

# Comparative Government and Politics PYQ 2021

**Q1. What is meant by comparative political analysis? Differentiate between traditional and modern methods of its study.**

**Ans. Comparative Political Analysis:**

Comparative political analysis is a methodological approach used in political science to examine and understand political systems, institutions, processes, and behaviors across different countries or regions. It involves studying similarities and differences in political structures, policies, ideologies, and governance practices to identify patterns, trends, and causal relationships. By comparing different political contexts, scholars aim to gain insights into how political systems function, how policies are formulated and implemented, and how political actors and institutions interact.

**Differentiation between Traditional and Modern Methods:**

**Traditional Methods:**

**Historical Approach:** Traditional comparative political analysis often relied on historical methods to trace the development and evolution of political systems over time. It focused on understanding how past events and decisions shaped present political structures.

**Descriptive Analysis:** Early comparative political studies were descriptive in nature, emphasizing the collection and presentation of data on political systems, institutions, and practices in different countries.

**Case Studies:** Traditional methods often involved in-depth case studies of individual countries to gain detailed insights into specific political issues or events.

**Qualitative Analysis:** The focus was primarily on qualitative analysis, using narrative and descriptive techniques to explore political phenomena.

**Limited Cross-National Comparisons:** Traditional methods were limited in their ability to conduct extensive cross-national comparisons due to data availability, communication barriers, and methodological constraints.

**Modern Methods:**

**Quantitative Analysis:** Modern comparative political analysis has embraced quantitative methods, including statistical techniques, to systematically analyze large datasets and identify patterns, correlations, and causal relationships across multiple countries.

**Cross-National Comparisons:** Modern methods facilitate broader cross-national comparisons, enabling scholars to analyze trends and variations across a larger number of countries and regions.

**Theory Building and Testing:** Modern comparative analysis emphasizes theory-building and hypothesis-testing. Scholars formulate theoretical frameworks and test their hypotheses using quantitative data to establish causal relationships.

**Policy Impact Analysis:** Comparative analysis is used to evaluate the impact of policy decisions and governance practices across different countries, providing insights into the effectiveness of different approaches.

**Globalization and Interconnectedness:** Modern methods recognize the increasing interconnectedness of political systems due to globalization, allowing scholars to study how international factors influence domestic politics.

**Use of Technology:** Advances in technology, communication, and data collection have facilitated the collection and analysis of vast amounts of political data from around the world.

**In conclusion,** while traditional comparative political analysis focused on historical understanding and qualitative case studies, modern methods have evolved to incorporate quantitative analysis, cross-national comparisons, theory-building, and policy impact evaluation. The shift towards modern methods is driven by advancements in data availability, technological tools, and the need to address complex political challenges in an interconnected world.

**Q2. What do you understand by authoritarian regimes? Draw a comparison between authoritarian and democratic regimes.**

**Ans. Authoritarian Regimes:**

Authoritarian regimes are political systems characterized by concentrated power and limited political freedoms. In these regimes, a single leader, a small group, or a ruling party exercises significant control over government decisions, policies, and institutions. Authoritarian regimes often suppress political opposition, restrict civil liberties, and curtail citizens' participation in decision-making processes. The leadership's authority is typically maintained through coercion, censorship, and a lack of meaningful checks and balances.

**Comparison between Authoritarian and Democratic Regimes:**

**1. Source of Power:**

**Authoritarian Regimes:** Power is concentrated in the hands of a few leaders, ruling elites, or a single leader. Legitimacy may be based on factors like tradition, ideology, or military control.

**Democratic Regimes:** Power is derived from the consent of the governed through free and fair elections. Leaders are chosen by the people and are accountable to them.

**2. Political Participation:**

**Authoritarian Regimes:** Political participation is limited, and citizens have little to no influence in decision-making processes. Opposition parties and civil society organizations may face restrictions.

**Democratic Regimes:** Political participation is encouraged and protected. Citizens can vote, form political parties, and engage in advocacy to influence policies.

**3. Civil Liberties and Rights:**

**Authoritarian Regimes:** Civil liberties such as freedom of speech, press, and assembly are often curtailed. Citizens' rights may be restricted, and dissent can lead to punishment.

