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Approaches, Colonialism and Decolonisation of Comparative Politics

Comparative politics is a field of political science characterised by an empirical approach based on the comparative method. It is not defined by an object of its study, but rather by the method it applies to study political phenomena.

Comparative Politics

The content and boundaries of comparative politics are poorly defined, because the field is an ambiguous compound of method and subject areas. Some scholars have argued that comparative politics is a 'messy centre'. This is because it focuses on comparison and the comparative method, as a method of political inquiry. All analysis involve some degree of comparison without which an individual phenomenon cannot be understood but comparative politics teaches us how to do so. Comparative government existed as a sub-discipline for a long time but comparative politics is a relatively new field dating from the post Second World War period. It is a field that is difficult to define, has undergone many changes and reached a plateau by the 1980s beyond which it could not move. In recent years it has again a growing interest due to the emergence of new areas such as comparative public policy.

Approaches to Comparative Politics

Political investigators use different approaches to arrive at greater political understanding in defining the kinds of facts which are relevant. The diversity of approaches used by political scientists to criticise the complexity of political systems and behaviour approaches are explained below.

Institutional Approach

This comparative political analysis. The study of institutions of governance was the core approach in its various forms has been an important constituent of of political analysis. The institutional approach to political analysis emphasises on the formal structures and agencies of government.

So far, the approach have been characterised by a preoccupation with Constitutions and legal-formal institutions of government and normative values of liberal democracy. This approach was also propagated by colonial regimes to popularise European liberal values in the colonies. This is why, in the newly independent countries, institutionalism acquired some fascination.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the scholars like Bryce, Lowell and Ostrogorski made important contributions to comparative study of institutions and by implication to the evolution of comparative governments as a distinct branch of study. The American Commonwealth (1888) and Modern

Democracies (1921) are two significant works of Bryce. Lowell's works include Governments and Parties in Continental Europe (1896) and Public Opinion and Popular Government (1913).

By the first quarter of the 20th century, the approach could be said to have acquired a limited comparative character and rigour combining analysis of theory and practice of institutions. In the 1950, the approach came under attack from Easton and Roy Macridis. Pioneering work was done in comparative politics by Herman Finer (Theory and Practice of Modern Government 1932) and Carl Friedrich (Constitutional Government and Democracy, 1932).

An important criticism leveled against the practitioners of the institutional approach was their westcentric approach i.e. their failure to take up for study of institutions in the countries of the third world and communist countries of Eastern Europe. It resurfaced in the late sixties and early seventies, in a form while retaining its emphasis on facts. It did not shy away from making generalised theoretical statements without attempting to build inclusive models.

Political Culture Approach

This approach has been very popular for conducting comparative studies and making empirical analyses of transitional societies. Scholars have liked to investigate political behaviour and processes by their political cultures.

Almond, Verba and Pye have been its pioneers. Borrowing concepts from Sociology and Anthropology, Almond has developed a methodology for comparative studies to political cultures. He believes that all political cultures can be comparatively studied on that basis.

For Almond, political system is a system of roles which can be empirically observed and understood scientifically. He studied besides legal-institutions, family relations, mass behaviour, electoral system, power, influence, etc.

The basis of his classification and analysis of the political systems is their structures and cultures. Both are related to each other. Political culture of a society is deeply influenced by its structures and vice-versa.

The boundaries within which a political system operates to attain its goals and purposes make space of its culture. He discovered three models of political systems, which reflect attitudes of individuals towards political activity. They are like Weberian ideal-types. He measures political culture of a society on the basis of its orientation towards political action and political structures.

Features of Political Culture

One can understand political culture on the basis of the four grounds which are as follows

   (i)   Understanding of the whole system.
   (ii)   Input processes which are connected with trans forming structures like political, bureaucracy, etc.
   (iii) Output processes which include acts of executive offices, judiciary, bureaucracy, etc.
   (iv)   Self which involves matters or personality, such as, rights, powers, possessions and obligations.

