

Political Culture, Political Science, and Identity Politics: An Uneasy Alliance

Howard J. Wiarda

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Political Culture, Political Science, and Identity Politics: An Uneasy Alliance Howard J. Wiarda Political Culture (defined as the values, beliefs, and behavioral patterns underlying the political system) has long had an uneasy relationship with political science. Identity politics is the latest incarnation of this conflict. Everyone agrees that culture and identity are important, specifically political culture, is important in understanding other countries and global regions, but no one agrees how much or how precisely to measure it. In this important book, well known Comparativist, Howard J. Wiarda, traces the long and controversial history of culture studies, and the relations of political culture and identity politics to political science. Under attack from structuralists, institutionalists, Marxists, and dependency writers, Wiarda examines and assesses the reasons for these attacks and why political culture went into decline only to have a new and transcendent renaissance and revival in the writings of Inglehart, Fukuyama, Putnam, Huntington and many others. Today, political culture, now updated to include identity politics, stands as one of these great explanatory paradigms in political science, the others being structuralism and institutionalism. Rather than seeing them as diametrically exposed, Howard Wiarda shows how they may be made complementary and woven together in more complex, multicausal explanations. This book is brief, highly readable, provocative and certain to stimulate discussion. It will be of interest to general readers and as a text in courses in international relations, comparative politics, foreign policy, and Third World studies.



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