**Democratic Regimes:** Civil liberties are protected, and citizens enjoy freedom of expression, press, and assembly. The rule of law ensures citizens' rights are upheld.

**4. Rule of Law:**

**Authoritarian Regimes:** The rule of law may be subordinate to the interests of the ruling elite, resulting in uneven application and selective enforcement.

**Democratic Regimes:** The rule of law is a cornerstone, ensuring equal treatment under the law and holding leaders accountable.

#### **5. Checks and Balances:**

**Authoritarian Regimes:** Checks and balances are weak or non-existent. The ruling elite has considerable control over the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

**Democratic Regimes:** Separation of powers and checks and balances prevent any single branch from gaining unchecked power. This ensures accountability and prevents abuse of authority.

#### **6. Transitions of Power:**

**Authoritarian Regimes:** Transitions of power are often non-democratic, involving coups, revolts, or elite negotiations. Leadership changes can be accompanied by instability.

**Democratic Regimes:** Transitions of power are peaceful and typically occur through elections. This stability contributes to the overall functioning of the government.

#### **7. Press Freedom:**

**Authoritarian Regimes:** The media is often controlled or heavily influenced by the government, limiting freedom of the press and independent journalism.

**Democratic Regimes:** Press freedom is protected, enabling a vibrant and independent media landscape that holds leaders accountable.

**In conclusion,** authoritarian regimes centralize power, limit political freedoms, and restrict citizen participation. In contrast, democratic regimes distribute power, protect civil liberties, and ensure accountability through mechanisms such as elections, the rule of law, and checks and balances. While authoritarian regimes can result in stability and efficiency in decision-making, democratic regimes prioritize individual rights, representation, and responsive governance.

### **Q3. Describe the major differences between federal and unitary systems with reference to Canada and China.**

#### **Ans. Federal and Unitary Systems:**

Federal and unitary systems are two contrasting forms of government organization that define the relationship between central and regional or local governments. In a federal system, power is shared between the central government and subnational entities, while in a unitary system, power is concentrated at the central government level. **Let's compare the federal system of Canada and the unitary system of China based on some major differences:**

#### **1. Distribution of Power:**

**Canada (Federal):** In Canada, power is divided between the federal government and provincial governments. Provinces have their own jurisdiction over areas like education, healthcare, and natural resources.

**China (Unitary):** China follows a unitary system where most political authority is centralized at the national level. Local governments and provinces derive their authority from the central government.

## **2. Autonomy of Subnational Entities:**

**Canada (Federal):** Provincial governments in Canada have significant autonomy and legislative powers. They can enact laws on matters within their jurisdiction and have control over resources.

**China (Unitary):** Local governments in China have limited autonomy compared to provinces in Canada. Their authority is subject to the directives of the central government, which exercises considerable control.

## **3. Constitution and Division of Powers:**

**Canada (Federal):** Canada has a written constitution that clearly outlines the division of powers between the federal government and provinces. Matters not specified in the constitution are generally under federal jurisdiction.

**China (Unitary):** China's constitution also includes a division of powers, but it is less detailed than Canada's. Ultimately, central government authority supersedes local autonomy.

## **4. Representation in National Governance:**

**Canada (Federal):** In Canada, provinces are represented in the national government through the Senate, where each province has a fixed number of seats.

**China (Unitary):** China's national governance structure is less influenced by regional representation. The National People's Congress has representatives from provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions, but central control remains strong.

## **5. Subnational Legal Systems:**

**Canada (Federal):** Provinces in Canada have their own legal systems, including their own courts and laws, which can differ from federal laws in certain areas.

**China (Unitary):** While local legal systems exist in China, they operate within the framework set by the central legal system, which holds ultimate authority.

## **6. Resource Management:**

**Canada (Federal):** Provinces in Canada have authority over many natural resources within their boundaries, including forests, minerals, and energy resources.

**China (Unitary):** The central government in China maintains control over key natural resources, often making decisions that affect local economies.

## **7. Cultural and Ethnic Diversity:**

**Canada (Federal):** Canada's federal system accommodates cultural and linguistic diversity among provinces, recognizing the unique identities of Quebec and other regions.

