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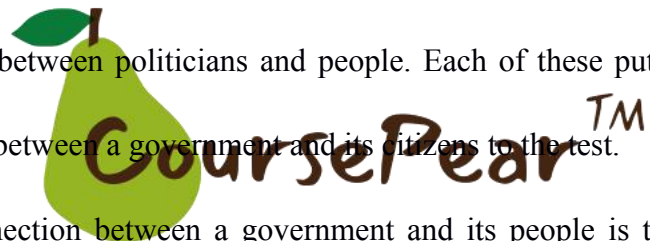
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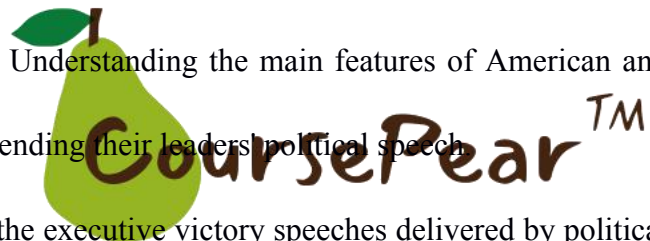
UWIII Pure Essay

As educated citizens in a democratic society, we are inundated with public comments, news releases, and other forms of communication from our elected leaders. It may be overwhelming; why do politicians express themselves in certain ways? How does such conversation reveal anything about them and their connection with voters? You may be wondering. Victory orations, a kind of speech with a strong historical connection to western civilization, offer an excellent object of study for addressing these issues. By examining two distinct speeches delivered on similar occasions, one by US President Barack Obama following his November election victory and another by British Prime Minister David Cameron following his party's 2010 parliamentary election victory, we can gain a better understanding of the similarities and differences between a government's and its people's discourses. While the speeches have many aspects, they remain very distinct due to the varied relationships between politicians and people. Each of these puts long-held assumptions about the relationship between a government and its citizens to the test.

The best approach to describe the connection between a government and its people is to understand the notion of political culture. Political culture may be described as "the interaction of the attitudes and motives of the distinct people who comprise political institutions" (Almond 32).



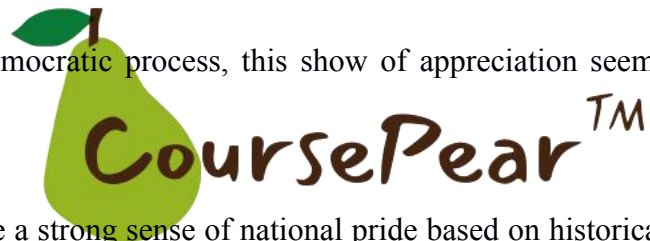
Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba created the phrase in their widely-read 1963 book *The Civic Culture*, which examined the connection between political institutions and political involvement. Every nation has some kind of political culture, and it is a useful tool for comprehending political attitudes and involvement in any particular state. The *Civic Culture* compares and contrasts the political cultures of the United States and the United Kingdom. As a result, political culture may be used to help us comprehend the disparities in political speech between leaders such as Obama or Cameron and their supporters. According to the authors' overall findings, American civic culture is highly discourse-based, with a sizable portion of the public engaging in political participation. Almond and Verba assert that Americans take pride in their political system and are usually pleased with government performance, even if they disagree with the people in power. The United Kingdom, like the United States, has highly developed participants as part of its political culture, but it also functions with a large number of people who are aware of the political process and typically participate in the electoral process but do not engage in activities other than voting. According to Almond and Verba, British political culture is much more deferential than American political culture, which means that a greater proportion of its citizens vote without actively participating in the election process. Understanding the main features of American and British political culture is critical for comprehending their leaders' political speech.



Such political discourse is illustrated by the executive victory speeches delivered by political leaders immediately after the announcement of election results. Given that the delivery occasions are virtually the same and that American and British political cultures are very similar, there are

many striking parallels between the two speeches. This format includes a thank you to those who assisted them in achieving victory, a tribute to the formidable competition, an acknowledgement of the political challenges each executive will face, and a conclusion emphasizing the possibilities each country can achieve if its citizens work cooperatively. The pattern is also unsurprising when countries are seen through the lens of political culture. They are both democratic countries with participating publics, as *The Civic Culture* asserts, and as such, much of their ideas of democratic thinking are comparable.

Each politician makes an effort to express gratitude to his or her followers and audience. Not thanking voters and campaigners seems almost counter-intuitive in an elected administration; after all, victory would be unthinkable without broad support. Obama makes a special point of congratulating "the greatest campaign team and volunteers in the history of politics," referring to his supporters as the apex of campaign teams. He demonstrates his appreciation via praise. At the conclusion of his speech, Cameron's modest "Thank you very much" enhances British political participants' stature. Due to the high level of involvement in both countries' political systems, it's unsurprising that both politicians make people feel accountable for their elected representatives. Given the critical role people play in the democratic process, this show of appreciation seems quite appropriate.

