

UPSC

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(Specimen Answer Booklet - For Practice Purpose Only)

1. Explain the Political Sociology approach in the field of comparative politics and discuss its limitations. (15m)

Comparative politics involves comparing political phenomena. Focus is on not only the object of evaluation but also the approach used for comparison. In this light, political scientists have developed various approaches towards realising the same.

The political sociology approach aims to analyse political systems through the lens of both politics as well as sociology. It caters to the interface of political sphere and the society.

As the dictum goes, "politics doesn't operate in vacuum", political sociology approach aims to factor in various

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Socio-economical aspects that together shape political phenomena. This holds especially true for third world and post colonial countries where such factors play a huge role.

The historical context of the approach can be seen in works of Aristotle, (social factors governing theory of revolution)
Machiavelli (corrupt society demands prince with iron hands as well as Marxist scholars (basic structure of society, role of civil society))

For example, in the context of India, scholars such as Rajni Kothari, Yogendra Yadav,

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Andre Bettelie have analysed the role of caste, class, social behaviour.

While it is true that sociological aspects hold relevance, scholars such as Theodor Sophor have argued to bring back the state in the discipline. The major limitation of this approach lies in the fact that it expanded the scope, hence including variable criteria under evaluation. For example, it is challenging to find a counterpart to caste in context of western countries (race cannot be equated with caste : Louis Dumont)

To conclude, we can say that not only society affects politics, politics also has an equally endearing concept on politics.



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2. Discuss the subject matter of comparative politics. outline the limitations of comparative political analysis. (10m)

Comparative politics involves comparing political phenomena/ systems. The subject matter of comparative politics refers to the i) mode of comparison ii) subject of comparison.

While there exist many modes to compare, (political economy, political sociology, political culture etc.) the subject of comparison has seen evolution from the traditional to modern times.

Initially, the subject matter involved study of law and constitution, theory and practice of governments and their historical analysis,

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in a strictly legalistic formalistic sense (ex: Aristotle's study of 158 constitutions, Bagehot, Bryce's works). Over time, with incorporation of behaviouralism, the subject matter incorporated not only the government but the entire political system including political parties, electoral behaviour, civil society etc.

Limitations -

- i) Criticised for its parochial, case study oriented hyper factualism (Roy Macridis)
- ii) Charged by Marxists of being ethnocentric and inherently advocating western democracy.
- iii) Collection of facts and figures for comparison is itself challenging.
- iv) Reductionist as it reduces and generalises events and happenings to brief meta narratives getting rid of the context of occurrence (Neera Chandra)
- Scholars have hence ~~was~~ suggested to move to a case to case micro analysis rather than global comparisons

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3. Is the rise of social movements a sign of opening up of popular space in political process or decline of representative politics? Examine. (15m)

Social Movements represent a collective enterprise of people representing social, economical or political issues. They represent a kind of collective behaviour hence shifting the fulcrum of politics from the elites to the masses.

In contemporary times, with the rise of participatory culture in youth especially students and neo-middle class, expression of popular demands has become common through social movements.

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Today, we see movements across the world (2019 - year of protests) - in not only developing but also developed countries. According to Charles Tilly, these movements are a major vehicle for participation of ordinary people, by not only building public conscience but also strengthening democratic culture.

According to some scholars, the rising centralist tendencies in political parties, the arena becoming highly professional, such movements fill the gap. They keep put the demands of the population on the table, which otherwise were difficult to highlight through representative politics.

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However, according to scholars like Richard Youngs (in his book: Civil Activism Unleashed), these ~~for~~ movements are ^{not} just political but also practical. They do not wish to establish a counter state/ contest elections, but only raise attention to the cause.

To sum up, social movements being spontaneous and leaderless in nature cannot entirely replace party & representative politics. It can, however, decentralise the process & bring grassroots to the forefront. It is through such movements sometimes that shape the future of electoral politics itself - for ex: rise of AAP through Anna Hazare Movement.

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4. compare the nature of state as found in advanced countries with those found in developing countries. (20m)

Political science, it is said, begins and ends with the state. (Galner) Hence

Study of the nature of state holds utmost importance in establishing relationships among countries, comparing and contrasting their functioning, building and thereby testing theories and substantively analysing nature of state.

The basic difference between advanced and developing countries lies in their level of development - while the level of development can itself be determined through myriad factors viz economic advancement,

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Industrialisation, legal-bureaucratic system etc., advanced countries are generally ~~the~~ referred to as the Global North (capitalist industrialised countries) ~~and~~ and the Global South / Third World countries form the bulk of developing nations - the post colonial societies.

The state in advanced countries, is more or less neoliberal. The state represents 'minimum states maximum governance' and hence indulges in basic minimum functions.

On the contrary, the state in developing countries, in the words of Hanrahan is overdeveloped. The states assume a central role in planning and hence participate actively in the economic sphere as well -

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which in capitalist nations is left for
the market.

