VIETNAM

VIET NAM: NATION, SYSTEMS AND POLITICAL CULTURES*

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"Political system" and "political culture" are concepts that have, in recent years, come to play an increasingly important role in the analysis of politics. "Nation" is a more venerable term. In the language of international relations, nation and political system are often interchanged either explicitly or implicitly. On the other hand, if one accepts the widely used definition of the nation as a "state of mind,"[1] distinguishing it from the legal-institutional framework of the sovereign state, then one could regard the nation as being at least a major consequence of the "orientations of the members of the system," which, in turn, defines "political culture."

The case of Vietnam may help us to clarify the distinctions which must be made among these three terms. It is also an appropriate focus within which we can evaluate the usefulness of the concept of political culture and its various ramifications.

David Easton has called a political system "those interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society."[2] Essential to this definition is the meaning Easton gives to "authority"; a "power relationship based on the expectation of compliance." Thus legitimacy, while desirable, is not a prerequisite for the existence of the system.[3]

1. Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism (New York: MacMillan, 1944) p. 10.

2. A Systems Analysis of Political Life (New York: Wiley, 1965) p. 21.

3. Ibid., p. 207-8.

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Political culture has been most exhaustively treated by Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba in Political Culture and Political Development.[4] There Verba defines the term as including the cognitive, evaluative and expressive or affective orientations of all members of the political system towards all aspects of politics.[5] More recently Gabriel Almond and G. B. Powell have incorporated this concept into a general framework of comparative analysis.[6]

In the most up-to-date treatment of nationalism, Rupert Emerson refers to the nation as "a community of people who feel that they belong together," "the largest community which...effectively commands men's loyalty..."[7] This is for Easton a type of "political community," for Verba, a well-integrated political culture.

The political culture and the political system are thus, by definition, coterminous. In most countries of SE Asia the nation is a much narrower group than either. For instance, it is hard to classify the Shans or Karens as falling within the Burmese nation, while they are certainly part of that system. Nor does the political culture even of Cambodia, as highly integrated as it is, coincide exactly with the nation. Chinese, Vietnamese and tribal minorities do not feel that they belong to the nation which calls

4. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.

5. Ibid., p. 518.

6. Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966) p. 50ff.

7. From Empire to Nation, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962) p. 95.

itself Khmer.

In Vietnam, on the other hand, the nation is broader than one system or, consequently, one political culture. There are, of course, those outside the nation who nevertheless are within the political culture, e.g., the montagnards or the Chinese. But likewise within the nation there are two or three political cultures.

The assertion that there is but one nation of Vietnam may require some explanation in view of the Secretary of State's fondness for the phrase, "The South Vietnamese nation." The evidence, however, is clear. Somewhat like Mao and Chiang, Ho Chi Minh and Ngo Dinh Diem agreed only on the proposition that they ruled ~~but one~~ the same nation. The North's position was put forth most fully in 1956:[8] "An age-long common past has moulded [the Vietnamese] into a nation... Viet-Nam, one and indivisible, must be reunited." They were advocating the holding of elections. A year later, despite the fact that he had prevented those elections from being held, Ngo Dinh Diem had very similar sentiments: "My country will become, as it always has been, one and indivisible."[9] To the South Koreans he said: "One identical aim must guide our efforts: the reunification of our territories..."[10] In 1964 both Generals Ky and Khanh made statements much like these, but more militant in tone.[11]

8. Viet-Nam Is One (Hanoi: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1956).

9. The Emergence of Free Vietnam (Saigon, Presidency of the Republic of Viet Nam, Press Office, 1957) p. 13.

10. Toward Better Mutual Understanding (Saigon: Presidency of the Republic of Vietnam, Press Office, Oct. 1957) p. 56.

11. Le Monde, 29 July, 1964.

Just as straightforward as the pronouncements of Vietnamese leaders is evidence taken from the traditional criteria of nationhood, common culture, especially language, and common experience. A common language is crucial to make possible the easy communication out of which a sense of nationality grows. Nearly 90% of the people within the geographical confines of Vietnam speak one language. There are three dialects of Vietnamese, northern, central and southern;but, though there are differences of tone, pronounciation, and vocabulary, the dialects are mutually intelligible. The written language is, of course, identical.[12]

Common Vietnamese experience can be traced back to the Chinese conquest of the 2nd Century B.C. The expulsion of the Chinese in the 10th Century was a more intense and more unifying trial, repeated several times during subsequent Chinese invasions. Leaders in battle against the Chinese are still national heroes in both North and South. After a few centuries of de facto political division the Vietnamese were reunited in 1802 under Gia Long, only to be separated again by the French into three parts in 1882. Despite administrative division, however, the French impact had common characteristics throughout Vietnam, and some common reactions. After 1940 the French, for the first time, deliberately encouraged a sense of Vietnamese identity, as did the Japanese.[13]

12. George Maspero, ed., L'Indochine (Paris, Van Oest, 1929) I, p. 74-75.

13. Ellen Hammer, The Struggle for Indochina (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1954) p. 33ff.

None of this evidence is conclusive, however. Testimonies of political leaders may have their own objectives--much beyond the establishment of social science categories. The traditional criteria of a common culture and common history are merely conditions conducive to, but not sufficient for, the appearance of a nation. The late Aung San of Burma, echoing Hans Kohn, has put well the character of the next step: "Though race, religion and language are important factors, it is only [the]...will to live in unity through weal and woe that binds a people together and make them a nation..."[14] That act of will which signaled the birth of the modern Vietnamese nation was the declaration of independence of September, 1945, and the organizational activity of the Viet Minh, both prior and subsequent. There were certainly few politically conscious Vietnamese at that time who doubted that "Vietnam is One."

