

# Nature and Scope of Comparative Politics

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# Comparative Government vs Comparative Politics

- Though Comparative Government and Comparative Politics are two different subjects, yet the modern scientists have laid emphasis on the combined study of both for obvious reason. Further, comparative method has been used for the study of both .
- Aristotle, well known Greek Philosopher attempted for the first time to understand the state, not so well known idea in those days. He went on to study and analyze almost 158 Constitutions to arrive at his famous classification of “Government” into 6 broad types depending upon the number and the purpose of power beholden by the people.

# Comparative Politics:Essence

- Comparative politics studies a broader range of political activity, including government and their institutions as well as other forms of organizations not directly related national government,e.g,tribes,communities,associations,unions.
- In other words it studies political as well as non-political actors and their attendant institutions.

# Meaning of Comparative Politics

- Edward Freeman, “Comparative Politics is the comparative analysis of the various forms of governments and diverse political institutions”.
- Michael Curtis, “Comparative Politics is concerned with significant regularities, similarities and differences in the working of Political institutions and in political behaviour.”

# Growth of the Discipline

- Comparison with others has been a common habit in humans. We compare many things with others to make the right decision, and the history of this human trait is as old as the existence of human civilization. The same applies in the case of comparative politics.
- In the book named *The Politics*, written by Aristotle, has the mention of comparative politics. In this book, he compares “constitutions”, by introducing his famous typology. Aristotle made a comparison of 158 countries, and that’s how comparative politics was started.

# Historical Growth

As civilization progresses and new changes in the state system occurred, Comparative Politics underwent broadly **five phases** of transformations to allow political scientists to grasp phenomenon in more subtle ways:

- State and System Theories
- Cultural Theories
- Developmental Theories
- Class theories
- Political Economy Theories

# Characteristics of Comparative Politics

- Descriptive Studies
- Historical-legalistic institutional studies
- Parochial
- Static
- Monographic

# Approaches to Comparative Politics

***Institutional***-an approach to the study of politics and government that focuses more on structure and dynamics of governing institutions (comparison of formal instt.)

***Structural***- an approach to study of politics and government that emphasises the relationships among groups and networks within larger system

***cultural***-an approach to the study of politics and government based on understanding the influence of culture and cultural norms(how cultural norms and practices support or undermine different political preferences and forms)

***Rational Choice***-an approach to the study of politics and government based on the idea that individuals work to maximize their benefits and minimize their costs.(ability to model the essential political actions and make predictions).

***Interpretative***- an approach to the study of politics and government based on the argument that politics is formed by the ideas we have about it



# Nature of Comparative Politics

- Analytical and Empirical investigation
- Comparative study of the formal and informal structures
- Study of infra-structures
- Emphasis on the study of Developing Societies
- Emphasis on the Inter-disciplinary method of study
- Value-free study
- Quest of theory building
- Horizontal and vertical comparison

