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Political Culture through the Lens of Mathematical Models

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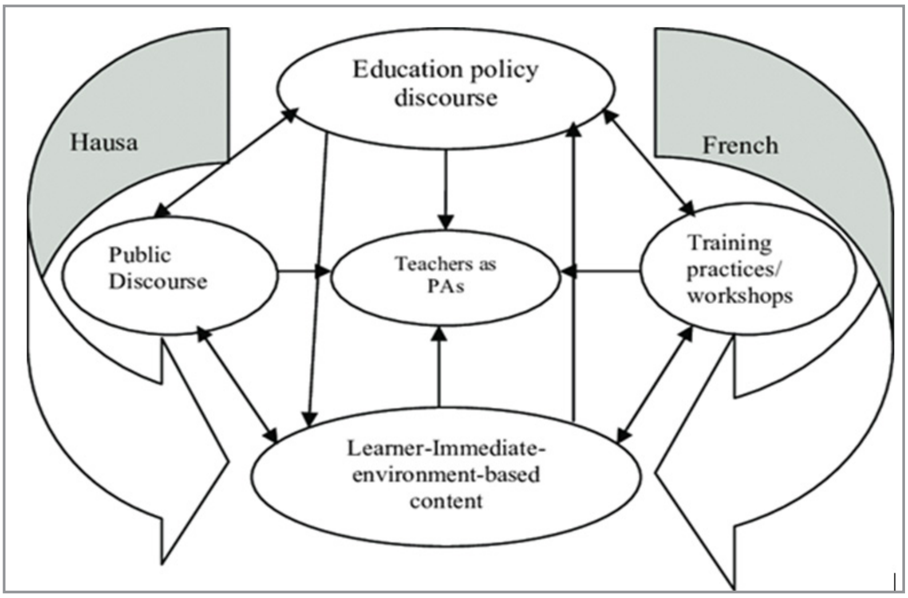
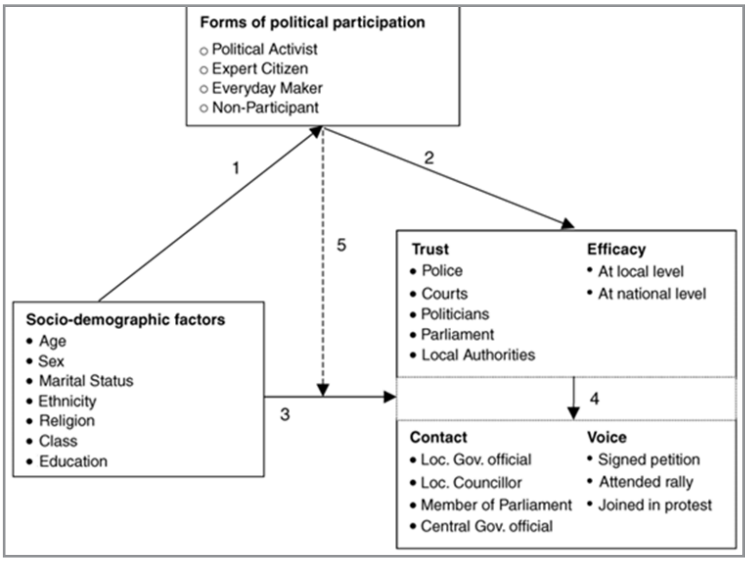
Abstract
A socio-mathematical aspect on political culture can be understood as the attempt to analyze how political culture—people's values, attitudes, and behaviors toward politics—is shaped, structured, and explained through social variables (socio-) and quantitative/mathematical modeling (mathematical). Here are some ways this can be conceptualized. SDT, pioneered by Jack Goldstone and advanced by Peter Turchin and colleagues, uses mathematical modelling to understand political instability in societies. It divides societies into four dynamic components: elites, the general population, the state, and political stability processes. These elements interact via feedback loops. Variables include elite numbers, age structure, urbanization, state finances, and ideological dynamics like pro-social norms vs radical ideologies.

Keywords: Political Culture, Mathematical, Lens.





Socio-Mathematical Framing Socio

Political culture is a collective phenomenon. It arises from shared traditions, trust, civic participation, ideology, class, ethnicity, and historical memory. Mathematical-: These social patterns can be expressed in models, functions, and equations to capture trends, distributions, or probabilities of political behaviors. Positive Political Theory (PPT) incorporates social choice theory, game theory, and statistical analysis to model political behaviour. It views actors as rational agents playing strategic games to reach equilibrium outcomes. William Riker's work on political coalitions is foundational.

Mathematical Tools in Political Culture Analysis Probability and Statistics

Surveys and indices (e.g., World Values Survey, Polity Index) quantify political attitudes. Probabilistic models estimate voter turnout, trust in institutions, or support for democracy. Game Theory: Models how cultural norms (e.g., cooperation vs. distrust) shape political strategies. Explains coalition-building, protest movements, or authoritarian compliance. Graph Theory / Network.

Analysis

Political culture spreads via social networks;
nodes = citizens,
edges = social / political ties.
Measures influence, polarization, and echo chambers.
Dynamical Systems / Differential Equations:

Models Change in Political Culture over Time

$$\frac{dC}{dt} = \alpha\, P(t) - \beta\, D(t).$$

General solution (for any $P(t), D(t)$)

With initial condition $C(t_0) = C_0$,

$$\boxed{C(t) = C_0 + \alpha \int_{t_0}^{t} P(s)\, ds - \beta \int_{t_0}^{t} D(s)\, ds}.$$

That's all you need if P, D are known functions or data series.