The doubts which have been expressed since about the Vietnamese nation are closely related to the use of narrower definitions. Some confuse the nation and the nation-state,[15] insisting on the presence of a single independent government. From 1946 to 1954 Vietnam had neither an independent nor a single government, and since then it has continued to lack the latter. Deutsch's functional definition of nationality stresses the requirement of a common communications system.[16] Certainly ever

14. Quoted in Hugh Tinker, Ballot Box and Bayonet (London: Oxford, 1964) p. 47.

15. See Carl Friedrich in Karl Deutsch and William Foltz, eds., Nation Building (New York: Atherton Press, 1963) p. 31.

16. Nationalism and Social Communication (Cambridge: MIT, 1962).

since 1946 there have been at least two competing patterns of communication within Vietnamese territory. Yet the history of this period has taught us not to ignore the continuing existence of a Vietnamese nation. Since 1954 both such systems supported the concept of a single nation.

To understand the essence of nationhood we must return, therefore, to Emerson's emphasis on the sense of belonging, the recognition of group identity. Verba too has recognized the importance of identity, calling it, "the major constituting factor of a new nation."[17] National identity is, of course, enhanced by the nation-state or by an integrated communication system. These were sources of strength for the Vietnamese nation in times past. But the sense of identity lingers on even when functional unity is destroyed. In fact, a very present foreign threat to that unity may be as successful in maintaining the national identity as the integrated institutions themselves.

Emerson's definition of the nation also stressed its demand for loyalty. Here the pattern since 1945 may be harder to envisage. Loyalty understood as a willingness to sacrifice for the object to which one is loyal[18] has been remarkable in many. Yet the danger inherent in the times made it inevitable that many other Vietnamese, though perhaps inwardly loyal to their nation, preferred survival and thus laid low--the attentiste.[19] Clearly

17. Pye and Verba, op. cit., p. 530.

18. See Morton Grodzins, The Loyal and the Disloyal (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966) p. 30ff.

19. According to Vu Van Thai, attentism was a form of commitment. See Asia, No. 4 (Winter, 1966) p. 28.

also there are within Vietnamese society other institutions and causes demanding men's loyalty. They can best be understood in the process of disecting political culture.

The crucial character of identity in the pattern of beliefs that make up a political culture makes it tempting to define the boundaries of that culture in terms of the nation. The equation of political culture and nation of identity could ~~may~~, however, lead the political scientist into unrewarding channels of enquiry. For instance, if this criteria were to be used, a large part of the Khmer speaking peoples of South Vietnam would probably fall outside the Vietnamese nation.[20] Should a sense of identity then cause them to be classified with the Khmer nation and political culture, their cognitions, attitudes and values would in a sense be lost to the analysis of interaction between the political culture and the system under which they live, whereas, in fact, their lack of identity with the Vietnamese nation is crucial to fully understanding that interaction. Furthermore, the definition of authority which involves only the expectation of compliance with orders and commands, a definition which can rest on the observation of behavior, is a very practical approach to the problem of delineating the boundaries of the system, and thus of the political culture. An attempt to delineate the boundaries of the political culture solely on the basis of a sense of identity would be most

20. "Officially Saigon no longer recognizes the existence of minority problems in regard to Cambodians," said Joseph Buttinger in 1960, in Wesley Fishel, ed., Problems of Freedom (Glencoe: Free Press, 1961) p. 100. "They are an integral part of the Vietnamese nation." But in 1961 Sihanouk charged Vietnam with "cultural genocide" of the Khmer minority. See Roger Smith, Cambodia's Foreign Policy (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966) pp. 754-6. The truth is somewhere in between.

difficult in an area where sample survey interviewing is rather an unhealthy occupation.

Even if we are to accept Verba's definition of the political culture as being coterminous with the system, the question remains in Vietnam as to where the boundaries of the systems are. The 17th parallel is, of course, a boundary between systems centered in Hanoi and Saigon respectively. There is another boundary, however, which no one could today draw with any assurance on a map, that between the Saigon-centered system and a communist dominated one in the South. This is, in fact, a boundary which in many instances may better be marked on a clock rather than on a map. Boundaries of any type of social system must be defined in terms of roles as well as geography. Most villagers in Vietnam regularly have two sets of roles, one relating to the Communist source of authority, the other to the non-Communist, both offering compliance. Systemic boundaries established in this way naturally fluctuate constantly.

Does this boundary amount to a kind of functional extension southward of the 17th parallel, or is the southern Communist-dominated system quite distinct from the Hanoi-centered one? This is, of course, the subject of rather considerable debate today. There is not space for all the arguments here. Recognizing that the position is arguable and cannot be fully substantiated, let me conclude tentatively that there are three distinct political systems within Vietnamese territory. The National Liberation Front, which amounts to a government for this third system, maintains a formal separation between itself and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

While the functional reality of that separation is impossible to measure, most well-informed observers doubt that a simple exercise of "authority" in Hanoi could of itself insure a fundamental policy change in the Front.[21] A recent debate over the relative advantages of guerilla and large unit warfare may be a case in point.

In any case, if there are three systems, there are also three political cultures. How may they be classified? One way of characterizing political cultures is in terms of "the distribution of general attitudes toward the political system and the input and output processes."[22] A participant culture has been described as one in which a high percentage of individuals are aware of the entire political system and its output and even view themselves as either actual or potential participants in the decision-making process. In a subject culture, on the other hand, a preponderance of individuals, while aware of the extent of the political system and concerned with its output, have no thought of attempting to participate in the demand, or input, structures. A parochial culture, finally, is one in which the majority of the population are not aware of or do not identify with the system. Movement from a subject to a participant culture is the essence of democratization. Modernization may be achieved, however, merely by transforming

21. Douglas Pike in Viet Cong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966) speaks of the "authority" of the NLF and refers to it as a "separate entity," p. 325, p. 375.

22. Almond and Powell, op. cit., p. 53; see also Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) pp. 17-21

parochials into subjects. None of the three political cultures in Vietnam are dominantly participant. There are nevertheless significant differences between them in terms of the relative importance of these three types of orientations.