The political culture approach declined in the 1970's. It was later revived as political scientists incorporated it into explanations of why some countries experienced economic growth and established democratic political systems while other did not.

Some political scientists suggested that the rapid economic growth and democratisation that took place in some East Asian countries in the second half of the 20th century was facilitated by a political culture based on Confucianism.

Civic culture of Almond and Verba emphasised on the political cultures of USA or Great Britain, from bias and prejudice. Arendt Lipzart has pointed out that prevalence of homogeneous values is not an essential element of political cultures of Germany and Italy. He found institutional participation of the elites much more relevant. He calls them democracy. Pateman too, does not accept cause and effect as consociational relations between stability of a democracy and its political culture.

D Kavanagh finds the role of sub-political cultures as more important. In the past, Almond and Powell has also tried to rescue themselves from this plight by resorting to the concept of secularisation. Thus, no final conclusion comes out.

Political Economy Approach

(Marxist Approach) It is defined as a social science which deals with the interconnections of economic and political process. There is general agreement that the political system functions within an ecology of other systems of human interaction namely, socilogy, economic and religious. Therefore, mere study of Constitutions and

institutions is considered inadequate to understand the nature of politics and state in terms of its functions and ability to perform desired goals. Marxists in particular believe that economics is the base of society and political system.

Economy and Class Domination

Marxism's ultimate aim is to create a classless society. Till this aim is achieved, state and politics is to be understood and analysed in terms of class relations, class domination and class struggle. According to the Marxist approach, therefore, comparative politics also has to be understood in terms of class domination over political structures.

The nature of political regimes has to be explained as the expression of specific interest and forces within particular national states, which can take important decisions for the operation of an economy. It must be kept in mind that the state is shaped by civil society, i.e. the conjuncture of wide range of social, cultural, economic and political forces. A historical analysis of these alone will enable to grasp the nature of the state in terms of its structure, function and legitimacy.

In order to investigate the origins and characteristics of present day states, it is necessary to consider their political history and also the dynamics of the mode of production, capitalist or socialist. In addition, the conjunctures of socio-economic and political forces have created national cultures which legitimate the role of the state and prescribe the limits of its intervention in the sphere of social and economic activity.

In this sense, there are considerable differences not only between states based on different modes of production but also between political regimes situated within similar modes of production. Thus, according to the Marxist approach there is need for more theorised historical analysis of specific national states.

Detailed comparative studies are also necessary in order to explain
  * Differences and similarities in terms of the structure and function of national state.
  * The development of their specific institutions.
  * Their varying autonomy in relation to various social and economic forces.
  * Their internal contradictions and dynamics of social change.

At the same time, emphasis on specific states should not detract from the consideration and comparison of broader socio-economic forces that differentiate or

join together clusters of states. Indeed, a comparative study of these forces should provide the framework within which any particular state formation should be analysed. It is particularly important for the existence of post-colonial states and their nature of dependency on developed states. This has also created a wide range of supernationed economics and political institutions. In this sense, Marxist approach also tends to look into a number of common trends in the development of national states and their nature.

Criticism of Marxist Approach

The Marxist approach gives importance to the economic factors and issues pertaining to developing countries but it has its own weaknesses. First of all, the belief of Marxist approach that state is controlled only by economically dominant class and is an instrument in their hand, has not stood the test of time.

Many Marxists themselves now view state to be relatively autonomous, partially removed from the immediate control of capital and its vested interests. This alone can explain the persistence of important structural variations between different national formations. The state cannot be simply conceived as a servant of capital. Particularly in developing societies, state plays a major role in directing and regulating economic development.

Marxist approach does not take any minor but significant aspects into account, because of that, it remains unable to provide theoretical sophistication. In fact, comparison has not been an important aspect of Marxist approach.

However, in view of its emphasis on ideological and normative aspects and also for transformation of societies, the approach has its relevance. With the collapse of Soviet Union and other East European socialist states, it has become more debatable but has not vanished away.

