

Introduction to Human Sciences

Political Science Lecture II

The Concept of State

- A **state** is an organization that has a number of political functions and tasks, including providing ***security***, ***extracting revenues***, and ***forming rules*** for resolving disputes and ***allocating resources*** within the boundaries of the ***territory*** in which it exercises jurisdiction.
- Force, persuasion, manipulation, exchange are all valid tools of state craft
- Are States the Most Important agents of Political Decision Making?
- Sovereignty and Legitimacy
- Can the concept of state completely disappear?

Nation

- A nation is a group of people with a sense of unity based on the importance the group attributes to a shared trait, attribute, or custom.
- Language, religion, ethnicity, race, and/or culture are often the foundations of national identity
- Nations generally consist of people whose sense of unity is based on something shared by virtue of the group into which they are born
- A nation arises when significance is attached to that which the group shares and around which a feeling of unity develops

State and Nation: Interaction and Relation

- Nations may or may not possess their own states
- National identity, or nationalism, may precede the emergence of a nation's state
- National identity may exist even though a nation lives within the territory of a separate state rather than within the borders of a state conforming to the nation
- State policies can encourage indigenous nationalist identities in one context while weakening them in another
- Multinational states - numerous ethnic, language, and religious groups with varying degrees of nationalist sentiment

Comparative Politics

- Study of how governments, political groups, political procedures, and citizenship vary across countries or time periods
- Uniqueness- CP-defined by both its substance and method
 - Substance: Structures, Actors and Processes
 - Method: What it does and how it does
- Study of foreign countries- individual countries
- Systematic comparison of different countries- aims at theory building and testing
- Method of research
- What CP does: Describe, Explain and Predict

Questions

- How to distinguish different regimes?
- What accounts for stability and regime change?
- What accounts for particular outcomes?
- What is the best form of government?

Traditional Comparative Politics

- Pre World War-II
- Narrow focus- powers and functions of state and its institutions
- Legalistic- formal analysis of constitutions and documents
- Ethnocentric- study of formal institutions- Western Europe, North America
 - West- the model for evaluation
- Descriptive rather than explanatory
- Ignored practice of politics and privileged official account of politics
- Case study

New Comparative Politics

- Post WW II- Behavioural Revolution in social science
- Broadening of both geography of focus as well as content of politics
- Non-western
 - Nuanced analysis of the non-western
- Move away from formal institutions to practice of politics
 - Included less formally structured agencies and processes
- Methodological advances- large-scale study, systematic collection of data
- Systems theory and Structural functionalism

Back to Institutions – Late 1960s

- Cyclic process- institutions- critique-functions-back to institutions
- Counter reaction- return of institutions- new institutionalisms
- Institutions as explanatory factors
- Individuals-actors- rational- RCT
- Contracting of geographical scope and scope of CP
 - Regionalists, specialists emerged- compartmentalization
- From universal to middle-range theory
- Small- N survey and case studies

Ethnic Conflict and Civil Life

- Why Hindus and Muslims had riots in some parts of India but they conducted their lives reasonably peacefully in others?
- Examines link between structure of civil society and communal violence
 - Focus is on inter-communal networks of civic life and not intra-communal
 - Associational forms of civic engagement
 - Everyday forms of civic engagement

Varying Levels of Violence

- Studying violent locations alone will not help explain
- Variations within India
 - Rural-urban
 - Certain cities compared to others
 - In some states- certain town more prone to violence than others
- Hindu-Muslim violence- city specific- hence appropriate units of analysis

Cities

- Calicut – Aligarh
- Lucknow – Hyderabad
- Surat - Ahmedabad

Controls

- Selection as similar as possible
 - Aligarh and Calicut based on population only
 - Hyderabad and Lucknow- previous Muslim rule and cultural similarities
 - Ahmedabad and Surat- in the same state (sharing history, language, and culture but not violence)

City Selection: Controls

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Why the Control?

- Popular political discourse and in theories about Muslim political behaviour
- The size of the community is considered to be highly significant
 - BJP for instance constantly argues- “Muslim appeasement,”- reduces incentives to build bridges and consequently higher communal polarization
 - Muslim politicians reverse this- higher the numbers of Muslims in a town, greater the political threat felt by the leaders of the Hindu community and higher the hostility
- Rudolphs also argue that when a town or constituency has a Muslim majority or plurality, Muslims typically favour confessional parties, not the centrist, inter-communal parties
 - Support centrist parties- when low in numbers

Conclusion

- Research suggests that Hindu-Muslim civic networks determined the outcome in the short-to-medium run
- However long run inter-communal networks were politically constructed
- Where ever- Hindu-Muslim differences were the dominant axis of local politics, national movement could do nothing
- Elsewhere- it was successful in forging H-M unity

Methodology

- Levels of analysis
 - National Level (large-n analysis)
 - Source: Times of India 1950-96
 - Reports on Hindu-Muslim riots
 - interpretive reading- report supported by the description of the symbols and issues involved
 - City Level

Methodology II

- Documentary and archival research
- Interviews at two levels—elite and cross-section
 - 25-30 interviews- elite (political, administrative, religious, business, educational)
 - Cross-section- 100 households from each city
- Five neighbourhoods in each city
 - Two Hindu-dominated, one violence-prone, the other peaceful; two Muslim-dominated, one violence-prone, the other peaceful;
 - one or two “mixed” neighbourhoods
- Carried out by Hindu and Muslim RA
- Two-to-three-hour conversation on questions specified in the questionnaire

Aim of Survey

- Mixed method- survey + oral history collection
 - Those who survey do not collect oral narratives and those who do oral history do not sample
- Two Different purposes
 - 1) study Hindu and Muslim attitudes toward politics, administration, police, religion, and history and especially to identify the everyday forms of engagement between the two communities in neighborhoods
 - 2) respond to some standard criticisms of social science research on ethnic conflicts- where focus is on institutionalised form of elite politics ignoring mass politics