

A political community may be viewed as a group of people living together under a common regime, with a common set of authorities to make important decisions for the group as a whole. To the extent that the regime is legitimate, we would further specify that the people have internalized a common set of rules. Given the predominately achievement-oriented norms which seem to be a necessary concomitant of industrial society, these rules must apply equally to the entire population or precisely those criteria (e.g. language) which are basis for blocking individual social mobility, can become the basis for cleavage which threatens the disintegration of the political community.

Among post-tribal multilingual populations where the masses are illiterate, generally unaware of national events, and have low expectations of social and economic mobility, the problem is largely irrelevant, even if such populations have a linguistically distinct elite group. In contrast, when the general population of a society is going through the early stages of social mobilization, language group conflicts seem particularly likely to occur; they may develop animosities, which take on a life of their own and persist beyond the situation, which gave rise to them. The degree to which this happens may be significantly affected by the type of policy which the government adopts during the transitional period.

The likelihood that linguistic division will lead to political conflict is particularly great when the language cleavages are linked with the presence of a dominant group which blocks the social mobility of members of a subordinate group, partly, at least, on the basis of language factors. Where a dominant group holds the positions of power at the head of the major bureaucracies in a modern society, and gives preference in recruitment to those who speak the dominant language, any submerged group has the options of assimilation, non-mobility or group resistance. If an individual is overwhelmed numerically or psychologically by the dominant language, if his group is proportionately too small to maintain a self-contained community within the society, assimilation usually occurs. In contrast, if one is part of a numerous or geographically concentrated minority group, assimilation is more difficult and is more likely to seem unreasonable. If the group is numerous and mobilized political resistance is likely.

Questions

- (a) A political community is identified as a group of people who have three things in common: What are they? (2)
- (b) Why are the rules important? (2)
- (c) Give another word or paraphrase for: (2)
 - (i) Cleavage;
 - (ii) Disintegration.
- (d) In the second paragraph the authors distinguished between two types of society: What are they? (2)
- (e) What problem is irrelevant to the first type? (2)
- (f) What is likely to happen to the second? (2)
- (g) When will language create political conflict? (2)
- (h) What is assimilation and when does it occur? (2)
- (i) When does group resistance occur? (2)
- (j) Give the opposite of the term "dominant group" used in the text. (2)

COMPREHENSION

(a) (3)

A political community is a group of people that are sharing common territory or living in the same state. They are governed by a common government. They have some authorities which make rule and regulations on their behalf. Moreover, the groups may differ in their ideologies and traditions but they have strong consensus over certain rules.

(b)

The rules serve as basis of unity among people in a political unity or community. These rules are basically the roadmaps which leads towards the set goals of the society. These rules are important because they are applicable to all members of society. These rules restrict the separation of certain group from the community. In a nutshell, these rules are mandatory for integration of a political community.

(c)

Cleavage: the path or plane which divides a structure

Disintegration: Disunity, separation into parts

(d)

The author has discussed two types of societies. One society is going through transition while the other society is stagnant in its development.

(e)

The first type of society is the one which is not following the path of transition. For such society, national development, ideology, social development and economic development are irrelevant problems.

(f)

The second society is the one which is following the path of transition. During this transition phase, language and ethnical groups may conflict with each other. The author fears that their enmity could stop their transition.

(g)

The language can create political conflict in a community when the dominant group tries to block the transition of smaller groups on the basis of language. Such groups prefer those who speak their languages and ignore smaller groups with different language. Such attitude cause resentment in smaller groups.

(h)

Assimilation means grouping or joining hands. Assimilation occurs in the society when smaller groups are mistreated on the basis of language and ethnical affiliations. The dominant group capture the powers in the society. Hence, resentment and less population cause the smaller groups to assimilate.

(i)

The group resistance occurs when people are not giving "in" given their due in a society. Dominant groups prefer their language-mates at key power positions. So, the selection at key position is biased. Therefore, group resistance occurs.

(j)

The term opposite of 'dominant group' is 'sub-ordinate group'. Subordinate group is the one which is numerically less in a society and speaks different language than dominant group.