New Institutionalism Approach

New institutionalism is also called neo institutionalism. It is a methodological approach in the study of Political Science, Economics, Organisational Behaviour, and Sociology. Such methodology became prominent in the 1980's among scholars of US politics.

New institutionalism combined the interests of traditionalist scholars, who focused on studying formal institutional rules and structures, with behaviouralist scholars, who examined the actions of individual political actors.

Historical Background of New Institutionalism Approach

From the 1930s through the 1950s, traditionalist scholars dominated political science as a discipline, especially in the United States. Scholars which were most interested in examining the formal structures and rules, were the foundation of political and governmental institutions such as the executive, legislative and judicial branches.

The new institutionalist approach has its roots in the early to mid-1980s. The two of the leading founders of the new institutionalism, American political scientist James G March and Norwegian political scientist Johan P Olsen published at a very influential pace.

The New Institutionalism, Organisational Factors in Political Life (1984), followed by a book, Rediscovering Institutions: The Organisational Basis of Politics (1989).

They continued to argue for further institutional analysis in Democratic Governance (1995). According to these authors, studying individual political behaviour without examining institutional constraints on that behaviour was giving scholars a skewed understanding of political reality.

Neo Institutionalism

There are at least three branches of neo institutionalism
   (i) Rational choice institutionalism
   (ii) Sociological institutionalism
   (iii) Historical institutionalism

Despite the differences, there are some common notions in this line of research. Historical institutionalists define and explain specific real-world political outcomes (such as an election) by using the historical legacy of institutional structure and feedbacks available to them.

They also view politics as a competition over scarce resources and highlight differences in political power between institutions, such as between the courts and the legislature. Historical institutionalists note that institutions do not perform with perfect efficiency (because they were designed in earlier times) and institutional rules are slow to change and thus these factors must be taken into account in any analysis.

Comparative Methods Approach

It is the process by which different cases are compared in order to better understand their qualities and to develop hypothesis, theories and concepts. Scholars are not agreed on the comparative methods, its nature and scope. Some of them like AN Eisenstadt, argue that the term does not properly designate a specific method, but rather have special focus on cross-societal, institutional or macro-societal aspects of societies and social analysis.

On the other hand, Harold Lasswell argues that for anyone with scientific approach to political phenomena, the idea of an independent comparative method seems redundant, because the scientific approach is unavoidably comparative.

Gabriel Almond also equates the comparative method with the scientific method. Yet, it is essential to underline that scholars recognise that the comparative method is a method of discovering empirical relationship among variables and not a method of measurement

The comparative method is frequently used in political and social research as it broadens the perspective and could improve understanding of social phenomena.

The comparative method may also be thought of a basic research strategy, in contrast with a mere tactical aid to research.

The comparative method is best understood if briefly compared with the following methods
* Experimental Method: It is used to understand the relationship between two variables in a controlled situation. Since, such experiments are not possible in Political Science, an alternative is the statistical method. This method entails the conceptual (mathematical) manipulation of empirical data in order to discover controlled relationships among variables.
* Statistical Method: This is a standard procedure and is applied almost automatically in empirical research. The statistical method is an approximation of the experimental method as it uses the same logic. But, it is necessary to understand that the comparative method is not an adequate substitute for the experimental method as in the natural sciences.
* Finally, many scholars feel that focus should be on 'key' or contextual variables, as too many variables can create problems. This not only allows manageability but also often leads to partial comparison of political systems. This has been used successfully in anthropological studies as tribal systems are simple. Political scientists can also do this by limiting the number of variables.

* <u>Case Study Method</u>: The scientific status of the case study method is somewhat ambiguous because science is neither generalising nor a ground for disapproving established generalisation. But, its value lies when used as a building block for making general propositions. In this a number of case studies on similar subjects are carried out.

Case studies can be of many types for example, a theoretical or interpretative and theory confirming or infirming, each useful in specific situations. Thus, the comparative and the case study method have major drawbacks.

Because of the inevitable limitations of these methods, it is the challenging task of the investigator in the field of comparative politics to apply these methods in such a way as to capitalise on their inherent strengths. They can be useful instruments in scientific political inquiry. Many scholars have spent much of the post-war period constantly improving the use of these methods.