Common special cases

- **Both constant:** $P(t) = \bar{P},\ D(t) = \bar{D}$

$$C(t) = C_0 + \big(\alpha\bar{P} - \beta\bar{D}\big)(t - t_0).$$

- **Endogenous linear response (if you instead meant $P = kC,\ D = mC$):**

$$\frac{dC}{dt} = (\alpha k - \beta m)\, C \quad \Rightarrow \quad C(t) = C_0\, e^{(\alpha k - \beta m)(t - t_0)}.$$

- **Mixed:** $P = \bar{P}$ **constant,** $D = mC$:

$$\frac{dC}{dt} = \alpha\bar{P} - \beta m C \ \Rightarrow\ C(t) = \Big(C_0 - \tfrac{\alpha\bar{P}}{\beta m}\Big) e^{-\beta m (t - t_0)} + \tfrac{\alpha\bar{P}}{\beta m}.$$

Were
C = Strength of Civic Culture,
P = Participation,
D = Disillusionment,
α, β = Influence rates.

Entropy / Information Theory: Captures diversity of political opinions in a society (high entropy = pluralism; low entropy = conformity/authoritarian culture).

Illustrative Socio-Mathematical Concepts
Trust Function:
T = f (E, I, H)

Were
T = political trust,
E = economic stability,
I = institutional performance,
H = historical-cultural memory.

1) Bounded index (logistic; $T \in (0,1)$)

Normalize inputs to $[0,1]$ (or z-scores) and let

$$T = \sigma\Big(\theta_0 + \theta_E E + \theta_I I + \theta_H H + \theta_{EI} EI + \theta_{EH} EH + \theta_{IH} IH\Big), \quad \sigma(x) = \frac{1}{1+e^{-x}}.$$

- **Pros:** Bounded; easy marginal effects.
- **Interpretation:** θ's are semi-elasticities on the log-odds of trust.
- **Estimation:** MLE (logistic regression) or NLS.

2) Multiplicative/elasticities (Cobb–Douglas; $T > 0$)

Assume $E, I, H > 0$ (after shifting if needed):

$$T = A\,E^{\alpha}\,I^{\beta}\,H^{\gamma}.$$

- **Log-linear form:** $\ln T = \ln A + \alpha \ln E + \beta \ln I + \gamma \ln H$.
- **Interpretation:** α, β, γ are elasticities of trust w.r.t. each input.
- **Estimation:** OLS on logs; include interactions by adding cross-terms in logs.

3) Substitutability vs. complementarity (CES aggregator)

$$T = \left(w_E E^{\rho} + w_I I^{\rho} + w_H H^{\rho}\right)^{\frac{1}{\rho}}, \qquad w_E, w_I, w_H \geq 0, \ \sum w = 1.$$

- **Substitutability:** $\rho > 0$ (inputs substitute); **complementarity:** $\rho < 0$.
- **Limits:** $\rho \to 0$ → geometric mean; $\rho \to -\infty$ → Leontief (bottleneck).

4) "Target-trust" with dynamics (nice if trust adjusts over time)

Define a contemporaneous target $T^* = f(E, I, H)$ using any of 1–3, and let

$$T_t = \lambda T_{t-1} + (1-\lambda) T_t^* + \varepsilon_t, \qquad 0 < \lambda < 1.$$

Closed-form solution:

$$T_t = \lambda^t T_0 + (1-\lambda)\sum_{k=0}^{t-1} \lambda^k T_{t-k}^* + \sum_{k=0}^{t-1} \lambda^k \varepsilon_{t-k}.$$

- **Steady state (constant inputs):** If E, I, H are constant ⇒ T^* is constant ⇒ $T_t \to T^*$.

How to Choose
- Want bounds and interactions → use logistic (1).
- Want elasticities and simple estimation → Cobb–Douglas (2).
- Want to model substitution vs. bottlenecks → CES (3).
- Want persistence/hysteresis → wrap (4) around your chosen fff.

Quick derivatives (policy levers)

- Logistic (at $x = \theta_0 + \ldots$):

$$\frac{\partial T}{\partial E} = \theta_E\,\sigma(x)\big(1-\sigma(x)\big) + \theta_{EI} I\,\sigma(x)\big(1-\sigma(x)\big) + \theta_{EH} H\,\sigma(x)\big(1-\sigma(x)\big).$$

- Cobb–Douglas:

$$\frac{\partial \ln T}{\partial \ln E} = \alpha, \quad \frac{\partial \ln T}{\partial \ln \downarrow} = \beta, \quad \frac{\partial \ln T}{\partial \ln H} = \gamma.$$

Polarization Index
Using variance and clustering of political opinions, polarization can be measured mathematically. Feedback Loops: Strong civic culture → higher participation → stronger institutions → reinforces civic culture. Weak culture → apathy → fragile institutions → further erosion.

Socio-Mathematical Insights
Political culture is not static; it evolves with social pressures (inequality, globalization, education) and can be modeled like a complex adaptive system.

Mathematical analysis allows prediction of thresholds (e.g., when discontent erupts into protest). Socio-mathematical perspectives can bridge qualitative political theory and quantitative data science. In short: A socio-mathematical aspect on political culture is the attempt to quantify cultural attitudes toward politics, using mathematical models to analyze how social forces shape collective political behavior.

Advanced Analysis
Make this concrete. Below is a compact but fully-specified coupled model of (i) institutional trust, (ii) political participation, and (iii) polarization, with clear meanings, equations, and how you'd estimate and use it.