According to Marxist tradition, states in capitalist-
advanced countries represents the core
while ⁱⁿ the developing represents the
peripheries. (Dependency theory)

According to Pluralists, while ~~the~~ power is
distributed as polyarchy - existence of
military industrial complex in USA
(Chricht-Mills); in developing countries
military itself acts as an important
institutional body, often indulging in coups
to overthrow the state itself.

As per ~~the~~ political development approach,
developing states can be visualised as

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Rigg's prismatic societies - where modernity coexists with tradition.

In the works of Samuel Huntington, we can see the theory of political decay witnessed in developing states - some eventually moving away from democracy itself. ("India the only island of democracy")

According to Lucene Pye, developing countries do not fulfil the criteria of equality (equal political participation), capacity to implement policies (Gunnar Myrdal's soft state) or functional specialisation / differentiation.

While it is true that there exist fundamental differences between nature of states ~~between~~ in developed & developing countries, the bulk of it is also determined by their colonial past - shaped by the developed countries itself.

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5. Differentiate between Pressure Groups and interest groups.
Do interest groups help to promote democracy or to undermine it? Examine. (20m)

In contemporary times, politics is not only contingent on political parties and conventional governance through legislatures and executive; but also on formal/informal associations among the society.

Hickner and Levine have defined
interest groups as a group of individuals
with a shared objective seeking to influence
public policy to realise their goal.

According to David Truman, pressure groups are
group of individuals having claims on another
group of individuals in a society.

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In this capacity, these groups act as 'invisible empires'.

The difference between pressure and interest groups lies in the nomenclature and our approach. While pressure groups feature in the traditionalist approach; behaviouralists prefer the term 'interest.' Interest groups seek to represent a particular interest - for example FICCI represents interests of the industry sector. 'Pressure' ~~groups~~ is generally the method employed by groups to influence policy makers. Hence, 'pressure' inherently means attaches a negative connotation to the group/collective. However, for practical purposes, the terms interest groups &

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pressure groups are used interchangeably.

Role in democracy

Interest groups, in the words of Rajni Kothari, act as agents of mobilisation, storehouses of leadership. They help in strengthening of democracy by representing popular demands, influence legislation, administration and often adjudication. They also help in shaping public opinion - for example role of farmers unions in farmers acts, NASSCOM for IT professionals etc.

With LPG reforms, interest groups feature as a part of government's policy making itself - ORF for foreign policy (Raisina dialogue), ASSOCHAM, CAIM for industrial policies. In fact, they have also a role in implementation

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of policies as well (Cloth Manufacturers Association & Ministry of Textiles).

However, it is to be noted that interest groups also affect the working of democracy if they focus on parochial interests with no cause groups lacking intra democracy / effective leadership, not only ~~go~~ give haven to those seeking to make Faustian bargain but also defeat the very purpose of broadening democracy. The Radia Tapes case highlighted their role in colluding with the government. Also, indulgence in violence / extremism poses significant danger to the society. !

Interest groups, hence, help strengthen democracy, provided their very roots believe in democratisation & collective participation.

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6. Discuss one party, two party and multiparty systems with respect to their nature and functional aspects. (15m)

"Democracy, in its hopes and faults, rests on the party system" - Finer

Political parties act as the vehicle to drive pluralist ideas and opinions in a

democracy. According to laski, parties canalise the issues faced by the electorate, to be looked into by their leader.

Party system, commonly refers to the number of parties in the political domain. According to Sartori, it is not the number, however,

the number of parties of systemic relevance that form the party system. Accordingly, one party, two party & multiparty systems

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involve one, two and many parties of relevance.

According to Weiner, party system can be classified as

- i) one party authoritarian
- ii) dominant non authoritarian
- iii) competitive two party
- iv) competitive multi party systems.

One party systems involve a single party functioning in the politic. These party

may be the only existing party such as CPC or in North Korea. In such cases,

the system is authoritarian, with no possibility of opposition.

It can also be the case that the single party is the only dominant party. For ex: Congress till 60s was in hegemony, the rest merely pressure groups (Morris Jones, Rajni Kothari); ANC in South Africa.

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Two party systems involve 2 parties - one in power one in active opposition ex: UK, US.
According to political scientists, this system is the most conducive to electoral stability, strengthening of democracy and effective governance.

Multiparty systems provide for multiple parties existing in the political domain.
These may be consociational for example in Germany or highly polarised ex: Italy, India.
While multiparty systems offer wide range of choices to the electorate, they are equally

prone to instability, unsustainable coalitions.
(Recent case of Italy > 30 govt in 73 years)

To sum up, according to Bryce, party systems directly determine nature of political system & is

closely related to 'political culture' of the country.

Could not add much to your answers

B.S.

Anchita!

- 1) Amazing Attempt.
- 2) Flow is good. Content is sufficient.
Conceptual clarity is visible.

Just 2 things

- 1) Try to connect
 - 1) Theory (Polyarchy in PG question)
 - 2) Contemporary affairs

- 2) In simple questions like Q6, it is your conclusion which will fetch you 1 extra mark so put more efforts in that.

Rest is close to perfect.

Congrats.

All the best