Merit and Demerit of Comparative Methods

Basis	Experimental Method	Statistical Method	Case Study Method
Merit	Eliminates rival explanations through experimental control.	Assesses rival explanations through statistical control.	Permits intensive examination of cases even with limited resources.
Demerit	Experimental control is impossible for many or most topics of relevance to the field of comparative politics.	Difficult to collect adequate information in a sufficient number of cases, due to limited time and resources.	Contribuse less to building theory than studies with more cases.

Colonialism

It is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is hard to distinguish from imperialism. As imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory.

Colonialism as a system started emerging at the very beginning of the modern era, i.e., the sixteenth century. To understand its distinctive character, a difference of Colonialism in modern era from earlier era has to be noted. Colonies had always been there. The Greeks had established Colonies in the pre-christ era. The Indian had colonies; for example, the Cholas went overseas and established colonies in Indo-China and Indonesia.

The famous Angkor Wat temple in Cambodia is surviving instance of the influence. We witnessed the forced incorporation by one small part of the world of the rest of the globe from the 16th century onwards. A few countries like Spain, Portugal, Holland, Britain and France established political domination over the rest of the world.

Some people like Wallerstein have called it the emergence of a world system. In a few decades the West country had established absolute supremacy in most fields over the countries of which are called the third world. Some writers like Andre Gunder Frank have called this as the process of the development of underdevelopment.

Forms of Colonialism

The forms of colonialism are discussed below

The Peasantry and its Impoverishment

The permanent settlement created by Cornwallis in Bengal, where the government gave over the right of revenue collection to a few large Zamindars who had powers over cultivators, now reduced to tenants. The Zamindars had to pay the government a fixed amount which was fixed forever but no restriction on rent rates till late in the 19th century.

In the Ryotwari system of Elphinstone in Bombay presidency and of Munro in Madras presidency, direct settlements were made with the pleasant proprietors and periodic revenue assessment was made every 20-30 years. The new features were disadvantageous to the peasantry mentioned above are common. The ruin of the peasantry was only a question related to the extent of pauperisation (Pauper is one who has to beg to live).

De-Industrialisation and Its Effects

During this phase, the colonialism had dual impact on Indian political economy, the destructive and developmental

The Destructive Impact

The result of this process was immediately of a two-fold character. First there was the absolute reduction in the wages of workers in agricultural operations and then secondly there was increase in the rent which the peasants were forced to pay. Poverty, not in a relative sense but of an absolute kind became wide-spread. The countryside in India till today pay attention to those who have little or no land.

Developmental Impact

The colonialism had following developmental impact on Indian political economy
* The first development is that with the beginning in the 19th century, British set up a modern admini strative apparatus and subsequently a judicial system together with merchantile firms.
* The second very important development during this period was the beginning of the construction of railways.
* The third important change to which reference has to be made is the development of modern irrigation networks. Around the same time as the development of railways, rapid expansion in irrigated areas also took place. This led to the beginning of capitalism under Indian entrepreneurs and a slow growth of modern industry. This was a feature of far reaching significance for future.

Imperialism and Industrialisation

In the last decades of the 19th century, the nature of capitalism was changing. Different types of capital like the industrial and the banking capitals were getting merged. This gave rise to large financial oligarchies within advanced capitalist countries like Britain, Germany, France, USA, etc, with excess of capital to export. There was intense competition among these countries to export capital to countries like India and establish industries.

The colonial mode of development imposed a serious disfunction, as pointed out by Bagchi between industry and agriculture. Most areas which developed industry remained agriculturally backward and those which became agriculturally advanced like Punjab remained industrially backward. The result was that the agricultural areas became hinterland for the industry.

This is very unlike the pre-colonial pattern where industry and agriculture were closely tied in a mutually beneficial relationship. This resulted in a peculiar pattern of uneven development all over India. Almost all the areas where Muslims constituted a majority of the population, did not develop any industry and remained as hinterlands. This too contributed to the Muslim separatism which led to the partition of the country and the creation of Pakistan.