State Variables (all Scaled to [0, 1])
- T(t): Institutional trust (0 = none, 1 = complete)
- P(t): Political participation (e.g., normalized turnout/engagement)
- Z(t): Polarization (0 = consensual, 1 = maximally polarized)
- I(t): Institutional performance/quality (optional but useful mediator)

Exogenous (observed) Drivers (also in [0, 1])
- M(t): Mobilization inputs (parties, movements, campaigns)
- B(t): Biased/fragmented information environment (mis/disinformation intensity)
- G(t): Inequality/grievance pressure
- S(t): Cross-cutting social capital (bridging ties)
- C(t): Corruption/shock to integrity
- O(t): Governance overload/crisis pressure

Continuous-Time Dynamics (ODEs)

$$T^{\bullet} = \alpha_1 I(1-T) + \alpha_2 P(1-T)(1-Z) - \alpha_3 ZT - \alpha_4 CT$$

$$P^{\bullet} = \beta_1 T(1-P) + \beta_2 M(1-P) - \beta_3 ZP$$

$$Z^{\bullet} = \gamma_1 B(1-Z) + \gamma_2 G(1-Z) + \gamma_3 (1-I)(1-Z) - \gamma_4 SZ - \gamma_5 TPZ$$

$$I^{\bullet} = \delta_1 TP(1-I) - \delta_2 CI - \delta_3 OI$$

Continuous-time ODE for trust T(t) with a Target Determined by E, I,

Model (first-order adjustment to a time-varying target)

Let the "target trust" be $T^*(t) = f(E(t), I(t), H(t))$.

Assume trust adjusts toward this target at speed $\kappa > 0$:

$$\frac{dT}{dt} = \kappa(T^*(t) - T(t)) \qquad (\kappa > 0).$$

Optionally include a disturbance $u(t)$:

H.
$$\frac{dT}{dt} = \kappa(T^*(t) - T(t)) + u(t).$$

General solution (any time-path of E, I, H)

With initial condition $T(t_0) = T_0$,

$$\boxed{T(t) = e^{-\kappa(t-t_0)}\,T_0 \;+\; \kappa \int_{t_0}^{t} e^{-\kappa(t-s)}\,T^*(s)\,ds \;+\; \int_{t_0}^{t} e^{-\kappa(t-s)}\,u(s)\,ds}.$$

This is the standard exponential-kernel (forecast-error) representation.

Common special cases

1. **Constant inputs** $E, I, H \Rightarrow$ constant target $T^* = \bar{T}$:

$$\boxed{T(t) = \bar{T} + (T_0 - \bar{T})\,e^{-\kappa(t-t_0)}}.$$

Monotone convergence to $\bar{T}$ at rate κ.

2. **One-time step change** in target at time τ:

$$T(t) = \begin{cases} \bar{T}_0 + (T_0 - \bar{T}_0)e^{-\kappa(t-t_0)}, & t < \tau, \\ \bar{T}_1 + (T(\tau^-) - \bar{T}_1)e^{-\kappa(t-\tau)}, & t \geq \tau. \end{cases}$$

3. **Linear target** (good for estimation)

$$T^*(t) = \theta_0 + \theta_E E(t) + \theta_I I(t) + \theta_H H(t),$$

then plug into the general solution. If E, I, H are constants you get the closed form in (
$\bar{T} = \theta_0 + \theta_E E + \theta_I I + \theta_H H.$

Bonus: vector/state-space form (if you model drivers dynamically)

If the drivers evolve via linear ODEs,

$$\dot{\mathbf{x}} = A\mathbf{x} + B\mathbf{u}, \quad T = C\mathbf{x},$$

then

$$\mathbf{x}(t) = e^{A(t-t_0)}\mathbf{x}_0 + \int_{t_0}^{t} e^{A(t-s)}B\,\mathbf{u}(s)\,ds, \qquad T(t) = C\,\mathbf{x}(t).$$

This nests the scalar case and is convenient for shocks, persistence, and identification.

Intuition

- Trust grows when institutions perform (I) and when engaged citizens experience low-conflict participation (P(1−Z)), and erodes with corruption and polarization.
- Participation rises with trust and mobilization, but polarization depresses it (costly/hostile politics).
- Polarization is fed by biased media, inequality, and weak institutions; it's cooled by bridging social capital and deliberative participation (the TP term).
- Institutions improve when trusted and used (co-production via TP), and degrade under corruption and crisis load.

All Terms are Saturating via (1−•), Keeping Variables in Bounds.

Discrete-Time Version (survey-wave or yearly)

$$T_{t+1} = T_t + \Delta t\{\alpha_1 I_t(1-T_t) + \alpha_2 P_t(1-T_t)(1-Z_t) - \alpha_3 Z_t T_t - \alpha_4 C_t T_t\}$$

$$P_{t+1} = P_t + \Delta t[\beta_1 T_t(1-P_t) + \beta_2 M_t(1-P) - \beta_3 Z_t P_t]$$

$$Z_{t+1} = Z_t + \Delta t(\gamma_1 B_t(1-Z_t) + \gamma_2 G_t(1-Z_t) + \gamma_3(1-I_t)(1-Z_t) - \gamma_4 S_t Z_t - \gamma_5 T_t P_t Z_t)$$

$$I_{t+1} = I_t + \Delta t[\delta_1 T_t P_t(1-I_t) - \delta_2 C_t I_t - \delta_3 O_t I_t]$$

Set Δt = 1 for annual data.

Measurement (link to real indicators)

- T_t: rescale survey trust-in-parliament/courts/gov indices to [0,1].
- P_t: turnout share, protest frequency index, or composite civic participation index normalized to [0,1].
- Z_t : affective polarization or opinion-dispersion metric normalized to [0,1].
- I_t : governance quality (rule of law, service delivery), normalized.

Equilibria & Thresholds (sketch)

At steady state (T• = P• = Z• = I• = 0) with constant drivers (M, B, G, S, C, O):

1. Low-conflict civic equilibrium (desirable):
- Z* ≈ 0 if γ4 S + γ5 T*P* outweigh γ1 B + γ2 G +γ3 (1−I*).
- T*, P*, I* sit near high values when α1, α2, β1, δ1 dominate erosion terms.

