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Comparative Politics: Issues and Trends

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By: Dr. Pranav Kumar



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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

COMPARATIVE POLITICS : ISSUES AND TRENDS

M.P.S.-4

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any **five** questions. Attempt at least **two** questions from each section. All questions carry equal marks.

SECTION-I

Q. 1. Evaluate the contemporary significance of the comparative method.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 5, 'Contemporary Significance'.

Q. 2. Compare the Marxian and Gandhian perspectives of the state.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 37, 'The Marxian Perspective' and 'The Gandhian Perspective'.

Q. 3. Analyse the impact of Regional Integration on Nation.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 65, 'Impact of Regional Integration on the State'.

Q. 4. Examine Liberal approach to Nationalism.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 89, 'Liberal Approach and Humanitarian Approach' and Page No. 93, Q. No. 2.

Q. 5. What is constitutionalism? Discuss it in the context of USA and Britain.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 124, 'Meaning of Constitutionalism', 'The British Model of Constitutionalism' and Page No. 125, 'The US Model'.

SECTION-II

Q. 6. Evaluate 'Federalism' as an approach for power-sharing.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-22, Page No. 177, 'Introduction' and Page No. 181, Q. No. 1.

Q. 7. Examine modernisation as a factor for the emergence of ethnic movements.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-18, Page No. 150, Q. No. 2.

Q. 8. Write an essay on the nature of democratic regimes.

Ans. India is a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic with a Parliamentary form of government which is federal in structure with unitary features. There is a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as its head to advise the President who is the constitutional head of the country. Similarly in states there is a Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister as its head, who advises the Governor.

Political trials are most salient in times of transition between regimes, especially when a new democratic regime confronts crimes of the old regime. Indeed, the first attempts to seriously consider the compatibility of political trials with liberal – democratic values appear in the literature on the transition to democracy. Unlike a military revolution that sustains its authority by brute force, democratic regimes are committed to the rule of law and are inclined to address the evils of the previous regime with the help of legal devices. However, the new regime's commitment to the rule of law also makes it aware of the dangers of using ex post facto laws and indulging in 'victor's justice.' At such times, the various expectations from the law – to punish the guilty, to ascertain the truth about the old regime, and to enhance reconciliation in society – seem to overwhelm the legal system and to push it in opposite directions. Moreover, the forward-looking direction of the architects of democracy who are concerned with the efficacy of the transition often conflicts with the backward-looking direction of legal proceedings and their narrow focus on individual guilt (Osiel 1997, Nino 1991, Teitel 1997). For these reasons trials of transition bring to the foreground the clash between politics and justice. Two main approaches to the problem have evolved since World War II: Exemplary Criminal Trials and Truth Commissions, both of which can be considered

political trials of sorts and have received extensive theoretical elaboration.

Following the end of World War II the Allies established an international military tribunal in Nuremberg (1945) to judge the leaders of the Nazi regime. This was the first time in history that the leaders of a defeated country had faced criminal prosecution for war crimes, crimes against the peace, and crimes against humanity by an international tribunal. The charge that was applied in the trial – conspiring to wage an aggressive war – allowed the prosecution to tell a general historical narrative. Could the obvious political end of using the court to teach a history lesson (through ex post facto laws, and victors' judges) be reconciled with the demands of liberalism? Confronted with this dilemma, Judith Shklar made the first serious effort to reconcile the legacy of liberalism with political trials occurring in the transition to democracy (Shklar 1964). A legalistic understanding of liberalism, she argued, could justify the Nuremberg trials only at the high cost of denying their political nature altogether. In her view, procedural safeguards to defendants could only guarantee that the trial would not deteriorate into a show

trial, but this in itself could not justify deviating from basic liberal demands such as an independent judiciary, established court, nonretroactive laws, etc. Paradoxically, Shklar came to the conclusion that the political dictate of founding a democracy justified the divergence from strict legalism in the Nuremberg trials. In other words, it was only an honest recognition of the political aspects of the trials, their educational and symbolic contribution to the building of democracy in postwar Germany, that could justify them. Later writers accepted Shklar's consequentialist approach to transitional justice but limited its applicability to trials that guarantee the due-process rights of the defendants (Osiel 1997).