Before commenting on these differences, however, a note on data is required. The political culture concept was first developed along with extensive use of survey research materials. This is, of course, desirable when one is primarily concerned with values, attitudes and cognitions. However, in many parts of the developing world, of which Vietnam is one, survey research is not feasible.[23] Yet values, attitudes and cognitions are too important for the operation of any political system, and the political culture concept too meaningful a framework for analysis to be postponed until after survey data, either for the elite or for the mass, become available. Thus inference from other kinds of data is essential, from behavior of representative individuals and groups or from statements and observations. The result is by no means a clear picture of the political culture or a scientifically verifiable hypothesis. But this is a first step out of which we may gain insights to guide the more rigorous methodology at a later date.

If membership in the ruling political party is relevant, and in the case of Communist parties it certainly is, there is reason

23. Nguyen Huu Chi, Political Socialization and Political Change, (Michigan State University, Ph.D., 1965, Political Science, General) reports that the attempt of a Vietnamese high school teacher to administer questionnaires on attitudes to his students resulted in charges that he was variously a Viet Cong and CIA agent, plus a whole day of questioning by the police and the "loss" of the questionnaires.

for thinking that participants are most important in North Vietnam. In 1966 it is estimated that the Lao Dang party had a little more than 500,000 members.[24] This was about 3% of the total population.[25] The size of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party, the Marxist-Leninist "guide" of the NFL, was likewise estimated in 1966 at less than 100,000,[26] or less than 2% of the approximately 40% of the total Southern population in NLF villages. However, if one would assume a large number of non-party activists in the South who felt that they were participants in the decision-making process, the Northern percentage would be lower than the Southern.[26a] In the Saigon-centered political culture the participants are undoubtedly much fewer yet. Only the military and administrative elite, in addition to members of the tiny factionalized political parties and of some student and religious organizations would consider themselves participants in the non-Communist South. The number would probably be not more than a few thousand,[27] except at moments of crisis

24. See Thu Do (Hanoi), Feb. 3, 1963, indicating that since 1952 the party had grown only 10%.

25. This is to be compared with Robert Scott's estimate of 10% "participants" in contemporary Mexico, which has undergone a longer modernization process. See Pye and Verba, op. cit. p. 345.

26. Douglas Pike, op. cit., p. 138.

27. Including nearly 300 district and province chiefs, about 600 members of elected bodies, a few hundred in the military and bureaucratic elite, and perhaps 3 thousand activists in political and religious groups.

In a democratic system, of course, voting would be the hallmark of a participant. In authoritarian politics, however, it is doubtful whether it can be given the same meaning. In the last election in the North, in 1960, 5.6 million people or more than 1/3 the total population voted 99.85% for the Workers' Party Candidates. (Bernard Fall, The Two Viet-Nams (See next page.)

26a. Pike, op cit, p. 115, estimates "NLF membership strength" in 1966 at 300,000. Though he does not explain, this is presumably the active core of the NLF and its affiliate orgs. The Communists claim nominal membership in the millions.

Despite this great discrepancy between the Communist and non-Communist sides, however, the error may actually be on the side of underestimating those with a sense of participation under the Communist regimes, for they have had a genius for creating the sense without the reality.[28]

The much more difficult line to draw is that between subjects and parochials. The terms include both cognitive and affective orientations. Almond and Verba have referred to "pure parochialism"[29] when there is not even an awareness of the existence of the political system. Except in some tribal areas in the mountains or in particularly remote villages this phenomena is probably rare in Vietnam. An affective parochialism which involves no sense of identity with the larger system is more common. The entire NFL program has been characterized as a frontal attack on parochialism.[30] Any village mobilized to support the NFL could hardly be, by definition, parochial. In North Vietnam the brutal land reform of 1956, if nothing else, made the peasant aware of

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27. (Con'd) (New York: Praeger, 1963) p. 146). This was a form of mobilization not likely to give the voter any lasting sense of participation. In South Vietnam, if one assumes 60% of the total population under government control, the 4.3 million who voted in the September 1966 election constituted nearly 45% turnout. Its meaning for the average voter, however, was probably not very different from that for his counterpart in the North.

28. Says Pike, op. cit. "NLF cadres made a conscious and massive effort to extend political participation, even if it was manipulated, on the local level so as to involve the people in a self-contained, self-supporting revolution." p. 374.

29. Civic Culture, pp. 18-19.

30. Pike, op. cit., p. 383.

the existence of the Hanoi regime, whether good or bad. The formulation of orientations toward systematic output was inevitable.

The highest percentage of parochials would, of course, be found in the non-Communist South. In fact, before the Communists began to mobilize the countryside and the Diem regime began to try to compete with them, South Vietnamese political culture was probably predominantly parochial. The ancient dictum that "Imperial decrees bow before village custom" was the most precise statement of conditions before the arrival of the French. The mandarinal administrative structure did not penetrate beyond the district level and the village was left to its own devices. "Village people accepted this and tried to have the least contact possible with the government."[31]

The establishment of French colonial rule, replacing or controlling the Vietnamese mandarin, made separation even more complete than before. As late as 1943 a leading British scholar opined: "The Annamite village is an autonomous community."[32] Even after years of war in the Mekong Delta an anthropological observer could say that the effect had been "to turn many villagers inward. They now are primarily concerned with survival."[33] In many non-Communist villages this attitude still persists. They expect nothing of the government and want to be left alone. However, many

31. Nguyen Thai, Is South Vietnam Viable? (Manila: Carmelo and Bauermann, 1962) pp. 61-62.

32. Great Britain, Naval Intelligence Division, Indo-China (London: HM Stationary Office, 1943) p. 140.

33. Gerald Hickey, Village in Vietnam (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964) p. 285.

other villages which expected nothing from government before now seek security. There is an orientation to output. Undoubtedly, a majority of South Vietnamese peasants outside NLF areas should, in cultural terms, be considered subjects, though the parochials are a more significant percentage than in either one of the other two political systems.

