to a decentralized governance model prioritizing personal freedoms (Bose & Jalal, 2022). The Middle East's governance models, influenced by Islamic principles and tribal loyalties, prioritize stability over democratic participation. In Pakistan, the interplay of Islamic values, tribal norms, and colonial legacies creates a complex governance landscape, marked by tensions between centralized authority and local autonomy (Rizvi, 2020). This study draws on these global examples to explore the mechanisms through which cultural norms shape governance, focusing on Pakistan as a primary case study and comparing it with the UK, USA, France, and the Middle East.

Research Question

How do cultural norms influence policy-making processes and governance models in across different political systems?

Research Objectives

- To assess the role of cultural norms in shaping political ideologies, policy preferences, and governance structures across diverse contexts.
- To analyse the evolution of governance models in Pakistan and their interaction with cultural values, including Islamic principles, tribal traditions, and colonial legacies.
- To compare the influence of cultural norms on political outcomes across cross-cultural dynamics.

Rationale of the Research

The study of cultural norms and their impact on policy-making is critical in an era of globalization, where diverse societies interact within and across borders. Governance models that fail to account for cultural contexts risk inefficiency, inequity, and lack of legitimacy (Touseef, 2023). This research is significant for several reasons. First, it addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on Pakistan, a country with a unique blend of Islamic, tribal, and colonial influences, which is often under-researched compared to Western contexts. Second, by comparing diverse political cultures, the study provides a global perspective on how cultural norms shape governance,

offering insights applicable to pluralistic societies worldwide (Khan & Law, 2018).

The practical implications are substantial. Understanding cultural influences enables policymakers to design policies that resonate with societal values, enhancing compliance and effectiveness. For instance, in Pakistan, aligning policies with Islamic values can foster public support, while in the UK, policies reflecting individualistic values are more likely to gain traction. The study also contributes to theoretical debates on political culture by integrating empirical evidence and exploratory methodologies. By addressing these issues, the research aims to inform strategies for fostering inclusive, equitable, and sustainable governance in diverse cultural contexts, particularly in regions facing cultural tensions or governance challenges.

Literature Review

Why Are Culture and Values So Important for Policy-Making?

Cultural norms and values are central to policy-making because they shape the political ideologies, preferences, and behaviours of both citizens and policymakers (Inglehart & Welzel, 2018). These norms provide a framework for interpreting authority, civic duty, and societal priorities, influencing how policies are conceptualized, implemented, and received. Collectivist cultures, emphasizing group welfare, support policies prioritizing social equity, such as universal healthcare or community-based development programs. Individualistic cultures value personal autonomy, leading to policies emphasizing economic freedom and limited government intervention.

Cultural values influence policy framing and communication. Politicians and media exploit cultural symbols, such as religious or nationalistic imagery, to align policies with societal values, shaping public opinion and voter behaviour (Touseef, 2023). In religious societies, policies framed in moral or spiritual terms gain public support. In Pakistan, policies referencing Islamic principles, like Zakat-based welfare programs, resonate deeply. Cultural norms also affect citizen engagement, with societies valuing civic duty exhibiting higher voter turnout and policy acceptance (Layman & Carmines, 2019). Aligning policies with cultural values enhances

legitimacy and effectiveness, as citizens are more likely to comply with policies reflecting their worldview.

Institutional designs are shaped by cultural norms. High power distance societies, where hierarchical authority is accepted, favour centralized governance. Egalitarian cultures, like those in Scandinavia, support participatory governance. Failure to account for cultural norms can lead to policy resistance, as seen when Western-style democratic reforms are imposed on collectivist societies without considering local values (Layman & Carmines, 2019).

Governance Models in Pakistan and the Impact of Cultural Norms

Pakistan's governance models are shaped by Islamic values, tribal traditions, and colonial legacies. Islamic principles, emphasizing justice, charity, and moral governance, influence policies on education, family law, and social welfare. The Zakat system, rooted in Islamic charity, underpins social welfare programs, providing financial support to the poor. However, these values entrench conservative policies, like blasphemy laws, limiting progressive reforms and creating social tensions (Touseef et al., 2023). These laws, tied to religious norms, spark debates over freedom of expression and human rights, illustrating the challenge of balancing cultural values with modern governance principles.

