

What is comparative politics ?

Prepared by : Madam/ Sihem Zeroual

There are major sub-fields of political science :

International relations , political theory , political systems , public administration , and comparative politics , this later is our lecture .

What do you mean by comparative politics ?

Definition of comparative politics :

Comparative politics : concerns the values , institutions and policies of two or more governments . It attempts to uncover how different states of governments carry out their authority . World government politics is divided into several categories . Some are identified as liberal democracies , others are considered limited democracies , while others remain socialists . Comparative politics includes the study of features common to all political systems . For instance , a government must be legitimate , but legitimacy , the moral right to rule , may mean something different to a socialist state because of the different principles and policies . Similarly , legitimacy may depend on other political concepts and developments on any given government . Keeping public order in a given country , For instance , depends upon the social structure of its society . Students of Comparative Politics compare the industrialized countries with undeveloped or underdeveloped ones .

- studying politics of in this way . help us examine major questions of political science , for example do some countries have democratic regimes whereas others experience authoritarianism ?

Why and how do regimes change ?

Why do some countries experience affluence and growth , but others endure poverty and decline ?

What's to compare ? we are going to compare the following elements : comparing states , comparing regimes, comparing societies , comparing political economies , comparing political conflict and competition .

Comparing states :

We focus on their major geographic and demographic features , the origins and development of each state , and their political regimes .

- before we analyse all these , let us first define state .

- State is defined in **Grolier's Encyclopedia of Knowledge** « as the highest comprehensive political association having a reconized claim to authority .»

Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia defienes state « as group of people inhabiting a specific territroy and living according to a common legal and political authority. »

- Both definitions are based on the components of state :

Population , territory , political authority , sovereignty .

- The modern concept of state in Western political science became more complicated , one of the most authoritative source on the idea of state is the work of the German political sociologist , **Max Weber** , he argued that :

« The state can't be defined in terms of its ends ... Ultimately , one can define the modern state only in terms of the specific means peculiar to it , as to every political association manely , the use of physical force . »

- We nead also to defrentiate between state and some terms such as country and government .

The concept of state is narrower than the nation of country which en compasses the territory and people livnig within a state .

- Political scientists also distinguish between the state and the government , considering the government to the leadership or elite that administrate the state.

- So what are the major indicators of comparison ?

States can differ in many ways , including geographical and demographic index , originis , length of escistence , strength , and historical development ...

Geographical indicator : states differ in their location ,(if has an important geographical comparing with others states) and also states differ in their size (it is a small state or a large state) .

- states also vary in their natural endowments such as arable land , mineral resources , navigable rivers , and access to the sea , well endowed states may have advantages over poorly endowed ones , but resource endowments do not necessarily determine the prosperity of state . Japan for example has bcome one of the world's dominant economic powers . despite having relatively few natural resources .

- Demographic index : states differ on their population (some states have a great number of population such as China,India, others have small number of population such (Gulf states)

The originis and historical development of state :

Some states such as China – France and the United Kingdom have long histories of statehood, others experienced the creation of a unified state only after long periods of division.

Many countries in the developing world became states after they were decolonized such as Nigeria became independent state relatively recently, in 1960

The level of organization effectiveness, and stability: The power of a state depends in part on its **legitimacy**, or the extent to which its authority is regarded as right and proper, i.e.: widespread conviction that government has a moral and legal right to govern. Political scientists have long observed that there are different sources of a state's legitimacy. State authority may draw on **traditional legitimacy**, in which the state is obeyed because it has a long tradition of being obeyed. Alternatively, a state may be considered legitimate because of **charismatic legitimacy**, that is, its identification with the magnetic appeal of a leader or movement. Finally, states may gain legitimacy on the basis of **relational – legal legitimacy**, a system of laws and procedures that becomes highly institutionalized. Although most modern states derive their legitimacy from rational – legal sources, both traditional and charismatic legitimacy often continue to play a role. In Japan and the United Kingdom, for example, the monarchy is a source of traditional legitimacy that complements the rational – legal legitimacy of the state. Some postcolonial states in the developing world have had considerable trouble establishing legitimacy. Often colonial powers created states that cut across ethnic boundaries or contain hostile ethnic groups, as in Nigeria and Iran.

The ability to preserve their sovereignty and carry out the basic functions of maintaining law and order. Sovereignty means legal independence of countries including the doctrine of noninterference by one country in the internal affairs of another, there are two faces of sovereignty internal and external, and according to the ability to preserve their sovereignty, we can distinguish between two kinds of states: **strong states** can perform the basic tasks of defending their borders from outside attacks and defending their authority from internal nonstate rivals. **Weak states** have trouble carrying out those basic tasks and often suffer from endemic internal violence, a poor infrastructure, and the inability to collect taxes and enforce the rule of law.

High levels of corruption are often a symptom of state weakness. Taken to an extreme, weak states may experience a complete loss of legitimacy and power and may be overwhelmed by anarchy and violence. Political scientists refer to those relatively.