In addition to the three main types of orientations to the political system which we have discussed, another major criteria for categorizing political cultures has been suggested by Almond and Powell to be the degree of secularization.[34] Secularization of the political culture is placed beside structural differentiation and expansion of capabilities to constitute the three characteristic processes of political development. Secularization is associated with pragmatism, bargaining, rationality, and specificity of values and attitudes relevent to politics.

This term, particularly with its emphasis on pragmatic bargaining, seems, in fact, to make a strong association between American style and the most advanced political culture. It is questionable whether the growth of this type of political culture is essential for political, as distinguished from democratic development.

Certainly in SE Asia, and perhaps in other late developing areas, the trend in political culture which would seem to be most essential for development of any kind is that toward integration, the amalgamation of diverse elements into a minimal consensus as

34. Op. cit., p. 62ff.

the basis for stability. It is the cleavages in political culture, drawn on geographical, ethnic or religious lines, which often loom as the major obstacles to development. Almond and Powell have themselves recognized that "nonrational agreement" on some values and goals may be necessary to hold a transitional system together. But, in fact, the political culture may be divided into a variety of sub-cultures.

Sub-cultures will be defined here as segments of the population quite distinguishable from simple interest groups or occupational categories, though both have sometimes been referred to as sub-cultures elsewhere.[35] Sub-cultures may be horizontal or vertical. Horizontal sub-cultures, involving different orientations toward the system as a whole, include the parochial, subject and participant. A fourth such category would be the sub-culture of the elite. Sub-cultures may also be vertical in character, drawn on geographical or ethnic lines, often cutting through social strata. Vertical sub-cultures share distinctive values and attitudes on more than just government policy, or they would simply be interest groups. In addition, they possess their own pattern of orientations on the legitimacy of the regime, or on identity with the nation, or on governmental procedures. The strength of the individual's identity with a sub-culture may or may not preclude identity with the nation.

In the Democratic Republic of Vietnam there has from the beginning been a very conscious and skillful effort to reduce the cohesion of and increase support from potential sub-cultures. The united front tactic of the Communists, first embodied in the Viet

35. See Ibid., pp. 63-64; also Almond and Verba, op. cit. pp. 27-29.

Minh, is particularly appropriate to integration of a heteregenous political culture. Religious and ethnic minorities are attracted to a show of support for the national cause, at the same time that any uncooperative elements are undercut. Recent reports by Western visitors to North Vietnam seem to indicate that, with the help of evacuation of dissidents in 1954 and American bombing since 1965, the major religious minority, the remaining Catholics, have been successfully persuaded to accept the legitimacy of the regime and to identify with the nation.[36] About the approach toward the indigenous ethnic minorities we have no recent information, but Communist policy was early quite successful. Several thousand tribesmen went North in 1954 with the Viet Minh.[37] The attraction was a policy of encouragement to tribal languages and at least the appearance of local self-government. The tribal groups have seemed, therefore, to retain their local identities at the same time that they admit the legitimacy of the regime and of governmental procedure. Recruitment to more positive identity with the nation continues to be the task of education and party cadre.

This approach to the lack of integration in the political culture seems to have avoided the two extremes which Verba points out so commonly occur in the new states: a vigorous attempt to destroy old particularistic loyalties or the acceptance of severe fragmentation.[38] So little is known about the resident Chinese minority

36. See Harrison Salisbury in New York Times, Jan. 9, 1967.

37. Bernard Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, p. 152.

38. Political Culture and Political Development, pp. 533-4.

of more than 150,000 that it is not possible even to speculate about attitudes.

In any case, it seems fair to say that in North Vietnam today there is no vertical sub-culture which holds distinctive sets of orientations on legitimacy and input procedures, as well as on identity and output.

The political culture of the NLF is, if anything, even more integrated. Its authority, more than in the North, is based on a successful mobilization of the peasantry. Where the NLF, or its pre-1954 predecessor, the Viet Minh, was unsuccessful in the united front tactic of winning religious or ethnic minority support, those groups are not now within the NLF political system. A case in point is the Hoa Hao, the Buddhist sect of more than a million faithful which is concentrated in An Giang and Chau Doc provinces.[39] Though originally in the Committee for the South of the Viet Minh, Hoa Hao adherents turned anti-Communist after the assasination of their leader, apparently at Communist hands. Likewise the Cao Dai, a syncretic religion also with more than 1 million believers, stands largely outside the NLF today. Their short-lived cooperation with the Viet Minh in 1945-46 broke down when the Communists attempted to seize direct command of the Cao Dai militia.[40] Only one of the Cao Dai's 12 sects is a part of the NLF, even

39. See Takashi Oka, "Journey to the Hoa Hao Regions," I, II and III, Institute of Current World Affairs, August, 1965.

40. See Bernard Fall, "The Political-Religious Sects of Vietnam," Pacific Affairs, 28 (September 1955) pp. 235-53. Also Takashi Oka, "Cao Dai Perspectives," Institute of Current World Affairs, August 11, 1966; Pike, Viet Cong, p. 202.

though there is suspicion of a "standstill agreement" with the Tay Ninh hierarchy.

The NLF is less capable of using coercion as an element of authority than the Hanoi regime, thus there has been careful recognition of the status of the various component groups.[41] Given the strength of the NLF organization, however, and the intensity of the nationalist appeal, it seems unlikely that any one of the groups represented in the Front has a sufficiently distinct set of orientations regarding legitimacy, input processes or output, to classify it as a sub-culture. Even group identity is probably subordinated to national identity. The very significant political differences between Southerners and those few Northerners in higher echelons of leadership is not of cultural importance because there is no community of northern residents in NLF areas.