Tribal norms in regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan prioritize community consensus and local autonomy, clashing with centralized governance models. The Jirga system, a traditional dispute resolution mechanism, reflects these norms but conflicts with formal legal frameworks, leading to governance gaps. In the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), tribal leaders resisted federal education reforms, prioritizing local control. The legacy of British colonialism instilled bureaucratic structures emphasizing hierarchy, yet these struggle to accommodate Pakistan's diverse cultural landscape (Akhtar, 2018). This disconnect undermines policy implementation.

Politicism, where political affiliation overrides merit, is a normalized cultural trait, limiting innovation and fostering corruption (Riaz, 2011). This undermines effective governance by prioritizing loyalty over competence, as seen in unqualified appointments to key positions. Pakistan's hybrid governance model

blends democratic institutions with authoritarian practices, shaped by cultural tensions between tradition and modernity (Laar et al., 2019). Addressing these requires reforms integrating cultural values with transparency and meritocracy.

How Cultural Norms Drive Political Outcomes

Cultural norms drive political outcomes by shaping policy priorities, institutional designs, and citizen behaviour. Examples include:

- Pakistan: Islamic values and tribal loyalties shape policies like blasphemy laws and regional autonomy. The 1971 East Pakistan crisis highlighted how cultural divisions, particularly linguistic and ethnic differences, influenced state recognition policies, leading to Bangladesh's independence (Shaikh, 2018). Tribal norms in FATA resisted federal education reforms, prioritizing local control.
- UK: Individualistic culture emphasizes parliamentary sovereignty and civic participation, driving policies like Brexit reflecting national identity (Rizvi, 2018). Values of fairness underpin the welfare state and anti-corruption measures, like the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority.
- USA: Political culture, shaped by individualism and moralism, creates diverse outcomes. Elazar's framework identifies moralistic states (e.g., Minnesota) prioritizing welfare, individualistic states (e.g., Nevada) favouring deregulation, and traditionalistic states (e.g., Mississippi) maintaining conservative policies (Layman & Carmines, 2019).
- Middle East: Collectivist and religious norms prioritize social cohesion, supporting authoritarian governance. Gender segregation in Saudi Arabia reflects modesty and tradition, limiting women's participation (Abu-Lughod, 2013). Vision 2030 reforms aim to align with modernizing trends.

Cultural Dimensions and Governance Quality

Geert Hofstede's seminal work on cultural dimensions offers a foundational framework for understanding how cultural values influence governance quality across different societies. Among his dimensions, power distance and uncertainty avoidance are particularly significant in shaping the structures and effectiveness of governance (Sent et al., 2022). Power distance refers to the degree to which less powerful members of society accept and expect

that power is distributed unequally. In countries with high power distance, hierarchical authority structures are widely accepted, and questioning authority is often discouraged. This cultural characteristic significantly influences governance practices. For example, in Pakistan, where power distance is notably high, governance is often characterized by rigid bureaucratic hierarchies and centralized decision-making (Evan & Holy, 2023). Such systems limit participatory governance by discouraging citizen involvement and reinforcing elite dominance in policy formulation and implementation. The acceptance of strong vertical hierarchies results in governance structures that prioritize control and top-down management, often at the expense of transparency and accountability.

In contrast, countries like the United Kingdom and the United States, which exhibit relatively low power distance, tend to foster governance models that emphasize accountability, inclusiveness, and public engagement. These societies promote flatter organizational structures and encourage questioning of authority, which in turn supports democratic institutions and participatory policymaking (Aydilek, 2024). The emphasis on equality and accessibility in governance processes encourages civil society participation and makes public officials more answerable to citizens.

Uncertainty avoidance, or the extent to which societies feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and create beliefs or institutions to avoid them, is another cultural dimension that impacts governance quality and policy preferences. High uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to prefer structured policies, clear rules, and strong regulations to manage risk and uncertainty (Stephenson, 2023). France exemplifies this cultural trait, with its governance marked by extensive regulatory frameworks and a pronounced commitment to secularism (Muers, 2018). The rigid enforcement of secular policies in France can be seen as a societal strategy to reduce ambiguity in public life and maintain social order through clear boundaries between religion and state.