Q. 9. Analyse the difference between European and American type of parties.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-23, Page No. 189, Q. No. 2 and Page No. 190, Q. No. 3.

Q. 10. Write an essay on 'Nationalisation of Science and Technology'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-28, Page No. 221, 'Nationalization of Science and Technology' and Page No. 225, Q. No. 3.

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Sample Preview of The Chapter

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COMPARATIVE POLITICS: ISSUES AND TRENDS

Comparative Politics: Nature, Significance and Evolution



INTRODUCTION

Political Science is the study of the state, government, and politics. Should the study of political science be scientific or behavioural, has always been at the centre of controversy for centuries? The twentieth-century debate about political science has been part of a broad dispute about methodology in social studies. Those who have sought to make the study of politics scientifically have been concerned to establish a discipline which can meet two conditions: it must be objective or value-free, and it must seek comprehensive and systematic explanations of events. Academic discipline concerned with the empirical study of government and politics. Political scientists have investigated the nature of states, the functions performed by governments, voter behaviour, political parties, political culture, political economy, and public opinion, among other topics.

It is only with the general systematisation of the social sciences in the last hundred years that political science has emerged as a separate definable area of study. Political Science is commonly divided into a number of subfields, the most prominent being political theory, national government, comparative government, international relations, and special areas shared with other social sciences such as sociology, psychology, and economics. In practice, these subfields overlap. Political

theory encompasses the following related areas: the study of the history of political thought; the examination of questions of justice and morality in the context of the relationships between individuals, society, and government; and the formulation of conceptual approaches and models in order to understand more fully political and governmental processes. To compare normative and behavioural models of political science there has been need of evolution of a new stream in the political science and that leads to the development of Comparative Politics as new branch along with political theory, public policy, national politics, international relations, etc.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

WHAT IS COMPARATIVE POLITICS AND ITS EVOLUTION?

Before the development of comparative politics as a stream of Political Science a number of questions were unanswered. This includes the following questions: Why are some countries poor and others wealthier? What enables some countries to “make it” in the modern world while others remain locked in poverty? Why are the poorer countries more inclined to be governed autocratically while the richer countries are democratic? What accounts for the regional, cultural, and geographic differences that exist? What are the politics of the transition from underdevelopment to development and

what helps stimulate and sustain that process? What are the internal social and political conditions as well as the international situations of these various countries that explain the similarities as well as the differences? What are the patterns that help account for the emergence of democratic as distinct from Marxist-Leninist political systems? These are the kinds of questions that lie at the heart of the field of Comparative Politics. These queries led to the development of comparative politics as a stream of political science.

Before defining the concept of comparative politics it would not be out of context to discuss the term politics. Politics is the process by which groups of people make decisions. The term is generally applied to behaviour within civil governments, but politics has been observed in all human group interactions, including corporate, academic, and religious institutions. It consists of “social relations involving authority or power”. Politics is the art or science of government or governing, especially the governing of a political entity, such as a nation, and the administration and control of its internal and external affairs. This is the methods or tactics involved in managing a state or government: The politics of the former regime were rejected by the new government leadership. If the politics of the conservative government now borders on the repressive, what can be expected when the economy falters?

But the traditional definition of politics adopts non-comparative and descriptive approach which is unable to draw parallel between different political systems and political processes. These limitations required an approach in political science which is empirical and analytical, leading to the development of Comparative Politics in the post second world war scenario. Comparative Politics is a branch of political science, characterised by an empirical approach based on the comparative method. Comparative Politics, seeks to explain differences between political systems. As Arend Lijphart explains, the comparative politics focuses on “the how” leaving apart the “what” of the analysis. In other words, comparative politics emphasises on the method it applies to study political phenomena, it is not defined by the object of its study,. According to Peter Mair and Richard Rose the comparative politics is defined by a combination of a substantive focus on the study of countries’ political systems and a method of identifying and explaining similarities and differences between these countries using common concepts.