The political culture of the non-Communist system in the South is clearly the most heterogenous. It is more so than the North because of history. Present day South Vietnam includes the last Imperial capital, Hue, and its environs, the remaining stronghold of traditional pre-Western Vietnamese culture. It also includes the Saigon-Cholon metropolis, the growing together of a French and Chinese city, set in a hinterland that is veritable frontier from the standpoint of Hue. Because Vietnamese migration into the Mekong Delta is such a recent historical phenomenon, there is still a sizable group of the previous residents, the Khmer. Because traditional Buddhist organization was weak on the frontier, a

41. See Pike, op. cit., Appendix D. for leadership biographies, indicating the effort to have every minority represented in the central committee.

Buddhist reform movement, Hoa Hao, could easily spread. Because the French cultural impact was greatest in the delta, it was fertile ground for the appearance of a syncretic religion, Cao Dai. And because of the exodus of anti-Communist refugees from the North in 1954, mostly intellectuals and Catholic peasants, there is now both a significant Northern and very large Catholic minority.

But the heterogeneity of the Saigon-centered political culture is also a consequence of power relationships since 1954. Successive Saigon regimes have not needed to depend on the countryside for survival, but have increasingly relied upon the U.S., both financially and militarily. Thus important sub-cultures could usually be dealt with harshly, as the Cao Dai or Hoa Hao under Diem or the Buddhists under Ky, without the consequences being immediately or fully felt. Even the bridging of sub-cultural differences in urban areas has not been essential for the appearance of stability when such overwhelming coercive power is available.

Regional, religious and ethnic differences define more than ten distinct sub-cultures. Three of the contemporary sub-cultures have had, under stress, sufficient cohesion and such distinct values that in their geographical areas of greatest concentration they have each constituted separate political systems in earlier periods. The Catholics in North Vietnam were ardent nationalists, supporting the Viet Minh in 1945. But the most militant Viet Minh cadre, contrary to Ho Chi Minh's decrees, frequently molested Catholic communities, so that by 1946 the vicarates of Phat Diem and Bui Chu in the Red River delta had organized their own militia

under the Vatican flag. For eight years the bishops had full temporal as well as spiritual power over the faithful while the Indo-China War raged around them.[42] It was the peasants from this area, led by their priests, who constituted the bulk of Catholic refugees who went South in 1954, nearly doubling the size of the Catholic minority there. Today it is counted at about 1.8 million.

Because of the favoritism shown during the Diem regime, as well as for reasons of education, Catholics are well-represented in the bureaucracy and military officer corps. In fact, under the Ky government the orientations of most Catholics may be hard to separate from the elite sub-culture. Support for governmental policy and procedures is probably higher today than among any other sub-culture. Yet it has not always been so. Since Diem there have been governments which the Catholics considered Buddhist-dominated and dangerously neutralist; they helped bring down the Quat cabinet for this reason.

Within Catholic ranks there have also been divisions, most significantly between the refugees and the southerners. Recently even the refugees have been divided on such a crucial issue as the legality of the September 1966 elections. One line of division is related to the difference in cultural orientation between the Westernized intellectual and the devout peasant living in an almost feudal relationship to his priest, having little contact with Western-style life. Despite these divisions, however, the bitter

42. See Philippe Devillers, Histoire du Viet-Nam (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952) pp. 185-7; and Donald Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indo-China (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961) p. 196ff.

distrust of Catholics by so many Buddhists helps to maintain a Catholic identity, and thus some basis for classification as a sub-culture.[43]

The sub-cultural status of the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai is perhaps clearer. Both enjoyed virtual autonomy in their strongholds from 1947 to 1954, organizing their own administration, their own armed force and raising their own taxes. Both suffered from the Catholic intolerance of Ngo Dinh Diem. By 1955 their autonomy had been destroyed but their attitude of hostility to Saigon and their sense of identity lingered on.[44] Not til after Diem's overthrow have they played such an active role in Saigon politics, being represented in most cabinets since Diem. Despite this high level representation--more window-dressing than an exercise of power--at the local level there tends to be a distinction between the authority of the sect and the authority of the central government. The appointment of Hoa Hao province chiefs in Chau Doc and An Giang seems only partly to have blurred the distinction. In Tay Ninh the appointment of a Cao Dai province chief only maintained Army fears of the revival of a separate Cao Dai militia.[45]

Like the Catholics, and despite their geographical concentration and high degree of common group experience, both the Hoa Hao

43. See Takashi Oka, "Catholicism as a Political Force," Institute of Current World Affairs, August 17, 1966. For a new level of Buddhist understanding of Catholics see Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967) p. 28ff.

44. See John Donoghue and Vo Hong Phuc, My Thuan: The Study of a Delta Village in South Vietnam (Saigon: MSU, 1961) pp. 36-44.

45. See Takashi Oka, "Cao Dai Perspectives" and "Journey to the Hoa Hao Regions."

and Cao Dai are badly factionalized. But the concept of a sub-culture does not require organizational unity. It concentrates on a common set of values, attitudes and cognitions. Both Hoa Hao and Cao Dai seem to adjust their attitudes toward and cognitions of Saigon authorities, their policies and their procedures, largely in terms of the value of the sect's survival. Reimposition of the kind of centralization that existed under Diem could thus produce renewed unity and hostility to Saigon.

The Catholics and the sects make up slightly less than a third of the South Vietnamese population free of NLF control. The dominant religion is, of course, Buddhism, though the Vietnamese Buddhist may also be a Confucianist, Taoist and animist, simultaneously. Almost all ethnic Vietnamese are of the Mahayana school, with the Khmer minority making up most of the Theravadists. The Buddhist modernization which ultimately led to political activism began in the 1920's, but caught hold primarily around Hue. The Buddhist cause literally burst into flame in Hue in 1963, three years after the imposition of the iron hand of Archbishop Ngo Dinh Thuc, Diem's brother.