In a converse manner, the United States scores low on uncertainty avoidance, which contributes to its more flexible and experimental policy approaches. This is particularly evident in state-level governance, where

variations in healthcare policy, education reform, and environmental regulation allow for policy innovation and adaptation. The tolerance for ambiguity and risk in such societies enables policy experimentation, which can lead to more dynamic and responsive governance (Hudson & Day, 2019). These cultural dimensions demonstrate that governance quality cannot be understood purely through institutional frameworks or political systems but must also consider underlying cultural values. For instance, attempts to transplant governance models from low power distance, low uncertainty avoidance societies to high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance contexts often face resistance or failure due to mismatches with cultural expectations (Siddiqi, 2020).

Recognizing these cultural dimensions is crucial for policymakers aiming to enhance governance effectiveness. Tailored policy approaches that align with cultural preferences can facilitate reforms and improve public trust. For example, in high power distance contexts, incremental reforms that engage traditional leaders and respect hierarchical relationships may be more effective than radical participatory initiatives (Khan & Law, 2018). Similarly, in high uncertainty avoidance societies, policies that emphasize predictability and clear legal frameworks might enjoy greater public acceptance (Inglehart & Welzel, 2018).

Cultural Modernization and Democratic Transitions

The concept of cultural modernization is pivotal to understanding how societies transition towards democracy. Rooted in the work of Ronald Inglehart, cultural modernization refers to a shift in societal values from traditionalism, characterized by strong adherence to religion, family, and authority, towards secularism, individualism, and self-expression (Alvarez et al., 2018). This transformation plays a decisive role in facilitating or hindering democratic transitions.

In the post-Cold War context of Eastern Europe, cultural modernization has been a key driver of democratic governance. Following decades under authoritarian communist regimes, many Eastern European societies embraced new values emphasizing political participation, accountability, and human rights (Muers, 2018). The cultural shift towards secularism and individual autonomy weakened the

ideological foundations of authoritarianism and supported the development of democratic institutions. The emergence of civil society movements, free media, and pluralistic political parties reflected these underlying cultural changes, helping consolidate democratic governance.

In stark contrast, in much of the Middle East, cultural resistance to modernization and secularization poses substantial barriers to democratic reforms. Deeply ingrained religious and traditional norms continue to shape political culture, often reinforcing authoritarian governance structures (Sent & Kroese, 2022). In many Middle Eastern states, the intertwining of religious authority and political power sustains regimes that prioritize stability and control over democratic participation. The cultural emphasis on collective identity and respect for established authority frequently limits space for dissent or political pluralism. More importantly, attempts to introduce democratic reforms are often perceived as threats to cultural and religious traditions, leading to resistance both from ruling elites and segments of the population (Evan & Holy, 2023).

Pakistan presents a complex case where cultural modernization coexists with persistent traditionalism, creating a significant cultural divide that shapes governance dynamics. Rapid urbanization and exposure to global media have fuelled demands for democratic participation and gender equity, especially among younger urban populations (Siddiqi, 2020). These groups increasingly embrace values associated with modernization, such as secularism, individual rights, and political accountability. However, in rural areas, where religious, tribal, and patriarchal norms remain dominant, traditional values continue to influence political behaviour and governance structures. This urban-rural divide complicates governance, as policymakers must navigate between modernizing reforms and deeply rooted traditional expectations to maintain political stability and legitimacy.

This cultural duality requires nuanced governance strategies that balance respect for tradition with the promotion of democratic principles. Policymakers must carefully design reforms that incorporate elements of local culture, such as involving traditional leaders in governance processes or framing democratic values in culturally resonant terms (Akhtar, 2018).

Education, media, and civic engagement programs play essential roles in gradually shifting cultural norms toward greater acceptance of democracy while avoiding backlash. Furthermore, cultural modernization is not a linear or uniform process but varies significantly across contexts, shaped by historical legacies, religion, economic development, and global influences. Successful democratic transitions often depend on the alignment of institutional reforms with evolving cultural values, fostering a political culture that supports participation, inclusiveness, and accountability (Alvarez et al., 2018).