2. High-Polarization Trap
- If γ1 B + γ2 G + γ3 (1−I*) is large relative to γ4 S + γ5 T* P* then Z* → 1, pushing T*, P* down via the −α3 Z T and −β3 Z P terms and degrading I*.

Civic "Reproduction Number" Rc (Rule-of-Thumb)

Define

$$R_c = \frac{\textit{trust / participation amplification}}{\textit{erosion pressure}} \approx \frac{\alpha_1 I + \alpha_2 P(1-Z) + \beta_1 T + \beta_2 M}{\alpha_3 Z + \alpha_4 C + \beta_3 Z}$$

If Rc > 1 locally, civic culture tends to grow; if < 1, decay. (For formal work, linearize the system and check Jacobian eigenvalues.).

Identification & Estimation

- State-space formulation: treat (T, P, Z, I) as latent/partly observed states; fit θ = {α, β, γ, δ} with extended Kalman filter or particle filtering using yearly data.
- Simpler: nonlinear least squares on discrete equations when all states are observed (many countries/years).
- Regularization / prior structure: constrain signs: α1, α2, β1, β2, γ1, γ2, γ3, δ1 ≥ 0; α3, α4, β3, γ4, γ5, δ2, δ3 ≥ 0.
- Quick synthetic parameterization (for intuition)

Choose (Units Per Year):

α = (0.9, 0.5, 0.8, 0.6) (±0.25),
β = (0.8, 0.6, 0.7) (±0.25),
γ = (0.9, 0.6, 0.5, 0.8, 0.7) (±0.25),
δ = (0.9, 0.7, 0.6) (±0.25).

Scenario A (Healthy info Sphere & Bridging Ties)

B = 0.2, G = 0.3, S = 0.7, M = 0.5, C = 0.2, O = 0.2 (±0.25)
→ Model tends toward high T, P, I and low Z.
Scenario B (toxic info sphere & high grievance): B = 0.8, G = 0.7, S = 0.2, M = 0.5, C = 0.4, O = 0.5 (±0.25).
→ Model drifts to a polarization trap unless M specifically boosts deliberative participation (raise γ5via deliberation programs).

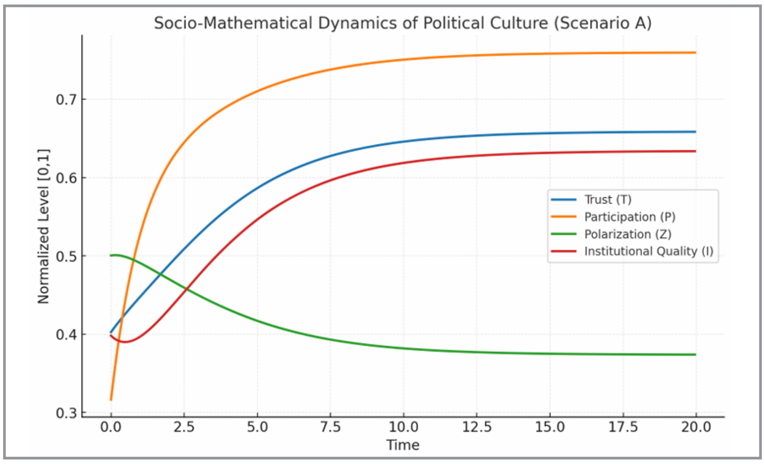
Policy Levers Mapped to Parameters

- Media / Information integrity: reduce B (fact-checking, platform rules) or increase γ4 via bridging content.
- Equity / redistribution: reduce G.

- Civic infrastructure: increase β2 (mobilization effectiveness) and γ5 (deliberative quality of participation).
- Integrity /anti-corruption: reduce C, which boosts T directly and I indirectly.
- Crisis management capacity: reduce O.

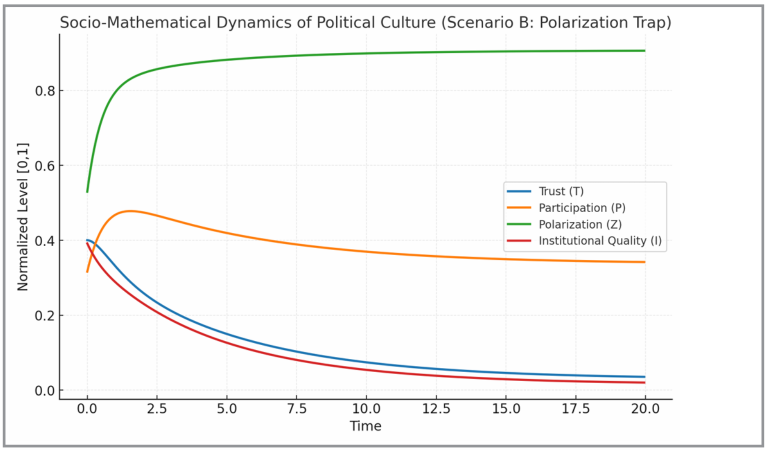
Extensions (drop-in)

- Networked version: index by groups iii, add influence matrix Wij in Z and T equations to capture echo chambers vs. bridging.
- Stochastic shocks: add noise terms σT ηT etc. for crises / elections.
- Heterogeneous participation: split P into electoral vs. extra-institutional participation with different effects on Z.



Scenario A: Healthy Info Sphere & Strong Bridging Social Capital).

