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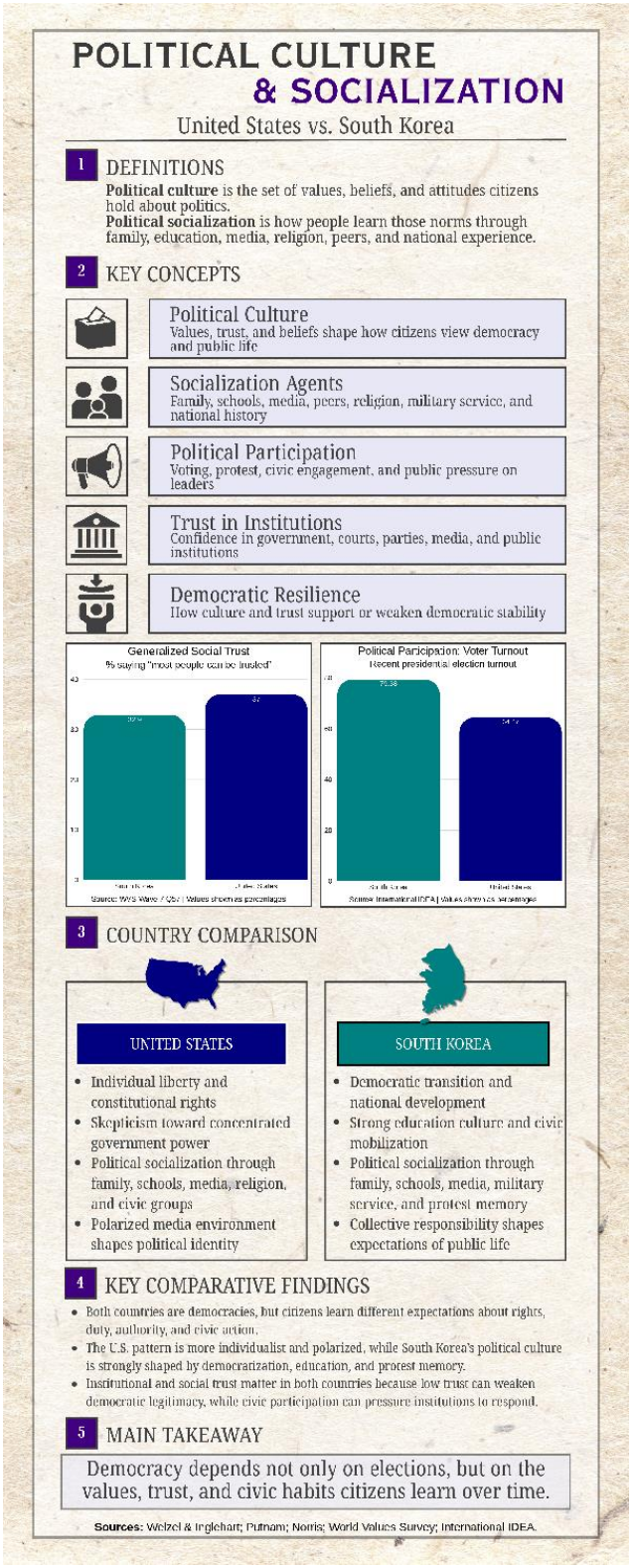
Week 4 Comparative Infographic

This infographic compares political culture and political socialization in the United States and South Korea. Both countries are democracies, but their citizens are shaped by different historical experiences, civic expectations, and socialization processes. Political culture refers to the values, beliefs, and attitudes citizens hold about politics, while political socialization describes how people learn those norms through family, education, media, religion, peers, and national experience.

The United States has a political culture strongly associated with individual liberty, constitutional rights, pluralism, and skepticism toward concentrated government power. These values are reinforced through families, schools, religious communities, civic groups, and media. However, the American media environment is also highly polarized, which can shape political identity in more divided ways. South Korea's political culture reflects its democratic transition, national development, strong education culture, and history of



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civic mobilization. Political socialization in South Korea is influenced by family, schools, media, military service, and collective memory of pro-democracy protest. These factors help explain why civic action and public pressure have played such an important role in South Korean democratic life.

The two charts support the comparison by showing differences in social trust and political participation. World Values Survey Wave 7 data show that 32.9% of respondents in South Korea and 37.0% in the United States said that "most people can be trusted." This suggests that both countries face limits in generalized social trust, even though the United States is slightly higher on this measure. This connects to Putnam's argument that trust and social capital matter for community cooperation and democratic life.

The voter turnout chart shows a sharper contrast. International IDEA data report turnout of 79.38% in South Korea's 2025 presidential election and 64.47% in the 2024 U.S. presidential election. This suggests stronger electoral participation in South Korea for these recent presidential contests. Welzel and Inglehart's argument about ordinary people and democratization is useful here because both countries demonstrate that democracy depends not only on formal institutions, but also on citizens' resources, values, and willingness to participate. Norris's work on democratic backsliding also helps frame the importance of political culture, trust, and civic behavior. Overall, the comparison shows that democratic resilience depends on more than elections alone. It also depends on the civic habits, social trust, and political expectations citizens learn over time.

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