When applied to specific fields of political science, comparative politics may be referred to by other names, such as for example, comparative government or comparative foreign policy? Comparative government is a method in political science for obtaining evidence of causal effects by comparing the varying forms of government in the world, and the states they govern, although governments across different periods of history may also be the units of comparison. There are several methods at work in comparative government (method of difference as opposed to method of agreement and variable as opposed to case study approaches) but all have in common the explanation of differential changes in dependent variable by the presence of different independent variables in the systems under comparison. The nature of dependent (what is to be explained) and independent variables (what explains the pattern of the dependent variable) in the method is almost unlimited, from government form to electoral system to economic or cultural factors.

Comparative Politics is particularly interested in exploring patterns, processes, and regularities among political systems. It looks for trends, for changes in patterns; and it tries to develop general propositions or hypotheses that describe and explain these trends. It may focus on the studies of one country—or a particular institution (political parties, militaries, parliaments, interest groups), political process (decision-making), or public policy (e.g., labour or welfare policy) in that country by comparing different aspects of the particular country. Apart from comparing two countries it also studies a regional or area—this may include studies of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Europe, or other sub-regions. Such studies are useful because they involve groups of countries that may have several things in common—e.g., similar history, cultures, language, religion, colonial backgrounds, and so on. Regional or area studies allow us to hold common features constant, while examining or testing for certain other features.

Under Comparative Politics Studies across regions are also performed. Such studies might involve comparisons of the role of the military in Africa and the South-east Asia, or the quite different paths of development of the West European countries and Latin America. It also conducts with the improved statistical data collected by the World Bank, the UN, and other agencies; it is now possible to do comparisons on a global basis. Thematic studies , on the themes such as dependency theory, corporatism, role of the state,

process of military professionalisation also comes under the Comparative Thematic studies are often complex and usually carried out by more senior scholars. So, Comparative Politics is a multidisciplinary study of different political systems and political processes in much broader aspect.

Even though Comparative Politics as a new stream of political science only evolved after 1950s, it has a long and very distinguished history dating back to ancient Greece and Rome. The Bible is perhaps one of the first written statements of Comparative Politics. Particularly in the Old Testament, the prophets are constantly comparing the people of Israel with other peoples: Egyptians, Persians, etc. Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Politics cover almost all the key issues of politics: the nature of power and leadership, the different forms of government, public policy, and so on. In order to know which form of government was most stable, Aristotle collected approximately 150 constitutions of his time, mainly from the Greek city-states but from other areas as well. Montesquieu, the 18th century French philosopher also contributed to the development of comparative politics, though in vague manner. Unlike Hobbes and Locke who focused on one country, but assumed it had universal validity, Montesquieu in his book "*The Spirit of the Laws*" attempted to move beyond the constitutional procedures of a country to examine its true culture and "spirit". His greatest contribution to the field was his model for the separation of powers.

The Comparative Politics, before the advent of 1950s, had been primarily concerned with the formal institutions of government—particularly the government of Western Europe. The problem of comparative method at that time revolves around the discovery of uniformities, i.e., the analytical formulation of concepts and problems under which the real institution forms can be compared. Harold D. Lasswell and Almond broadened the field of political science in the 1950s, by integrating approaches from other social science disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Almond transformed an interest in foreign policy into systematic studies of comparative political development and culture. Almond's research eventually covered many topics, including the politics of developing countries, Communism, and religious fundamentalism. They gave the Comparative Politics its own identity by drawing contours and situating it

differently from Political Theory and Area Studies. Their contributions were seminal to establish the comparative politics as a distinct stream in political science and to broad the paradigm of study to newly decolonised countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

During 1960s, Behavioural revolution also contributed in the evolution of the Comparative Politics. Behavioural Revolution in the field explains political behaviour, institutions, processes, and policies. Behavioural approaches include economic (preference structuring, bargaining), psychological (attitude formation and change, motivations, perceptions), sociological (roles, group, class), or political (decision-making, coalitions, influence). This also focuses on the political behaviour (conventional or unconventional) of the individual person or small group (microanalysis), or of large organisations that participate in the political process such as parties, interest groups, political action committees, governmental agencies, and mass media (macro analysis). Behaviouralism emphasised the systematic understanding of all identifiable manifestations of political behaviour. But it also meant the application of rigorous scientific and statistical methods to standardise testing and to attempt value free inquiry of the world of politics. For the behaviouralist, the role of political science is primarily to gather and analyse facts as rigorously and objectively as possible. Its contribution is conspicuous in making the field multidisciplinary.