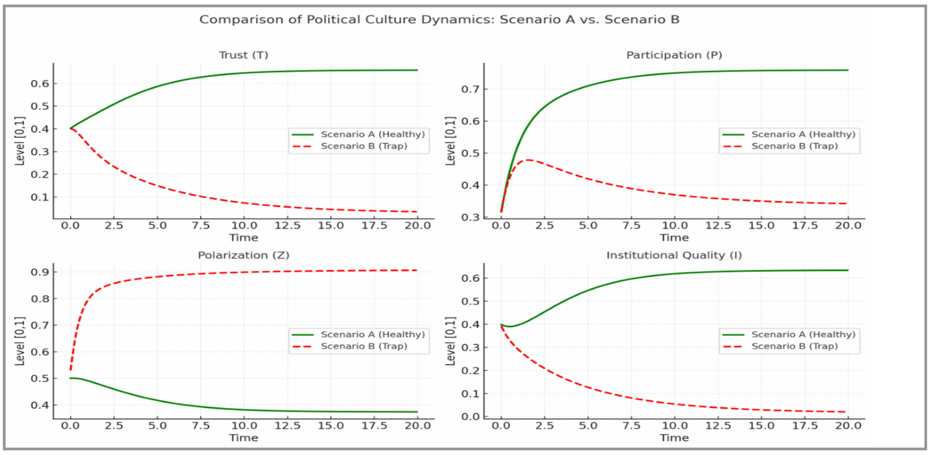
- Trust (T), Participation (P), and Institutional Quality (I) rise over time.
- Polarization (Z) declines and stabilizes at a low level.
- This shows a stable civic equilibrium, where strong institutions and trust reinforce participation and reduce polarization.



Polarization-Trap Scenario (Scenario B)

- Polarization (Z) rises sharply and stabilizes near its maximum.
- Trust (T), Participation (P), and Institutional Quality (I) all erode over time.

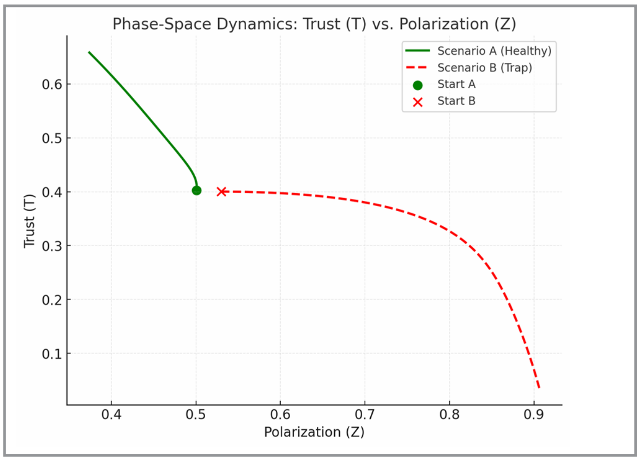
This illustrates how a toxic information environment, high inequality, weak social capital, and corruption can push the system into a self-reinforcing cycle of distrust, disengagement, and institutional decay.



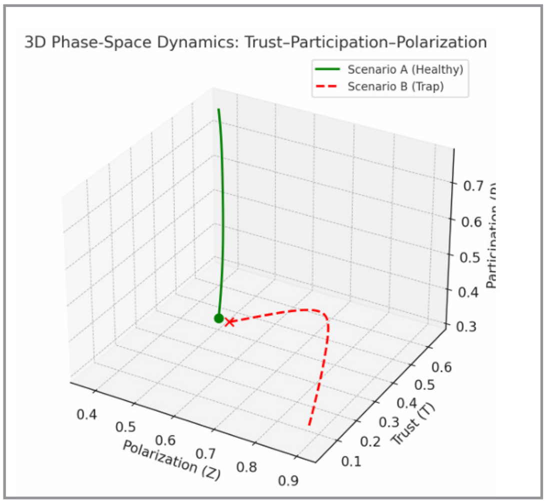
Direct Comparison Between Scenario A (Healthy Infosphere) And Scenario B (Polarization Trap):

- Trust & Participation: grow steadily in Scenario A (green), but collapse in Scenario B (red dashed).
- Polarization: declines toward stability in Scenario A, but explodes upward in Scenario B.
- Institutional Quality: strengthens under Scenario A, deteriorates under Scenario B.

This side-by-side view makes clear how different social and informational environments can push political culture toward either civic resilience or a polarization trap.



Phase-space plot (Trust vs. Polarization): In Scenario A (green), the trajectory moves from moderate trust and polarization toward high trust and low polarization, ending in a civic equilibrium. In Scenario B (red dashed), the system moves toward low trust and high polarization, showing the polarization trap. This plot highlights the feedback loop: trust and polarization act like opposing forces shaping the overall stability of political culture.



Here's the 3D phase - Space Plot (Trust – Participation – Polarization)

Scenario A (green): the trajectory flows toward a zone of high trust, high participation, and low polarization.

Scenario B (red dashed): the trajectory collapses toward low trust, low participation, and high polarization.

This 3D view makes it clearer how participation mediates the relationship: in a healthy system, participation reinforces trust and counteracts polarization; in a toxic system, polarization undermines participation, which in turn weakens trust.

Application

Turchin used SDT to identify recurring "secular cycles"—roughly 100-year waves of sociopolitical instability—and 50-year cycles of political violence, tracing patterns across agrarian societies and including modern America.

Examples

- PPT helps analyze political bargaining, democratic institutions, and institutional power asymmetries.
- Game theory models political competition—e.g., Anthony Downs' median voter theorem, showing candidate convergence on median positions unless voters are rationally ignorant.Wikipedia

Sociophysics and Network-Based Approaches

Bridging Physics & Political Opinion: "Sociophysics" treats social phenomena like physical systems. Galam's models simulate democratic voting, coalition formation, and opinion dynamics, successfully anticipating political outcomes—such as shifts in French elections and referendum results.

Social Cognition & Echo Chambers: Agent-based models on social networks reveal how individual biases and campaign strategies shape public discourse and polarization. For instance, echo chambers emerge from selective exposure and ideological segregation.arXiv.