Gender, Culture, and Political Participation: The Role of Cultural Narratives in Shaping Political Behaviour and Policy

Cultural norms and gendered expectations deeply shape patterns of political participation, access to power, and policy development across global societies. In patriarchal societies, particularly in regions such as the Middle East and South Asia, women's participation in political processes remains limited due to entrenched cultural expectations about gender roles. These limitations not only hinder gender equity but also impact the inclusiveness and representativeness of policy outcomes. For instance, in Iran, strong currents of cultural conservatism, stemmed from both religious tradition and social norms, continue to restrict women's public roles, despite periodic reformist movements that call for broader gender inclusion (Touseef et al, 2023). Similarly, in Pakistan, patriarchal norms especially prevalent in rural areas obstruct women's access to political spaces, although notable progress has been observed in urban settings where educational and economic advancements have begun to shift gender norms (Rizvi, 2020). In contrast, Western democracies such as the United Kingdom and the United States have made strides in institutionalizing gender equality, but cultural biases still manifest in the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, as illustrated by persistent gender gaps in political and corporate leadership (Carriere, 2024). Beyond gender alone, cultural political psychology provides a framework for understanding how deeply embedded narratives shape political behaviour, identity, and public policy. These narratives, often

tied to collective memory and identity, influence what kinds of policies are deemed acceptable or legitimate by the public. For example, Hindu nationalist narratives in India have been instrumental in promoting a vision of cultural homogeneity, which has, in turn, influenced legislation affecting minority rights and secularism (Clark et al., 2018).

The amplification of these cultural narratives through social media has further intensified political polarization and identity-based conflicts. Culture wars over issues like climate policy, LGBTQ+ rights, and immigration in the United States demonstrate how digital platforms have become battlegrounds for competing political worldviews. Therefore, any attempt to promote inclusive political participation, especially regarding gender equity, must be attentive to the cultural narratives at play. Policies must be context-sensitive, incorporating strategies like culturally tailored educational programs and community engagement initiatives to shift norms over time. Without addressing the cultural and psychological dimensions of political life, efforts to achieve equitable representation and inclusive governance will remain incomplete.

Cultural Influences on Policy Implementation and Governance Models

Cultural norms profoundly shape policy implementation and governance models, often creating challenges when policies conflict with societal values while also offering opportunities for designing inclusive systems. In Pakistan, healthcare reforms face resistance in rural areas where communities prefer traditional medicine over modern healthcare systems. This cultural preference, rooted in historical reliance on local healers, highlights the difficulty of implementing centralized policies in regions valuing traditional practices (Shaikh, 2018). Similarly, in the Middle East, environmental policies like water conservation in Jordan struggle against cultural practices that prioritize agricultural traditions, where water-intensive farming is seen as a way of life. In the United States, gun control policies encounter opposition in regions where cultural norms emphasize individual freedoms and self-reliance, reflecting a deep-seated belief in personal autonomy (Dror, 2017). These examples illustrate how cultural misalignment can hinder policy success, underscoring the need for

implementation strategies that engage communities through culturally sensitive approaches, such as stakeholder consultations or community-based programs that respect local values while promoting policy goals. Effective governance models address these challenges by integrating cultural norms to enhance legitimacy and inclusivity. New Zealand's governance framework, which incorporates indigenous Maori principles, exemplifies this approach by blending traditional values with modern democratic practices, fostering social cohesion and policy acceptance. Similarly, Canada's governance models promote cultural reconciliation by integrating indigenous frameworks, ensuring policies resonate with diverse communities. In contrast, top-down governance models, such as Pakistan's colonial-era bureaucracies, often face resistance due to their disconnect from local cultural contexts. These rigid structures struggle to accommodate diverse values, leading to inefficiencies and public distrust.

Globalization and Cultural Hybridity

Globalization introduces cultural hybridity, blending local and global norms to reshape governance models in diverse contexts. In the Middle East, Western governance models are adapted to Islamic contexts, as seen in the United Arab Emirates' economic reforms under Vision 2021, which integrate global market principles with Islamic values of social welfare (Laar et al., 2019). These reforms, such as the establishment of free trade zones, reflect a hybrid approach that balances global economic integration with cultural traditions, fostering stability while attracting international investment. In Pakistan, global media and digital platforms influence youth demands for democratic participation, clashing with traditional tribal and religious norms that prioritize communal consensus (Dror, 2017). This cultural tension is evident in urban protests advocating for transparency, which often face resistance from rural communities rooted in hierarchical traditions.