Anti-Colonial Struggles

It was the sense of being deprived and exploited that disillusioned the people. After the establishment of the colonial rule, the modernist elite took the lead in opposing the colonial rule. They sought to unite the people on one platform and demand the rulers the right to be heard and be equally treated. Their tone was initially moderate, but later extremist wings grew up out of frustration.

For three decades beginning from the end of the 19th century, revolutionary rationalist movement (that the British called 'terrorist') was powerful in India. During and after World War II, violent strategies were widely followed in the anti-colonial movements in Asia and Africa. There remained collaborators of the ruling regimes across the conservative and the modernist camps, as there were opponents from both the segments of the native societies. The collaborators were the beneficiaries and the opponents were the disillusioned people at a given time. Nevertheless anti-colonial movements kept in growing, though not necessarily in similar ways.

Change in Indian Scenario

The Indian National Congress drew into its fold from big sections of the Indian society and some compassionate European subjects of the British Raj. Its leadership was essentially upper middle class professional but it included and was backed by several landlords and adversary of the Raj. At the end of the 19th century an extremist wing emerged which resort to revolutionary violence.

After World War I, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi turned the Indian National Congress into a mass party and through a non-violent resistance, challenged the British Empire. Notwithstanding the departure of several early groups from its fold, the strength of the Indian National Congress increased streadily so much that the British had to handover power to this organisation. A very special kind of combination mass politics and constitutionalism was the characteristic of this struggle.

The Indian National Congress was first political party of its kind in the entire Colonial world. During World War II. even Japanese imperialism in its conflict with the Western powers, came to the aid of the nationalist movements in South-East and South Asia. In most of Africa, sometime after the failure of 'primary resistance', Anti-colonial movements began under the leadership of the modernist elite after World War I but it became strong after World War II.

Decolonisation

It is the downfall of colonialism, where a nation establishes and maintains its supermacy over dependent terrains. It is described as the collapse of colonialism or the claim of a previously colonised people for independence and self determination. Decolonisation was the consequence of independence movements in colonised territories. It was also the result of an intended economic decision made by colonial authorities. The cost of maintaining colonial empires had begun to surpass their value of the European powers. The Oxford English dictionary explains decolonisaton as "the withdrawal from its colonies of a colonial power, the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies."

Other experts define decolonisation as a polity's movement from a status of political dependence or subordination to a status of formal autonomy or sovereignty. For example, impact of decolonisation was that, the newly independent states borrowed money from the Western countries in order to fund their own development which created a new system of debt. For decades, this debt has been politically not possible for many countries to pay off. The consequences of decolonisation for more general notions of international system are strongly contested.

Thus, the process of colonialism typically involved the relocation of populace to a new terrain, where the arriving rivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political fidelity to their country of origin. Colonialism is a of authority, which involves the suppression of one to another. Decolonisation is the opposing of colonialism In this process, one nation establishes itself as self-governing and separate from the state it had emerged from.

Nationalism and State Theory

Nationalism is defined as loyalty and devotion to a nature, especially a sense of national consciousness and promoting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supernational groups. Nationalism has a positive view of conquering other nations as it sees itself as the ultimate nation. Any ideologies that undercut or contradict the nation is opposed.

European Nationalism

In 19th century, a wave of nationalism swept the European continent, transforming its countries. The French Revolution had inspired people all over Europe. It spread the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity and generated the spirit of nationalism. Some newly formed countries, such as Germany and Italy were formed by uniting various regional states with a common national identity. Nationalism was the ideological impetus that over the century transformed Europe. We will examine the three model cases of nationalism in Western Europe, viz., England, France and Germany.

After the Second World War, Europe was a troubled states, bloody wars had been fought on the continent.

European Union (1992) or EU is an experiment to transform the relations between nations based on the functionalist ideology. It envisages to transform the relations between nations by enmeshing them in economic, social, cultural, political partnership.