**China (Unitary):** China's unitary system emphasizes national unity and often downplays or assimilates cultural and ethnic diversity within the framework of a single Chinese identity.

**In conclusion,** Canada's federal system emphasizes the distribution of power and autonomy to provinces, while China's unitary system centralizes authority in the national government. These

differing approaches reflect the countries' historical, cultural, and political contexts, shaping their governance structures and relationships between central and subnational entities.

**Q4. Do you think that proportional representation is a better electoral system than others? Give reasons for your answer.**

**Ans.** Whether proportional representation (PR) is a better electoral system than others depends on the specific context and goals of a given country's political landscape. PR has its advantages and disadvantages, and the choice of an electoral system should align with a country's priorities and values. **Here are some reasons for and against proportional representation:**

**Advantages of Proportional Representation:**

**Representation of Diverse Views:** PR tends to provide more accurate representation of the diversity of political views within a country. Smaller parties and minority groups have a better chance of gaining representation, which can lead to a more inclusive political landscape.

**Avoidance of Wasted Votes:** PR reduces the number of wasted votes, as parties that receive a certain percentage of the vote are likely to gain some representation. This can discourage strategic voting and promote broader participation.

**Less Extreme Policies:** PR often leads to coalition governments where parties must negotiate and compromise. This can moderate policy decisions and prevent extreme or polarizing policies from being enacted.

**Increased Voter Engagement:** PR can engage more voters since smaller parties have a viable chance of representation. Citizens might feel more invested in the political process when they see their preferred parties gaining seats.

**Disadvantages of Proportional Representation:**

**Potential for Instability:** PR can lead to frequent changes in coalition governments, which might hinder long-term policy planning and stability.

**Difficult Decision-Making:** Coalition governments may struggle to make decisive decisions due to the necessity of accommodating various parties' interests.

**Lack of Local Representation:** Some PR systems might focus on national-level representation, which could lead to a disconnect between representatives and their local constituencies.

**Fragmentation:** PR can result in the proliferation of smaller parties, making it harder for any single party to gain a clear majority. This can lead to challenges in forming stable governments.

**Difficulty in Accountability:** In multi-party systems, it might be difficult for voters to attribute responsibility for policy outcomes to a single party, making accountability less clear.

**Context Matters:**

The effectiveness of PR as an electoral system depends on the country's size, political culture, party system, and other unique factors. It might work well in one country but not in another. Some countries, especially those with a history of diverse opinions and a desire for inclusivity, might find PR

beneficial. Others might prioritize stable governance and local representation, leading them to opt for different systems like first-past-the-post or mixed-member proportional representation.

**In conclusion**, whether proportional representation is better than other electoral systems is a subjective question. The choice of an electoral system should be informed by careful consideration of a country's political goals, history, and societal dynamics. Each system has its strengths and weaknesses, and the key is to select the one that best aligns with the country's values and objectives.

**Q5. What is the role of political parties in democratic polity? Distinguish between a multi-party and one-party systems.**

**Ans. Role of Political Parties in Democratic Polity:**

Political parties play a crucial role in democratic polities as they serve as the primary means through which citizens can participate in the political process and influence government decisions. **The role of political parties in a democratic system includes:**

**Representation:** Political parties represent diverse interests, ideologies, and perspectives within society. They aggregate and articulate these viewpoints to present a clear policy agenda to voters.

**Elections and Accountability:** Parties contest elections and offer candidates for various offices. This provides voters with choices and allows them to hold parties accountable for their performance in government.

**Policy Formulation:** Political parties develop policy platforms based on their ideologies and priorities. They present their proposed solutions to societal challenges, helping citizens make informed choices during elections.

**Government Formation:** In systems with parliamentary governance, the party or coalition with a majority often forms the government. This connection between parties and government ensures that policies are consistent with party agendas.

**Oversight and Critique:** Parties in opposition serve as checks on the ruling party's actions. They critique government policies, propose alternatives, and hold the government accountable for its decisions.

**Participation and Mobilization:** Political parties engage citizens in the political process through rallies, campaigns, and grassroots activities. They mobilize voters, encouraging them to participate in elections and civic activities.