The rallying cry of the Buddhist political sub-culture which crystallized in 1963 was "stop the persecution of our religion." Leaders of the movement, particularly Thich Tri Quang, were not content to be a minority [illegible], however; they thought of themselves as spokesmen for the nation. In early 1966 the Buddhists formed for the first time a frankly political organization, Luc Luong Phat Giao Vietnam, or the Vietnamese Buddhist Force, which with luck could probably win 30% of the votes in a free election

in the non-Communist South. However, this semblance of a political party was not auspiciously timed; the organizational unity of Buddhist religious bodies which blossomed in 1963 was already fading.

The Buddhists have been plagued by regional division even more than the Catholics. The outstanding Buddhist figure in the Delta is a layman, Mai Tho Truyen, who disapproves of an active political role for the Church.[46] Tri Quang, on the other hand, has been building an organizational base in the Center for more than a decade; his political goals are both revolutionary and traditionalist, and at least xenophobic.[47] But without a new incident to spark popular indignation against "persecution" Tri Quang does not seem to be able to hold together a supra-regional Buddhist movement. One might even speak more properly of a Buddhist sub-culture of Central Vietnam. (Thich Tam Chau has led the militant Buddhist refugees in the Saigon area.) It seems unlikely to accept the legitimacy of any regime in Saigon which does not come to power through free elections--and some would say, any which is not dominated by the Buddhists. It is clearly non-Communist, but probably neutralist. It will be implacably hostile to any military or predominantly Catholic government.[48]

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46. Even Thich Nhat Hanh, who worked closely with Tri Quang in 1963 has similar reservations. See his Aujourd'hui le Bouddhisme (Paris: Editions Laboi, 1964) p. 128.

47. Interview with Thich Tri Quang, August, 1964, Saigon.

48. See Takashi Oka, "Buddhism as a Political Force, I-IV, July-August, 1966, Institute of Current World Affairs; also John Donnell and Charles Joiner, "South Vietnam: 'Struggle' Politics and the Bigger War," Asian Survey (January, 1967).

Regionalism is an important level of identity in Vietnam which has not been displaced by nationalism. One's regional origins are immediately evident in the type of Vietnamese spoken. Regional rivalries seem to flow from resentments and loyalties which make up a pattern that may be called sub-cultural differences; they crisscross sub-cultural boundaries established by religious identity.

Regionalism was a problem for the Nguyen dynasty in the mid-18th century. The competition of the elite from all three regions in Saigon today makes the problem worse than ever. In the meantime regional differences were sharpened by the differential French impact in each of the three ky. Reference to regional differences is part of everyday conversation among Vietnamese; each region has stereotypes for the others. Generally northerners are regarded as being most aggressive, disciplined and hard working; they regard themselves as superior. Those from the center also have a certain superiority complex about their more faithful adherence to Vietnamese tradition. Southerners are easy-going (or "lazy", depending on who is speaking), spontaneous and most Westernized.[49]

The attitudes of a region toward any particular regime are to a considerable extent determined by the regional origin of its leaders. The overthrow of Diem, for instance, was in part a Southern revolt against the dominance of Center and North. The Ky government is similar in character to Diem's. During the cabinet of Tran

49. See George K. Tanham, "Nationalism and Revolution", Asia, 4(Winter 1966) pp. 35-6.

Van Huong in late 1964, however, northerners accused the premier of plotting to set up a separate state in the delta. Again in 1966 regional resentments were intensified, first by the cabinet crisis of October, and then by the assassination in December of Tran Van Van, the leading southern member of the constituent assembly. The government charge of Viet Cong responsibility was not accepted by most southerners, who accused Ky.

Any group not ethnically Vietnamese clearly calls for designation as a sub-culture. A large portion of the half million Khmer in the delta continue to regard the Cambodian chief of state as their leader--or plot against him. In any case, they do not identify with the Vietnamese or fully accept the legitimacy of the Saigon government. The nearly 3/4 of a million Chinese were required to become Vietnamese citizens in 1956, but this is no assurance of their attitudes or cultural identity. There is some reason to believe that despite their discreet silence their orientations are still largely toward China.[50]

Aside from these ethnic minorities with political orientations outside Vietnam, there are well over half a million tribal peoples in the high plateau in more than 50 distinguishable ethno-linguistic categories.[51] Since group identity seldom goes beyond the tribe for these rather primitive people, there could be said to be as many sub-cultures. They all have in common, however, a sense of

50. See Takashi Oka, "Politics: The Forgotten Front", Feb. 6, 1966, Institute of Current World Affairs.

51. See Frank LeBar and others, Ethnic Groups of Mainland SE Asia (New Haven: HRAF, 1964).

cultural and economic threat from the Vietnamese who are rapidly encroaching on their land. In fact, the Rhade staged a serious rebellion in 1966 against the Vietnamese military, at the same time that they treated the Americans like allies, as they had the French. Increasing education and contact with the outside world can only lead to more rebellions as long as ethnic Vietnamese are seen simply as a threat.

In cataloguing the lengthening list of political sub-cultures in South Vietnam, one must also make mention of political parties, though they are relatively insignificant in the Saigon setting. The oft-mentioned Dai Viet, for instance, is a string of elite factions which share a conspiratorial quest for power, but hardly any distinctive values or attitudes. The older Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD), the Vietnamese Kuomintang, is worthy of somewhat more serious consideration since it has a mass base in parts of Quang Ngai province. It is not clear, however, whether orientations to the party take priority over orientations to nation or religion, village or region, for more than a handful. In analyzing prospective alignments if a national election should be held, a prominent Vietnamese political scientist has predicted that both parties would split on religious lines.