EU is currently a bloc of 28 countries and 19 countries have formed Eurozone. Formation of European union is an outcome of single European Act, 1991.

Lisbon and Mashtricht Treaty converted EU into a political, foreign affairs and security integration of policies and a monetary union respectively. Lisbon Treaty (Article 50) provides for exit of member countries from European Union.
Brexit It is the term abbreviation for "British exit". Brexit refers to the possibilitiy of Britain withdrawing from the European Union (EU).

England
The contours of nationalism started taking shape in England in the early 16th century in the context of the decimation of the feudal order in the late 15th century. Three major feudal orders or "estaste' are
(i) the nobility
(ii) the clergy
(iii) the toilers

Each feudal order has a separate role, with restrictions on inter-order mobility. A massive restructuring of this order was brought about by the War of the Roses that ended in 1485 and saw the accession of the Tudor dynasty to the English throne.

Post 1945 Britain quickly relinquished its status as the world's largest imperial power but it was the massive cultural and social changes at home. That truly transformed the British society.

According to Liah Greenfeld, English nationalism, therefore, was essentially individualistic, and also civic in the sense that national identity was identical with citizenship or voluntary membership in the communit.

France
French nationalism is dated back to the French Revolution, but it changed substantially over time. At its inception, French nationalism was a more liberal form of nationalism, it advocated freedom, equality and individual rights. Then after the Franco- Prussian war (1870-1971), French nationalists took an anti-German tone, demanding the recovery of territories lost in war. It also emerged from its numerous wars with England, which involved the reconquest of the territories that made up France.

The Concept of 'Nation' in France
When the concept of 'nation' was first imported into France, it was seen as synonyms with the nobility and it continued to be Revolution (1789), identified as such upto the French

Even after 1789, the 'nation' referred to people, represented by the elite who through their assumption of the role of representation affirmed their political power.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century nationalism no longer retained its Idealistic liberal-democratic sentiment of the first half of the century, but became a narrow creed with limited ends.

French Nationalism evolved with one branch becoming more ethnocentric and this led to reiteration of nationalism that promotes the adoption of fascist and anti-communist elements that resemble some of the nationalist ideologies of Spain, Italy and Germany.

In contemporary world, France is the third most popular destination for immigrants in Europe. A significant portion of these immigrants hails from former French colonies of Algeria and Morocco. France is also a preferred destination for central and Eastern European immigrants.

Comparision between England and French Nationalism

Unlike England, French nationalism was collectivistic, authoritarian and based on an inequality between the masses and the representatives who assumed the role of representing them.

Unlike English nationalism, French nationalism was cívic, i.e. membership in the French nation was not dependent on ties of race, ethnicity, etc.

It is here that some scholars of nationalism see a contradiction between individual freedom which implies a civic criterion of membership and the authoritarianism, which indicates its collectivistic nature.

Germany

Cultural unity and economic cooperation and the Zollverein helped German nationalism to grow. Meanwhile liberal idealists and fear of invasian encouraged nationalism to grow.

Before the Campaigns of Napolean, Germany was divided into hundreds of independent states and cities.

Napolean recognised Germany into 39 larger states. He also established the confederation of the Rhine, a league of 16 German states. This brought further unification Germany Napoleonic invasion evinced the articulation of a German fraternity.

Representatives of German Enlightenment

The representatives of German enlightenment were discredited owing to the antagonism against the French. The German national consciousness was determined by Romantic philosophy.

The earliest origins of German Nationalism began with the birth of romantic nationalism diving the Napoleonic wars when Pan-Germanism started to rise. Advocacy of a German nation state an important political force in response to the invasion of German territories by France under Napolean.

Aggressive German nationalism and territorial expansion was a key factor leading to both World Wars. Prior to World War I, Germany had established a colonial empire in hopes of rivaling Britain and France.

Collapse of the wall street exchange was followed by the Great Depression of 1929, there was a huge surge in unemployment between 1930 and 1933 and led to the formation of the Nazi Government in 1933 with Adolf Hitler as the Chancellor Second