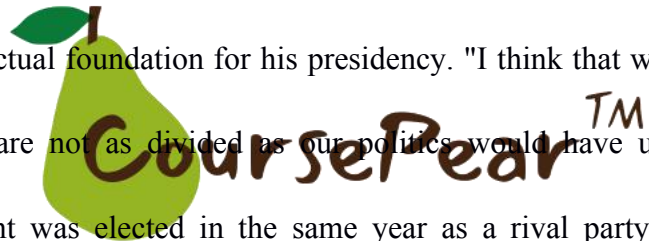


Like the United States, both nations have a strong sense of national pride based on historical tradition. The election process in the United States dates all the way back to the 1787 Constitution. The electoral procedure in the United Kingdom goes all the way back to the

election of ministers in 1264. Due to this sense of pride in the political process, the other side has a receptive tone.

President Obama complimented his opponent on a "difficult campaign," saying that the election was so difficult to win because "we love this nation and are so concerned about its future." When voters discover their preferred candidates are not elected, there is minimal loss of national pride in either country due to the respect for the election process and the nation's future. Cameron likewise pays homage to his predecessor as a newly-elected leader, paying "tribute to the departing prime minister." Respect for the opposing view maintains the stability of these historically successful democracies.

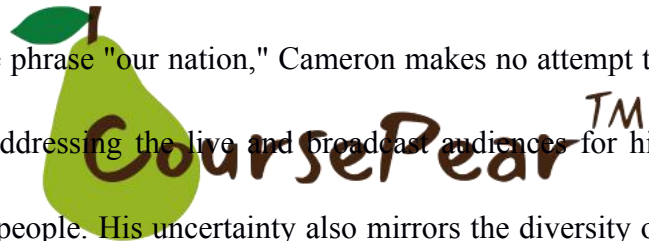
As leaders of governments that rely on public involvement, both leaders place a premium on cooperation. In his address, the Prime Minister asserts that "true change occurs when everyone pulls together, joins together, and works together..." Without voter engagement and respect for election procedures entrenched in both countries' political cultures, neither country would be able to operate within its own system. Cameron stresses the need for all parties to cooperating in forming a new coalition government. He considers the future he will face as a victor. Similarly, Obama makes an effort to provide the intellectual foundation for his presidency. "I think that we can grasp this future together because we are not as divided as our politics would have us believe," he asserts. Given that the President was elected in the same year as a rival party's Congress was elected, he is well aware that he will need the collaboration of some of his opponents to enact any legislation.



While each speech's structure and general content are identical, the messaging used by each politician varies. The variances in the orations exemplify many of Almond and Verba's observations on the differences in political cultures inside each country. One significant distinction between the two nations is the United Kingdom's royal tradition. David Cameron's first words are a message from the Queen of England, a chief of the state which is mainly symbolic. The Queen as a descendant of a royal dynasty that dates all the way back to the Middle Ages and as a reigning queen for many decades has considerable legitimacy in British political culture. "British democracy has always been a pretty top-down affair, with a focus on leadership rather than popular involvement. This is partially due to the heritage of monarchical despotism from a far earlier period (Whiteley 3)."

Cameron then addresses his audience directly. He outlines clearly the path of events he intends to follow. Cameron makes no effort to amuse the audience with stories. Cameron's no-nonsense approach to his victory speech makes sense in light of the huge audience of political players with little political expertise. Almond and Verba's perspective enables both highly engaged and apathetic people to extract what they want from this speech.

Additionally, apart from the usage of the phrase "our nation," Cameron makes no attempt to define his audience. In this instance, he is addressing the live and broadcast audiences for his speech, who are mostly composed of British people. His uncertainty also mirrors the diversity of political candidates in the British elections. Not only would this speech be suitable for a parliament floor, but it would also make sense to people with just a passing familiarity with

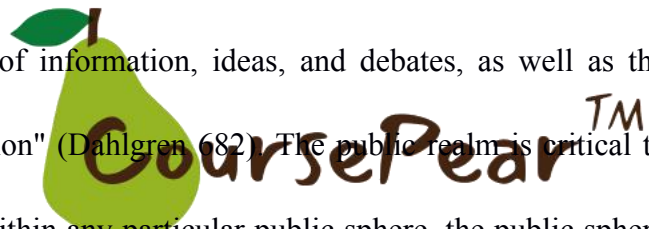


British governance.