**Stability and Consensus:** Parties provide stability to democratic systems by offering structured processes for political competition. Through negotiation and consensus-building, parties help resolve societal conflicts.

**Multi-Party vs. One-Party Systems:**

**Multi-Party System:**

In a multi-party system, multiple political parties compete for electoral support, and no single party consistently gains an absolute majority. This system encourages a diversity of opinions, provides

choices to voters, and often results in coalition governments where parties must negotiate to form governing majorities.

**One-Party System:**

In a one-party system, a single political party dominates the political landscape, and other parties are either prohibited or marginalized. The ruling party exercises significant control over government institutions, and opposition is limited or suppressed. This system can lead to lack of political pluralism, limited accountability, and a potential concentration of power.

**Key Differences:**

**Competition and Choice:**

**Multi-Party:** Provides a wide range of political choices and encourages competition among parties.

**One-Party:** Offers limited political choices, often with only one dominant party.

**Pluralism:**

**Multi-Party:** Embraces political pluralism, allowing diverse viewpoints and ideas.

**One-Party:** Tends to limit political diversity and pluralism.

**Governance:**

**Multi-Party:** Often leads to coalition governments that require negotiation and compromise.

**One-Party:** Ruling party exercises significant control without the need for coalition partners.

**Accountability:**

**Multi-Party:** Offers a built-in mechanism for accountability through opposition parties.

**One-Party:** Accountability might be limited due to lack of effective opposition.

**Participation:**

**Multi-Party:** Encourages higher citizen engagement and participation due to the availability of choices.

**One-Party:** Participation might be restricted due to lack of political competition.

**In conclusion**, political parties are integral to democratic governance as they represent citizens, formulate policies, and enable participation. Multi-party systems promote pluralism and choice, while one-party systems can concentrate power and limit political diversity. The choice between these systems often depends on a country's political culture, history, and societal context.

**Q6. Explain the changing nature of nation state in the context of globalization.**

**Ans.** The concept and nature of the nation-state have evolved significantly in the context of globalization. Globalization refers to the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of economies, societies, cultures, and political systems across national boundaries. **This phenomenon has brought about various changes to the traditional notion of the nation-state:**

**Economic Interdependence:** Globalization has led to increased economic interdependence among nations. National economies are now closely linked through trade, investment, and supply chains, making it difficult for states to remain entirely self-sufficient.

**Diminished Sovereignty:** The traditional notion of complete sovereignty of nation-states has been challenged by globalization. International agreements, trade organizations, and global financial institutions often impose limitations on the autonomy of states in making certain decisions.

**Multilateral Governance:** Global challenges such as climate change, terrorism, and pandemics require collective responses. Nation-states are increasingly participating in international organizations and treaties to address these issues, leading to a shift from purely national decision-making to multilateral cooperation.

**Cultural Exchange:** Globalization has facilitated the exchange of ideas, cultures, and information across borders. This has led to the emergence of global cultures, hybrid identities, and a blurring of traditional cultural boundaries.

**Migration and Diasporas:** Increased mobility and migration have created transnational communities and diasporas that maintain connections with their home countries while integrating into host societies. This challenges the idea of a nation-state being tied to a single territory.

**Technology and Communication:** Advances in technology and communication have enabled instant global connectivity. Social media and the internet allow individuals to form virtual communities that transcend national boundaries.

**Human Rights and Cosmopolitanism:** The emphasis on universal human rights and cosmopolitan values challenges the exclusivity of the nation-state. Global norms and principles often transcend national identities.

**Global Challenges:** Issues like environmental degradation, terrorism, and economic crises require collaborative solutions that go beyond national borders. Nation-states must cooperate to effectively address these challenges.

**Transnational Corporations:** The rise of multinational corporations with operations in multiple countries has shifted economic power and influence away from nation-states.

**Global Governance:** As international institutions and organizations gain prominence, they exert influence over national policies and decisions, altering the traditional power dynamics of the nation-state.

**In summary,** globalization has transformed the traditional nation-state by challenging its sovereignty, redefining cultural identities, and necessitating collaboration on global issues. While nation-states remain important actors on the global stage, their roles and functions have adapted to the interconnected world, where international forces and global networks play an increasingly significant role in shaping political, economic, and cultural dynamics.