Hybrid governance models require policies that accommodate diverse perspectives while maintaining coherence. For instance, participatory forums in the UAE, such as the Federal National Council, integrate global democratic ideals with local cultural values, ensuring stakeholder engagement without disrupting social cohesion (Aydilek, 2024). Similarly, in India,

cultural hybridity is reflected in policies blending global human rights frameworks with traditional values, though tensions arise when nationalist narratives dominate (Vabo et al., 2023). These hybrid models highlight the need for flexible governance structures that adapt to global influences while respecting local identities.

Discussion and Critical Analysis

The complex interplay between cultural norms and governance systems presents both significant opportunities and profound challenges in different socio-political contexts. Culture is not merely a backdrop to governance; it actively shapes political institutions, policy preferences, citizen engagement, and the very legitimacy of ruling authorities. However, this cultural embeddedness can simultaneously foster political stability and perpetuate exclusion or inefficiency, demanding careful navigation by policymakers and scholars alike.

In Pakistan, the coexistence of Islamic and tribal norms produces a hybrid governance model that reflects the country's diverse social fabric but also generates contradictions that complicate democratic consolidation. Islamic values significantly influence social policy; for example, the institutionalization of Zakat—an obligatory almsgiving—illustrates how religious principles can inspire welfare-oriented policies aimed at poverty alleviation and social justice. This aligns with Islamic teachings emphasizing community responsibility and care for the vulnerable. However, these religious norms can also entrench conservative and exclusionary policies, such as the controversial blasphemy laws, which restrict freedom of expression and have been criticized for being misused to target minority groups and suppress dissent.

When considering the UK's political culture, it encourages a sense of personal autonomy combined with respect for established democratic institutions, which has historically supported political stability and incremental reform. The Brexit referendum is a telling example: it reflected nationalist and sovereignty-driven narratives that appealed to deeply held cultural values around self-determination and identity. However, this nationalist resurgence has also polarized political discourse, challenging the inclusivity of governance and threatening social

cohesion. The divisive rhetoric surrounding Brexit illuminated fault lines in British society related to class, regional identity, and immigration, underscoring how cultural narratives can both mobilize political participation and deepen societal fragmentation.

In the United States, the diversity of political cultures, moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic, creates a patchwork of governance outcomes that reflect varied historical and cultural trajectories. Moralistic states, often in the Northeast and Midwest, prioritize welfare policies and collective good, promoting active government roles in addressing social issues. By contrast, individualistic states, such as many in the West, emphasize deregulation and personal responsibility, fostering an entrepreneurial political ethos. Traditionalistic states, largely in the South, maintain conservative policies that often seek to preserve established social hierarchies and resist rapid change. This mosaic complicates federal governance but also allows for policy experimentation. However, it also exposes the nation to significant ideological conflicts, especially on issues like healthcare, voting rights, and social justice, demonstrating how cultural heterogeneity influences not only governance quality but also political polarization.

Concerning the Middle East, collectivist cultural norms underpin governance systems that frequently prioritize social cohesion and order over individual political freedoms, often reinforcing authoritarian rule. These norms place a premium on community solidarity, respect for authority, and preservation of tradition, which governments exploit to legitimize limited political participation and restrict dissent, especially among marginalized groups such as women. For example, women's political participation remains severely limited in many Middle Eastern states due to cultural restrictions justified on traditional or religious grounds. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 signals a government effort to modernize and diversify its economy and society, including improving women's rights and expanding their roles in public life. However, deep-rooted cultural resistance and conservative religious interpretations slow the pace of these reforms (Akbar, 2023), illustrating the difficulties of balancing modernization ambitions with entrenched social norms.

A recurring theme across these examples is that cultural norms serve dual roles in governance in a manner that they provide with legitimacy and social order while also potentially perpetuating biases and exclusion. For instance, gender disparities in the Middle East or politicization of religious narratives in Pakistan show how culture can constrain social progress under the guise of preserving tradition. Politicians frequently manipulate cultural narratives to influence public opinion and consolidate power, which underscores the critical need for comprehensive civic education programs. Educating citizens about democratic values, critical media literacy, and rights-based governance can empower populations to resist divisive or exclusionary cultural politics (Touseef, 2023).