By contrast, Obama attempts to engage his audience in discussion. He addresses the audience as "you, the American people," and seems to initiate a dialogue with them. Throughout the speech, his frequent use of the pronoun "we" contributes to the speech's emphasis on inclusiveness. This is consistent with Almond and Verba's assessment of American political culture as one that values involvement.

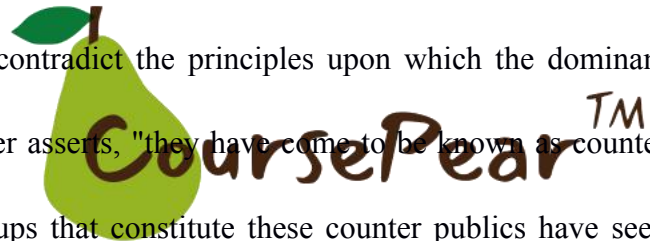
Obama's tales contain tributes to people who have assisted him, such as his vice president, campaign workers, and voters and telling the experiences of individuals he has aided. He tells the tale of a father who would have been unable to pay for his eight-year-old daughter's leukaemia treatments if her insurance company had discontinued coverage. Such stories are not intended to appeal to members of Congress or other elected figures. Rather than that, they are intended to appeal to participants who, according to Almond and Verba, want to see the fruits of their labour.

As significant public addresses, these speeches are a component of public dialogue between people and elected officials. These types of discourses take place in what social scientists often refer to as the "public domain." A public sphere may be defined as "a network of communication spaces in society that enable the free flow of information, ideas, and debates, as well as the development of political will, or public opinion" (Dahlgren 682). The public realm is critical to understanding how political cultures exist. Within any particular public sphere, the public sphere is where the conversation between a government and its citizens takes place, which is basically political culture. Our contemporary public sphere conception is almost certainly most inspired by



social scientist Jurgen Habermas, who stated in 1962 that he thought the public sphere was disintegrating due to increasing commercialization. When reading material published concurrently with *The Civic Culture*, it is obvious that much has changed since the 1960s. As was the case with Almond and Verba, Habermas did not update his work after publication to account for changing social circumstances. As a result, it is essential to consider some subsequent work that builds on Habermas's.

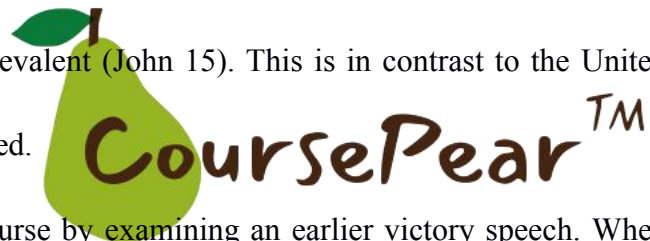
In the instances of Obama and Cameron, audiences participate in a public conversation with their leader and with one another. They represent a "public," as social theorist Michael Warner would put it, as members of an informally constituted public sphere centred on that specific speech. Both speeches have public in the form of their listeners, but for the sake of this article, we shall focus on the domestic public. To modernize Habermas's notion of the public sphere, it is necessary to take social change into consideration. At the moment, significant Asian, Black, Hispanic, and female groups are actively engaging in the political process in ways that were formerly reserved for white males. These groupings reflect a splintering of the public, the speeches' listeners, into smaller groups with divergent views from both countries' mostly white male leaders. "Because they fundamentally contradict the principles upon which the dominant culture understands itself as a public," Warner asserts, "they have come to be known as counter publics" (Warner 81). Because minority groups that constitute these counter publics have seen significant social change over the last fifty years, Almond and Verba's work should be updated to reflect the demographic patterns associated with these changes. As Warner would have it, each



speech's dominating audience lives inside the same political-cultural environment in which Almond and Verba first wrote *The Civic Culture*. Both the United States and the United Kingdom have upheld white male rights. The most significant shift in political culture theory is the increase in socioeconomic mobility of minorities, particularly women and people of colour. However, due to each nation's unique demographics, the developments inside and for these counter publics vary enormously.

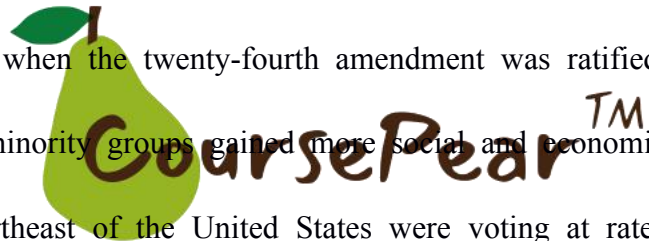
Between the mid-twentieth century and the present day, the United Kingdom's public discourse has changed very little. One of the reasons for the more steady discourse, according to a University of Manchester study on Almond and Verba, is the United Kingdom's ethnic breakdown. Due to the fact that minority groups make up a considerably smaller proportion of the British population than they do in the United States, the race has a relatively little influence in shaping public discourse. In the United Kingdom, ethnic minorities continue to vote in lower numbers than the biggest groups overall (Whiteley 41), although minority participation patterns are less important due to the groupings' minuscule demographic size. In the United Kingdom, chances are more clearly related to class; as minorities' social standing has increased, their patterns of involvement have grown more prevalent (John 15). This is in contrast to the United States, where both race and class are considered.