An important--nay, the important--political force which has not yet been mentioned is the military, an occupational group, but nevertheless something more than just an occupational group. In its entirety it certainly does not constitute a sub-culture. The thousands of recruits and deserters who enter and leave military ranks every year give no evidence of loyalty to or identity with

the military institution. Nor can it be denied that even within the more permanent ranks there are not many who have primary orientations to other sub-cultures, especially religious. Among many younger officers with a university education there is reportedly a stronger orientation toward the student group to which they once belonged than to the army.[52] Still, since internal fragmentation has been admitted within other sub-cultures, this evidence is not so damaging.

In the more stable core of the armed forces, however, there is a similar educational experience, i.e. military training, a common value system, and a common set of loyalties, subject as always in Vietnam to factionalism. The ethos arises also, of course, from a distinct function which must be rationalized in the face of hostility from other segments of society. The military officer corps has probably had more frequent and intense contact with the West, both France and the U.S., than any other segment of Vietnamese society, but not on an equal footing. The military is that element in Vietnam today most dependent on the U.S. There are, therefore, particular military orientations in matters of identity, legitimacy of government, and its policies and procedures--especially when the military is the government.

The elite of such a fragmented political culture as that in non-Communist South Vietnam must, of necessity, be highly

52. David G. Marr, "A Study of Political Attitudes and Activities among Young Urban Intellectuals in Conemporary South Viet-Nam", M.A. Thesis, Berkeley, University of California, 1966, p. 7.

fragmented itself. Its component elements, in fact, are for the most part, simply the elite of the various vertical sub-cultures, already discussed. There is, nevertheless, a substantial portion of the elite who belong in a category not yet described. These are the higher civil servants and intellectuals of substance who either have no tie to a religious sub-culture or for whom the relationship is more exploitative than a matter of identification. They may have connections with a political party, open or secret, and they cannot, of course, conceal their regional origins. They have no doubt of the propriety of their quest for power. For them the purpose of politics, as for elites everywhere, is a combination of public service and private gain, with the relative importance of the two considerations varying significantly from person to person.

The backgrounds of this elite combine the education of the Confucian family and some French schooling, whether in France or Vietnam. These, plus life experiences, of course, are probably the main influences on their values, attitudes and cognitions. In these influences there is much common ground between the Saigon elite on the one hand, and those of the NLF and of Hanoi on the other--though the Western impact may be less for the latter two. And they have imbibed some Communist ideology as well. Thus as we conclude with a discussion of the content of Saigon elite sub-culture, we will be tracing an important element in the orientations of the other two elites as well.

On questions of identity and legitimacy there tend to be types of orientations characteristic of an elite. In so far as elite

status is self-conscious, identity would be more completely with the nation than in any other sub-culture. In a system where governmental changes are violent, acceptance of the legitimacy of the regime would tend to fluctuate most sharply among the elite, depending on whether or not a person himself participated at a particular point in time. Orientations toward policies and procedures would likewise be dependent on this factor. The Saigon elite appears to follow this pattern.

The pattern [redacted] of beliefs which [redacted] helps distinguish the political sub-culture of one elite from that of another [redacted] includes those concerning the relationship between the individual and other individuals, the individual and the group, and the individual and his environment. These beliefs have important implications for decision-making and for organizational life.

Beliefs about interpersonal relations clearly derive from the meld of Confucian doctrine and family structure, as well as from more recent historical experience. Perhaps the two most important political consequences of these beliefs are the lack of trust and the changing attitudes toward status, hierarchy and authority. The deep suspicions which surround almost every extra-familial tie, and which make the double or triple agent a not uncommon phenomenon in inter-group relations[53] are [redacted] the product of more than a generation of war or uneasy armistice. Survival itself has been dependent on a healthy skepticism about the intentions of one's "friends". Betrayal of plans by one member of a cabal or a

53. See Robert Shaplen, The Lost Revolution (New York: Harper, 1965) ch. 6.

clandestine political party has often brought disaster to the rest.

One reason recent history has produced such pervasive distrust, however, is that in traditional Vietnam there was so little scope for any kind of extra-familial ties. Three of the five relationships spelled out in the Confucian classics were within the family. And this was not just theory. The press of events in the last few decades, however, has required the forging of alliances with many veritable strangers, even though there was almost no ethical foundation for this new kind of interaction.

The lack of interpersonal trust is also linked to the values of hierarchy and status. In the Confucian system Man to prosper must preserve harmony with Nature. And hierarchy is perceived to be the natural order.[54] Thus it is natural that every individual have his place in the social hierarchy, much of which is clothed in terms of an extension of the family. Even today, though the belief may have been abandoned before the habit, a citizen addresses a civil servant as ong or "grandfather", and, in the case of a particularly high ranking bureaucrat, cu, or "great-grandfather".[55] The Vietnamese language itself is ample evidence of the fact that the individual has significance only in a status

54. See Nguyen Huu Chi, op. cit., p. 49ff, p. 74ff; Arthur Wright, ed., The Confucian Persuasion (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1960); see also Nghiem Dang, Politics and Public Administration in Viet-Nam (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966) pp. 52-56; and H. G. Creel, Confucianism: The Man and the Myth (New York: John Day, 1949).

55. Nguyen Huu Chi, op. cit., pp. 77-78. Even in Communist organizations "comrade" is often preceded by status-designating honorifics.

hierarchy. The typical form of address is not by personal name, but by status pronouns, and all pronouns, unlike Western languages, indicate status.[56] The social hierarchy was maintained by strict adherence to li, variously translated as ceremony, propriety, etiquette, or proper conduct.