Mathematical Modeling of Political Culture Dynamics

Diffusion Models of Political Beliefs: Researchers use equation-based models to represent the spread of political beliefs over time. Examples include logistic growth differential equations:

$dx/dt = rX[1 - (X/K)]$

Here, X = proportion of population holding a belief, r = change rate, K = saturation threshold [Number Analytics]

Models can be augmented with game-theoretic frameworks or social network structures to simulate political persuasion, cultural transmission, or civic participation across populations.

Social Rule System Theory

Formalizing Norms & Institutional Rules: This theory mathematically represents social constructs—like norms, values, and institutions—as rule systems. Using logic and computer science-based formalisms, it models how rules govern social interactions and the flexibility or conflict among these rules. Implications for political culture include modeling how institutional norms evolve, enforce behavior, or generate systemic change.

Critical Mathematics Education & Political Perspective

Mathematics as a Political and Cultural Tool: Critical mathematics pedagogy critiques the neutrality of mathematics. It argues that mathematical practices and teaching are imbued with power dynamics, shaping citizens' worldviews. Education is a site where social and political subjectivities are produced or resisted.

Socio-Political Mathematics Education: The socio-political turn in mathematics education examines how inequality, cultural capital, and institutional frameworks influence access to mathematical knowledge. The work of Valero, Zevenbergen, and others emphasizes that mathematics is embedded in broader political and cultural systems.

Summary of Key Approaches

Approach	Mathematical Tools Used	Political Culture Insight
Structural-Demographic Theory	Dynamic systems, empirical data analysis	Cycles of instability driven by social, elite, demographic variables
Positive Political Theory / Game Theory	Game-theoretic, social choice models	Strategic behavior in institutions and voting systems
Socio physics / Network Models	Physics-inspired models, agent-based networks	Opinion dynamics, polarization, echo chambers
Diffusion Models of Beliefs	Differential equations	Spread and saturation of political beliefs
Social Rule Systems	Logic & formal systems	Modeling norms and institutional rule-making
Critical Mathematics Education	Socio political critique, educational theory	Power dynamics in mathematics as part of political culture

The M+1 rule and Cross-National Patterns.

Building on Cox's seminal "M+1 rule," Reed (2003) and others demonstrate through simulations and comparative analysis that the number of viable candidates in a district rarely exceeds M+1 (where M is district magnitude). This theoretical equilibrium captures cross-national patterns of candidate entry, revealing the micro-mechanisms—psychological desertion and mechanical incentives—that sustain convergence in practice.

Information and Strategic Voting

Laboratory and field studies further confirm that information availability strengthens strategic coordination. Tyszler and Schram (2015) show that under plurality rules, voters are more likely to desert weak candidates and converge on viable alternatives when better informed. This aligns with incomplete-information voting games, where beliefs about viability shape equilibrium behaviour.

Approval vs Plurality Rules.

Comparative studies using simulations and lab settings highlight how approval voting can mitigate coordination failures. Unlike plurality, which often forces voters into desertion equilibrium, approval voting allows expression of support for multiple viable candidates, yielding outcomes closer to aggregate preferences in three-candidate contests.

India's First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) System.

India offers a distinctive case of strategic voting under a multi-cornered FPTP environment, often with three or more strong parties per constituency. Studies of Lok Sabha elections show frequent "vote transfers" among blocs to defeat dominant rivals, consistent with Cox's coordination framework. However, coordination failures—especially in states with regional parties—often lead to outcomes where candidates win with modest pluralities, underscoring the limits of equilibrium predictions when ethnic, caste, or regional loyalties constrain voter flexibility.

Fruitful Conclusions

Across contexts, game-theoretic tools have illuminated the mechanics of strategic voting, candidate entry, and coalition formation. From Japan's mixed-member districts to France's runoffs, Brazil's mayoral races, Sweden's PR thresholds, and India's multi-party FPTP contests, case studies confirm and qualify theoretical predictions such as Duverger's law and the M+1 rule. Experimental and comparative studies further show that information, institutional rules, and cultural factors all shape how closely real-world elections approximate game-theoretic equilibrium.

Expanded India Case: Game-Theoretic Strategic Voting under FPTP

India's first-past-the-post (FPTP) system generates fertile ground for strategic coordination challenges. Unlike two-party systems, India's elections often feature multi-cornered contests involving national parties and strong regional or caste-based actors. While Cox's M+1 rule predicts convergence to two viable contenders per constituency, coordination frequently fails due to fragmented social cleavages.

Uttar Pradesh (UP): UP exemplifies a caste-fragmented multiparty system. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and Samajwadi Party (SP) often split votes among upper-caste, Dalit, and Yadav/OBC bases, respectively. Game theory would predict strategic desertion toward the strongest challenger, but voters often remain loyal to caste-based parties. This results in BJP victories with modest pluralities (~35–40%), revealing equilibrium failure [1-10].

Tamil Nadu: Tamil Nadu politics is dominated by the Dravidian parties (DMK and AIADMK), with the BJP and Congress playing marginal roles. Here, coordination works differently: voters desert weaker national parties in favor of the dominant state party. However, when both DMK and AIADMK contest strongly, coordination failures split anti-incumbent votes, showing how equilibrium depends on coalition strategy.

West Bengal: In West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), BJP, and Left/Congress alliance create persistent three-way contests. While Cox's M+1 rule suggests convergence to two contenders, many constituencies remain triangular. This reflects the role of regional identity and historical loyalties (e.g., Left strongholds), limiting voters' willingness to desert even strategically weak candidates.