Consider the similarities in public discourse by examining an earlier victory speech. When compared to David Cameron's victory speech, Sir Anthony Eden's 1955 victory address is very similar. As a victory speech from over fifty years ago, Eden's oration is an ideal vehicle for



examining how language has remained consistent or evolved since Almond and Verba's work. As with modern triumph speeches, Eden's work touches on all of the main elements of victory discourse, including comfort for the adversary, gratitude to supporters, discussion of political problems, and a focus on collaboration. Eden addresses his audience in the same manner as Cameron addresses his audience as members of Parliament. "... I have just got the preliminary September trade numbers. Eden starts, "I assumed you would want them," before diving into the details of keeping the British economy healthy. While Eden, like Cameron, usually expresses gratitude to his supporters, he does not address the people directly. Eden's use of language is likewise extremely formal, similar to Cameron's, in striking contrast to Obama's liberal usage of personal pronouns. According to these speeches, the political discourse in the United Kingdom seems to have remained pretty stable throughout time.

By contrast, the United States, which has a greater ethnic variety than the United Kingdom, is more likely to depart from Almond and Verba's political ideas. The United States is mostly white, but it is also almost 13% black, roughly 4.5 percent Asian, and approximately 15% Hispanic (CIA World Factbook). In terms of race, America did not achieve complete political equality for all races until the mid-1960s, when the twenty-fourth amendment was ratified. Following equality before the law, racial minority groups gained more social and economic equality. By 1984, black voters in the northeast of the United States were voting at rates comparable to their white counterparts, with close to a 66 percent turnout (Conway 32). However, many of these developments are intimately connected to advancements in socioeconomic status



and education, not just race. Those with a better socioeconomic position have a stronger stake in politics since access to government information translates into more insight into personal financial management. Individuals who are educated may more readily understand the consequences of their political participation and are therefore more inclined to participate in political dialogue with their elected leaders. While this tendency is generally accurate, it does not apply to all minorities. Language continues to be a challenge for first-generation immigrants, especially the increasing Hispanic population in the United States (Conway 33). Almond and Verba make no mention of this group in their work, despite the fact that it is the fastest-growing racial population in the United States today (CIA World Factbook).

Having such dramatic demographic shifts in political involvement has undoubtedly had an impact on the United States. To demonstrate, consider another 1960 victory speech delivered by President John F. Kennedy. This address was delivered contemporaneously with Almond and Verba's study, giving it an ideal object with which to contrast Obama's victory speech. Kennedy's victory speech has the typical components of a victory speech:

- Praising the opponent
- Expressing gratitude to voters
- Highlighting upcoming difficulties
- Stressing the need for unity



However, Kennedy's address is nearly completely devoted to a series of telegraph exchanges between him, then-President Eisenhower, and Vice President Nixon. "My congratulations on

your recent election victory," he writes in response to a telegraph from Eisenhower. Kennedy makes just one mention to voters in his speech: as party members. "May I add that I want to convey my gratitude to all people of our nation, Democrats, independents, and Republicans... I want to express my gratitude to everyone," he adds. Kennedy delivers a strong victory speech but lacks the direct engagement with his people that Obama does.

What Obama does best symbolizes change is his encouragement of political debate among all Americans. He does not merely open himself up to these counter publics via his use of stories, family chat, or liberal use of pronouns. Rather than that, Obama participates in a candid conversation about American political culture. "Democracy in a 300 million-person country can be loud, chaotic, and complex... every one of us has strongly held beliefs," he explains. Obama recognizes that everyone has opposing views, many of which are made public during his address. Rather than dismissing divisions in his speech, Obama welcomes his audience of publics and counter publics with divergent perspectives, despite the fact that such divergent opinions complicate and delay the policy-making process. Obama still manages to bring his audience together by asserting that "we are not as divided as our politics implies." The President's assertion that the American public and counter publics are not nearly as divided as they once were may possibly be accurate. Perhaps some of the groups Warner says are so divisive in society have developed in response to America's shifting demographics. And if that is the case, might the United States of America be on the verge of establishing a government with still loud but more cooperative majority and minority factions?