Finally, globalization introduces new dynamics into this interplay, exposing societies to transnational ideas of governance, human rights, and development, while also provoking cultural defensive reactions. The challenge for contemporary governance lies in crafting adaptive models that can negotiate this tension by integrating beneficial aspects of modernization and global norms while respecting cultural identities and traditional practices. This balance is crucial for maintaining political legitimacy, social stability, and effective governance in increasingly interconnected but culturally diverse societies.

Conclusion

Cultural norms profoundly influence policy-making and governance by shaping ideologies, preferences, and institutions. In Pakistan, Islamic and tribal values create a hybrid model, requiring culturally sensitive reforms. The UK's individualistic culture supports democracy, but nationalism challenges inclusivity. The USA's diverse cultures drive varied outcomes, reflecting regional contexts. France's secularism ensures consistency but risks exclusion, while the Middle East's collectivist norms reinforce authoritarianism. Aligning governance with cultural contexts enhances legitimacy and effectiveness. Future research should explore how globalization, technology, and youth movements reshape political culture, ensuring inclusive policies through cross-cultural dialogue and civic education.

REFERENCES

- Akhtar, A. S. (2018). *The politics of common sense: State, society and culture in Pakistan*. Cambridge University Press.
- Alvarez, S. E., Dagnino, E., & Escobar, A. (2018). Introduction: The cultural and the political in Latin American social movements. In *Cultures of politics/politics of cultures* (pp. 1-30). Routledge.
- Aydilek, E. (2024). Impact of political culture on the policy-making process: comparative analysis of the United Kingdom and Türkiye. *Öneri Dergisi*, 19(62), 166-189.
- Bose, S., & Jalal, A. (2022). *Modern South Asia: history, culture, political economy*. Routledge.
- Clark, T. N., & Hoffmann-Martinet, V. (2018). *The new political culture*. Rout.
- Dror, Y. (2017). *Public policy making reexamined*. Routledge.
- Evan, T., & Holý, V. (2023). Cultural diversity and its impact on governance. *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences*, 89, 101681.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). Culture's recent consequences: Using dimension scores in theory and research. *International Journal of cross cultural management*, 1(1), 11-17.
- Hudson, V. M., & Day, B. S. (2019). *Foreign policy analysis: classic and contemporary theory*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2018). Political culture and democracy. In *New directions in comparative politics* (pp. 141-164). Routledge.
- Khan, M. A., & Law, L. S. (2018). The role of national cultures in shaping the corporate management cultures: A three-country theoretical analysis. *Organizational culture*, 35-60.
- Laar, R. A., Shi, S., & Ashraf, M. A. (2019). Participation of Pakistani female students in physical activities: Religious, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. *Religions*, 10(11), 617.
- Layman, G. C., & Carmines, E. G. (2019). Cultural conflict in American politics: Religious traditionalism, postmaterialism, and US political behavior. In *Religion and Politics* (pp. 483-509). Routledge.
- Muers, S. (2018). Culture, values and public policy. *Inst Policy Res*.
- Rizvi, H. A. (2020). Pakistan's strategic culture. *South asia in*, 305-328.
- Sent, E. M., & Kroese, A. L. (2022). Commemorating Geert Hofstede, a pioneer in the study of culture and institutions. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 18(1), 15-27.
- Shaikh, F. (2018). *Making sense of Pakistan*. Oxford University Press.
- Siddiqi, F. H. (2020). Political Parties as Transmitters of Political Culture: Competitive Party Dynamics and Political Sub-cultures in Pakistan. *Chinese Political Science Review*, 5(4), 534-554.
- Stephenson, J. (2023). Using the Cultures Framework for Policy Analysis. In *Culture and Sustainability: Exploring Stability and Transformation with the Cultures Framework* (pp. 153-189). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Touseef, M., Khan, B. B., Ali, S., Abbas, H. N., & Raza, A. (2023). The influence of cultural values and norms on political attitudes and behavior: a sociological study. *Advanced Qualitative Research*, 1(2), 40-50.
- Vabo, S. I., & Winsvold, M. (2023). A framework for analyzing organizational culture among politicians: Exploring implications for participatory governance schemes. *Public Administration*, 101(3), 917-931.