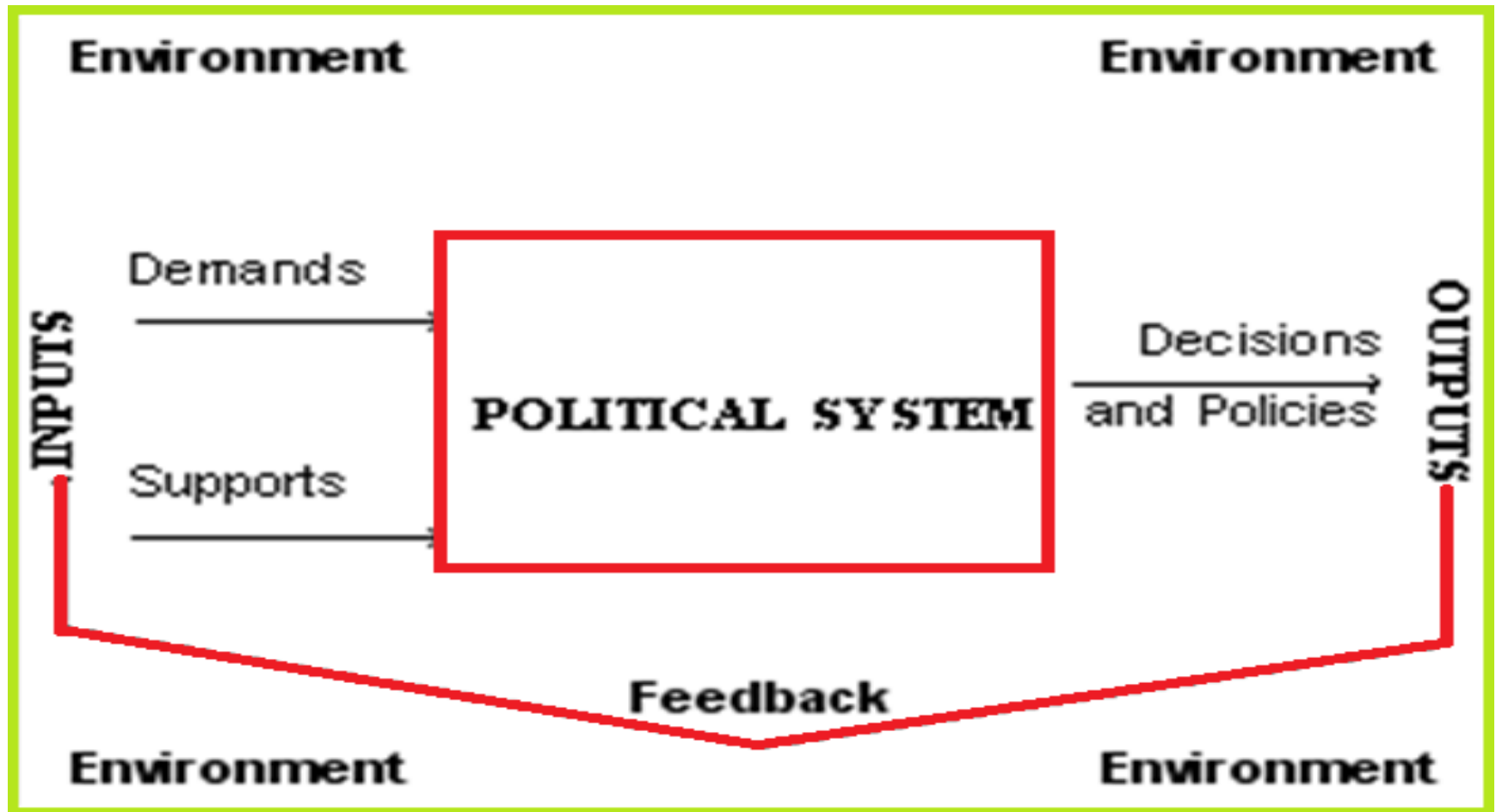
# Scope of Comparative Politics

- All political structures-includes the study of all the formal and informal, governmental, and extra-governmental institutions and their structure;
- Functional-the knowledge of how all the formal and informal institutes work within the country;
- Study of political behaviour- the study of voting behavior, political participation, leadership recruitment, elite behavior, mass politics, etc.;
- Study of similarity and differences-How two countries are similar and how are they different from each other; and
- Study of all political systems-the political system of any country defines its nature and the voting culture.

# Scope of Comparative Politics: in nutshell

1. Comparative study of Political systems
2. Study of constitutional systems
3. Study of Political culture
4. Study of political Socialization
5. Study of political Ideologies
6. Study of political Participation
7. Study of interest groups
8. Study of power, Influence and authority
9. Study of Political Elites, Political Violence and Political Corruption.
10. Study of Political Processes
11. Study of Problems of modernization and urbanization
12. Study of the role of the Bureaucracy □
13. Study of the political Activities

# System Theory: How it works



# Problems of Comparative Politics

- ❖ Lack of common terminology ;
- ❖ Problems of fact-finding ;
- ❖ Wide range of variables;
- ❖ Gap between Constitutional Forms and Political Realities ;
- ❖ Problem of inter-connection between values behaviour;
- ❖ Fickle mindedness of Man;
- ❖ Problem of defining of the boundaries;and
- ❖ Universally acceptable results are not possible.

# References

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