However, the catastrophic events which have burst in on this well-ordered system in the 20th century have created havoc. The values have to a considerable degree persisted, though challenged by French education, while the social realities with which they were congruent have been shattered. Inferiors order about superiors, and the status of the military is low. Those of high status seem to forget li. The public virtue which justified authority has disappeared.[57] When one cannot trust another to act according to his status defined role, perhaps the most important expectation in the traditional social system, what can one trust? The consequent frustrations have far-reaching political impact. It is in this context that we can understand the remark of a prominent politician-intellectual in Saigon recently that "all Vietnamese generals are hoodlums." Thus the facts of life have required new kinds of inter-personal relationships which conflict with the traditional Confucian values taught in family and school, and no new, more compatible values have received wide acceptance.[58]

There may be a somewhat different interpretation, however,

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56. See H. Merrill Jackson, "Dimensions of Social Relationships Indicated in Vietnamese Forms of Address:, Mental Health Research Institute, University of Michigan, July 1959).

57. See Nguyen Thai, op. cit., p. 97ff, for explanation of Diem's decline in these terms.

58. This has been the need which Communist ideology has so often filled.

going beyond a simple stress on conflict between the new and the old. Nguyen Huu Chi has pointed out that despite the dominance of Confucianism, Taoist beliefs, even without institutional support, have also persisted within the Vietnamese tradition.[59] Though Vietnamese Confucianism has assimilated much of Taoism, on one point they are in direct and essential conflict. Taoism rejects hierarchy as the natural order, "preferring what is within [man] to what is without". It scoffs, therefore, at li, which a good Confucianist must spend so much time studying. Chi points out that in the past those who failed in the mandarinal exams often embraced Taoism, which, in the Confucian setting, practically endorsed anarchy. The very intensity of the socialization process encouraged this rebellion. He points out further[60] that as higher education has expanded in the post-war period,[61] fewer and fewer of the graduates have been able to follow the teaching or bureaucratic careers which previously were considered the only proper goals for intellectuals. Thus the expansion of modern education and an oft-forgotten strain in Vietnamese tradition contribute together to the breakdown of trust within the elite.

The attitudes and values which surround the individual's relationship to the group are also, of course, heavily influenced by

59. Op. cit., p. 100ff.

60. Ibid., p. 225.

61. From 600 university students in all of Vietnam in 1939 to more than 20,000 in the South alone by 1964. Great Britain, Naval Intelligence, Indo-China, pp. 156-7; Republique du Viet-Nam, Secretariat d'Etat a L'Education Nationale, Annuaire Statistique de L'Enseignment, Saigon, 1965, p. 13, p. 16.

tradition. Both Confucianism and Taoism stress the supreme importance of the individual's harmony with or conformity to nature, and thus to society.[62] Intolerance for deviation within the group has, in fact, become ingrained in many more Vietnamese than are aware of its philosophical underpinnings. The emphasis on harmony, with consequences even for medical belief, is part of the peasant value system.[63] The pressure for conformity is present in any social grouping.

The result is not necessarily group solidarity, however. In fact, in the context of rapid political and socio-economic change the opposite is true. Modern education, new economic opportunities and the penetration of strange political ideas breeds individual nonconformity. The intolerance of that nonconformity creates factions, i.e. a new group in which harmony is possible. If that faction grows, however, the prospect of its spawning still another faction grows also. And so the process continues. Large modern political organizations which require the tolerance of diversity, thus, cannot operate. In the official doctrine of the Diem regime, "personalism", there was an attempt to harmonize Western-style individualism and Vietnamese-style group conformity.[64] But there is no indication that the doctrine had any relationship to behavior. The suppression of opposition was

62. Nguyen Huu Chi, op. cit., p. 49ff.

63. See Gerald Hickey, Village in Vietnam, p. 57.

64. Nguyen Thai, op. cit., p. 127ff; John C. Donnell, "Personalism in Vietnam", in Fishel, ed., Problems of Freedom, pp. 29-68.

single-minded. The most successful feat of non-Communist organization in recent years, the Buddhist movement, had disintegrated into warring factions by 1966. Only the Communists seem to have been able to increase the sanctions against non-conformity and increased rewards for conformity to a level that is effective in relation to the stresses in a fissiparous culture.

The beliefs regarding the individual's link to his environment have thus been shown to be the basis for beliefs about his proper role in the social group. But beliefs about the environment itself are also a significant element in the elite sub-culture. Clearly the individual's position is a passive one. Taoism goes to the point of preaching conformity with nature by retreat from activity. Thus attentism or Chum tran in Vietnamese--represents not just the failure to find an attractive alternative, an object of loyalty, or not just an opportunistic withdrawal, but is the appropriate positive response to a deep-seated belief.[65] If this is so, then the intense commitment to change the environment which Communism often engenders--despite the deterministic qualities of Marxist economics--is a modern innovation in Vietnamese life. Yet even this commitment may actually be more directed toward restoring harmony than altering the cosmos.

Clearly the only country in SE Asia to celebrate the birthday of the Sage as an official holiday has an elite sub-culture much affected by the Confucian tradition. The impact is not primarily a

65. See Nguyen Huu Chi, op. cit., p. 106.

unifying one, however. Distrust, factionalism and attentisme are probably more important legacies of Confucianism in the contemporary social realities of Vietnam than are the obverse. Thus the prospect that the Saigon elite can overcome the fragmentation of the political culture as a whole is gloomy, unless, of course, some old value is revived or some new value appears which has cohesive powers beyond those already mentioned. More than one writer has been impressed with the lasting importance of Vietnamese xenophobia.[66]

In conclusion, we should note that a political culture is a persistent phenomena, as are the sub-cultures within it. Yet we have also noted the alterations decade by decade. In the long run the dynamics of the system transform the culture while within short periods the culture determines the pattern of development within the system. Given the activist American beliefs about the malleability of the environment, however, and the much more passive attitude characteristic of Vietnam, and of much of Asia, it is probably well for us quite consciously to concentrate on cultural limits rather than on systemic potential, to bring our analysis into balance. Much more research is needed before we can know with any confidence what these limits are. Hopefully some of the tentative propositions here stated will be a guide to that research.

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66. Harr, op. cit., p. 62, is an example.