It led to the evolution of two frameworks in the field of comparative politics. One is known as System Approach and second is Structural Functional Analysis. The systems approach integrates the analytic and the synthetic method, encompassing both holism and reductionism. It is a framework by which one can analyse and/or describe any group of objects that work in concert to produce some result. This could be a single organism, any organisation or society, or any electro-mechanical or informational artifact. System theory first originated in biology in the 1920s. Easton aspired to make politics a science, applied this approach to political science. He worked with highly abstract models that described the regularities of patterns and processes in political life in general. In the 1970s, however, Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell introduced a structural functionalist approach to compare political systems. They argued that in order to understand a political system, it was necessary to understand not only its institutions (or structures), but also their respective

functions. They also insisted that these institutions must be placed within a meaningful and dynamic historical context to be properly understood. This idea stood in marked contrast to the prevailing approaches in the field of comparative politics: the state-society theory and dependency theory. This two approaches of comparative politics got boost owing to decolonisation process and emergence of new states.

However these approaches always face stormy weather since it inception and normative models also criticised these approach by saying them reductionism. Some scholars including Almond accepted the comparative politics as a movement inside political science rather than terming it a stream of political science. Apart from the above mentioned approaches to the study of comparative politics Decision-making approach and Marxist approach also gave new perspectives for the study of comparative politics.

THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

A wide variety of meanings is attached to the term “comparative method.” For some authors, the comparative method is similar to the statistical method, except that it deals with a small number of cases. The comparative method has taken many forms since Augustus Comte first employed the concept in 1853, in his foundational *Cours de philosophie positive*. Subsequently a variety of comparative methods have emerged in the social sciences with different goals, units of comparison, and types of data that reflect a variety of theoretical assumptions and interests. Comparison has formed the core of anthropology, sociology and other social sciences, to the extent that Emile Durkheim (1938) viewed all sociological analysis as necessarily comparative. Comparative methods have been employed for both quantitative and qualitative studies of such diverse phenomena as language, political organisation, economic relations, religion, myth, kinship, marriage, and the family. Three strategies are used in comparative methodologies: illustrative comparison, complete or universe comparison, and sampled-based comparisons. Illustrative comparison is the most common form of comparative analysis and has been employed extensively by theorists. In this approach items are used as examples to explain or exemplify phenomena found in different units. They are chosen for their illustrative value and not systematically selected to be statistically representative. Illustrative comparisons are used in historical reconstructions, and to support

interpretations or general assertions. Ethnographic case studies are commonly justified as the source for illustrative comparisons. The second strategy is complete or universe comparison, in which all elements of the domain within the study form the units of comparison. Finally, sampled comparison strategically delimits part of the whole, with the goal of selecting data that are statistically representative of the variations within the whole and are intended as the basis for statistical generalisations.

There are three different comparative methods: experimental, statistical and case study. An experiment is a method of investigating causal relationships among variables. An experiment is a cornerstone of the empirical approach to acquiring data about the world and is used in both natural sciences and social sciences. An experiment can be used to help solve practical problems and to support or negate theoretical assumptions. But the experiments are done in controlled conditions, so, its application to the comparative politics has limited scope. Hence as alternative to the experimental method, in comparative politics statistical method is used. Statistical methods can be used to summarise or describe a collection of data; this is called descriptive statistics. In addition, patterns in the data may be modeled in a way that accounts for randomness and uncertainty in the observations, and are then used to draw inferences about the process or population being studied; this is called inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics together comprise applied statistics.

Correlation and regression are examples of statistical methods. Straight-line (linear) relationships are particularly important because a straight line is a simple pattern that is quite common. The correlation measures the direction and strength of the linear relationship. Quantitative methods have given new thrust to the orientation of the study of Comparative Politics. Comparative Politics frequently turn to quantitative methods instead of or in combination with alternative techniques because they believe that quantitative methods are essential for addressing many substantive questions of interest. Studies that are associated with alternative methodologies also suggest the centrality of qualitative methodology. The case