Graphical Representation

We Can Map This as A Strategic Coordination Diagram for India

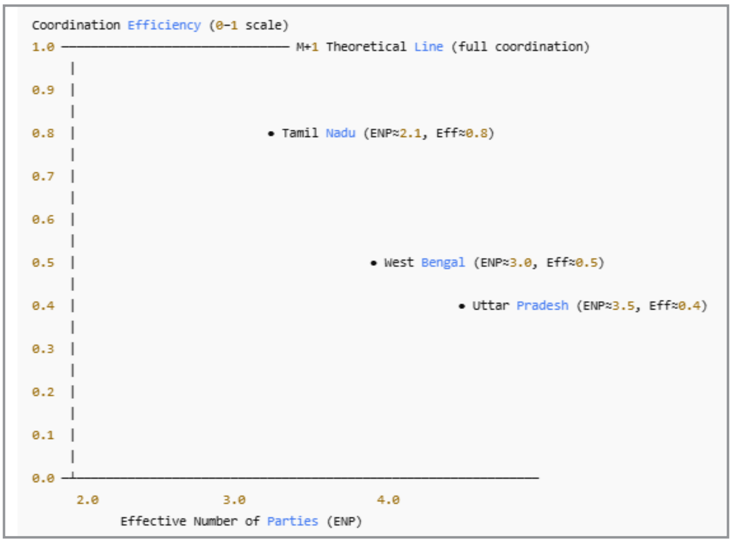
Axes

X-axis = Number of effective parties (ENP)

Y-axis = Coordination efficiency (0 = total failure, 1 = full Duvergerian convergence)

Patterns:

UP: ENP ≈ 3.5, Coordination Efficiency ≈ 0.4 (high fragmentation, caste loyalty blocks desertion).



Tamil Nadu: ENP ≈ 2.1, Coordination Efficiency ≈ 0.8 (near-bipolar system with occasional split).

West Bengal: ENP ≈ 3.0, Coordination Efficiency ≈ 0.5 (persistent triangular races).

```python
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt

# Data
states = ["Uttar Pradesh (UP)", "Tamil Nadu (TN)", "West Bengal (WB)"]
ENP = [3.5, 2.1, 3.0]
Coord_eff = [0.4, 0.8, 0.5]

# Plot
plt.figure(figsize=(8,6))
plt.scatter(ENP, Coord_eff, color="blue", s=100)

# Annotations
for i, state in enumerate(states):
    plt.text(ENP[i]+0.05, Coord_eff[i], state, fontsize=10)

# Benchmark line (ideal coordination = 1)
plt.axhline(y=1, color='r', linestyle='--', label="M+1 Theoretical Line")

# Labels and formatting
plt.xlabel("Effective Number of Parties (ENP)", fontsize=12)
plt.ylabel("Coordination Efficiency", fontsize=12)
plt.title("Strategic Coordination under FPTP in Indian States", fontsize=14)
plt.ylim(0, 1.1)
plt.xlim(1.8, 4)
plt.legend()
plt.grid(True, linestyle="--", alpha=0.6)

plt.show()
```

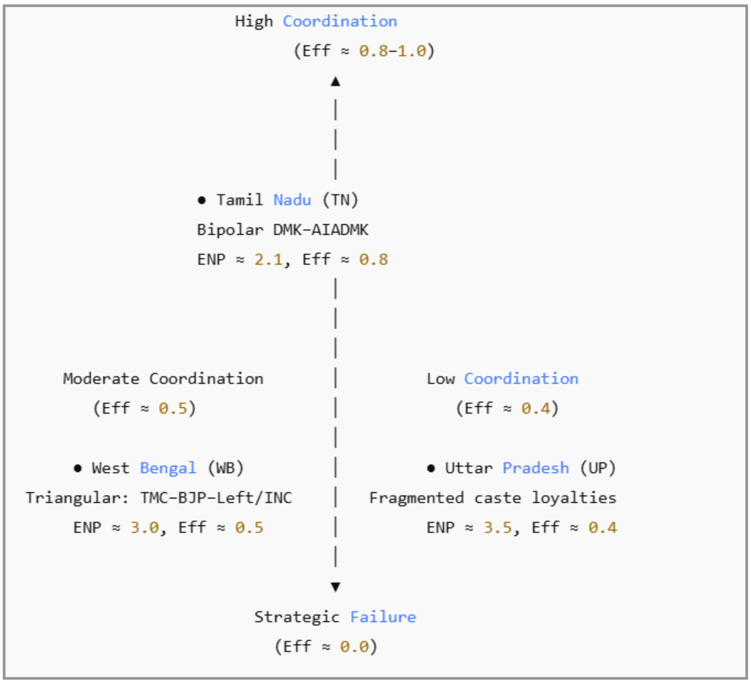
Comparative Focused Just on UP, TN, and WB

If your aim is conceptual illustration (to show how game-theoretic coordination works differently in distinct Indian contexts), then UP, TN, and WB are sufficient. They give a triangular comparison:

UP = caste-driven fragmentation (low efficiency)

TN = bipolar regional competition (high efficiency)

WB = triangular persistence (moderate efficiency)



This trio alone neatly illustrates the range of outcomes predicted vs. violated under M+1 rule.

If your aim is comparative national analysis (to generalize or publish), then it's stronger to add more states, especially those with unique equilibrium logics:

Bihar – coalition dynamics (RJD, JD(U), BJP) → ENP ≈ 3.2, Eff ≈ 0.5

Maharashtra – multiparty + alliances (BJP, Shiv Sena, NCP, INC) → ENP ≈ 3.5, Eff ≈ 0.6

Kerala – stable two-bloc system (UDF vs LDF) → ENP ≈ 2.0, Eff ≈ 0.9

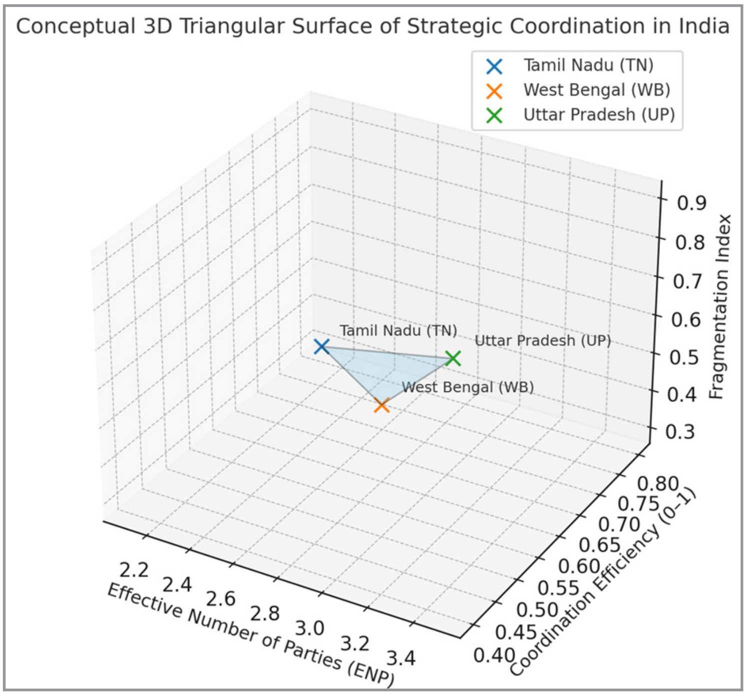
Punjab – Sikh/regional parties + national actors (Akali Dal, Congress, AAP, BJP) → ENP ≈ 3.0, Eff ≈ 0.5

Interpretation.

Tamil Nadu (TN) sits near the top: almost a two-party equilibrium (high coordination).

West Bengal (WB) lies in the middle: persistent three-cornered races (moderate coordination).

Uttar Pradesh (UP) is toward the bottom: fragmented caste/regional loyalties prevent convergence (low coordination).



Conceptual 3D Triangular Surface Plot
The translucent surface connects Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh, forming a triangular "strategic coordination landscape."

TN sits at the Duvergerian peak (low ENP, high efficiency, low fragmentation).
WB lies on the slope (triangular equilibrium, moderate fragmentation).
UP anchors the fragmented base (high ENP, low efficiency, high fragmentation).
This makes the triangle metaphor tangible in 3D — showing how state-level party dynamics map onto a strategic surface rather than just isolated points.

For Further Reading

- Turchin, P. "Ages of Discord: A Structural-Demographic Analysis of American History" (2016) & earlier papers on SDTWikipediaWIRED
- Riker, W. H. The Theory of Political Coalitions (1962) for game-theoretic foundationsWikipedia
- Galam, S. "Sociophysics: A Review of Galam Models" (2008)arXiv
- Wang et al. on modeling echo chambers and public discoursearXiv
- SpringerBook Mathematics in Politics and Governance (2024) for practical political modeling toolsSpringerLink
- Valero & Zevenbergen on socio-political dimensions of mathematics educationSpringerLink+1
- Here are some case studies where game-theoretic tools are applied to elections.

Game-Theoretic Case Studies in Elections
• Japan's mixed-member elections (strategic coordination)
Tool: equilibrium selection in strategic voting models under two simultaneous tiers (SMD + PR).
Finding: Voters reallocate support away from non-viable candidates in SMD races while expressing sincere preferences on PR lists; a large share of voters behave strategically, but "misaligned" votes (for a less-preferred viable option) are a small subset. American Economic Association AEA Publications IDEAS / RePEc

- Brazil's mayoral elections (regression discontinuity test of Duverger/Cox)

Tool: Game-theoretic predictions of strategic desertion + RD exploiting exogenous rule changes.
Finding: Causal evidence that moving from runoff to plurality induces voter coordination and reduces the number of viable candidates, consistent with Duverger/Cox strategic equilibria. Princeton University

- France's two-round presidential elections (2002, later cycles)

Tool: Strategic voting in majority-runoff games; equilibrium comparisons between round-1 sincerity and round-2 coordination.
Finding: In 2002, many voters failed to coordinate in round 1, producing a shock (Le Pen advancing); subsequent work shows conditions under which two-round systems still yield strategic (not purely sincere) round-1 behavior. JSTORResearchGateecontheory.orgScienceDirect

- Sweden (PR with thresholds)

Tool: Cooperative/coalitional game-theory logic under PR with legal thresholds; "insurance" voting to keep allies above threshold.
Finding: Voters hedge toward ideologically proximate allies near the threshold to optimize coalition payoffs—consistent with threshold-driven strategic equilibria. (Recent working paper case study.) Diva Portal

- Laboratory elections comparing plurality vs majority-runoff

Tool: Experimental tests of equilibrium set predicted by voting games (Duverger equilibrium under plurality vs sincerity possibilities under runoff).
Finding: Plurality tends to induce two-candidate coordination; majority-runoff sustains more sincere first-round voting, aligning with theoretical equilibrium characterizations. NBER The M+1 rule (Cox) across electoral systems
Tool: Entry / coordination games with strategic voters and candidates; equilibrium bound that viable competitors per district ≤ M+1 (M = district magnitude).
Finding: Cross-national and simulation evidence supports strategic mechanisms producing M+1 viability; clarifies when psychology vs mechanics drive convergence. Cambridge University Press & Assessment+1

- Information and strategic voting (theory + experiments)

Tool: Voting games with incomplete information under plurality; equilibrium predictions about desertion from weak candidates when information improves.
Finding: Better information increases coordination on viable options and reduces wasted votes, consistent with strategic equilibria. PMC

- Approval vs plurality: coordination in 3-candidate games

Tool: Voter coordination games under alternative rules; equilibrium comparison of approval, plurality, and runoff.
Finding: Approval voting can mitigate coordination failure and better aggregate support for broadly acceptable candidates in large-N, 3-candidate settings. ScienceDirect.

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Institutional Review Board Statement
Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement
Not applicable.

Ethics
There are no ethical issues with the publication of this manuscript.

Disclosure of AI Use

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