

## Section 5. Political science

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*Kuppaeva B.,*

*Candidate of political science, Associate Professor,*

*Department of History of Kazakhstan*

*and Culture of the Peoples of Kazakhstan,*

*Kazakh National Agrarian University, Kazakhstan, Almaty*

### PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS OF COMPARATIVE STUDIES

**Abstract.** Comparative research today is an objective need, a necessary and living reality. Comparative analysis makes it possible to understand the political practice of various countries, to carry out a political forecast, helps to identify valuable experience, makes it possible to take into account the negative aspects, the inefficiency of certain political decisions. Comparative research allows you to go beyond a particular country, to make broader scientific generalizations.

**Keywords:** comparison, method of comparative analysis, comparative political science, types of comparative studies, methods of comparative analysis extrapolation of scientific knowledge, problem of incompatibility, non-identity of political science categories, non-identity of political terms, Galton's problem.

**Comparative analysis methods.** Comparison, the method of comparative analysis, is becoming an integral part of political science. Its range of applications in the study of politics has made comparative analysis central to political science. Its importance is constantly growing. Its primary objectives are: to develop a knowledge system of governance and politics in general; to evaluate political experiences, institutions, behaviour and processes in terms of cause-effect relationships; and to predict events, trends and consequences. Comparative research performs three functions: interprets variables in terms of analytical frameworks; identifies problem areas and trends; and predicts institutional trends and processes. Comparative research has to follow the following steps: 1) collecting and describing facts based on and subject to carefully constructed classification patterns; 2) identifying and describing similarities and

differences; 3) formulating experimental hypotheses; and 4) testing hypotheses through empirical observations to develop initial ideas. One important aspect of comparative political science research is data collection. Data collection requires **a certain logical structure, an analytical framework.**

The advantages of an analytical framework are the following: the study of a political system on the basis of the proposed categories makes it possible to compare it with other systems on the basis of the same categories. Analytical frameworks allow the study of political processes in different systems through comparison; comparative research reveals more fully the tools for achieving goals; comparative research reveals areas where intended actions may cause unintended consequences. The American political scientist Roy Macridis showed the possibilities

of comparative analysis by elaborating a framework of four main analytical categories of political systems: a) deliberative process and decision-making as a function of politics, b) forms of power and its social and political dimensions, c) ideology and its role in political motivation and institutional organisation, and d) organisation of political power. Systemic and structural-functional analysis play a particularly important role in comparative political analysis [1].

David Easton described the main features of systems analysis of the political system in the following way: 1) The political system is a series of interactions through which values are distributed in society. Easton emphasises the element of an “authoritative (binding) allocation of values” in the political system. 2) The political system has a “responsive” and “self-regulating” capacity to modify, adjust internal processes and structures to avoid self-destruction. 3) A political system is an open system, amenable to change under the influence of external environmental factors. 4) The environment of a political system may be intrasocietal and extrasocietal. 5) A political system can remain stable if there is a balance between “input” and “output” impulses [2].

Gabriel Almond’s structural-functional approach complemented the systemic systems approach. According to Almond, the inputs and outputs of a political system should be analysed in terms of the functions embedded within the system. Who, what structures, what functions do they perform and how? Almond is interested in the role played by the stable structures of the political system. Almond attempts to address the stability and permanence of structures by naming the functions that contribute to the maintenance of the system – regulatory, extractive, distributive and reactive [3]. The structural-functional approach shows high efficiency in the comparative analysis of political systems, operates with a whole set of variables, offers a number of standardised categories successfully applied in the analysis of different political systems. Some political scientists argue that the structural-

functional approach to politics is conservative in its methodology, as if it is biased towards supporting the status quo, because it describes a set of institutions that exist at a given time. But even taking into account this limitation of structural functionalism, it has enriched comparative political science. The representatives of this approach have more clearly identified the complexity of relations between social and political phenomena; promoted the importance of the functions of the political system and focused attention on the entire social system as the medium for political phenomena.

The American political scientist Karl Deutsch has developed a cybernetic model of the political system. Deutsch likens the political system to a self-adapting cybernetic system. Governance consists of piloting, which depends on information about the position of the target, the distance left to cover and the results of previous actions. Deutsch analyses the system through the prism of feedback, i.e. in terms of controlling actions based on the experience of previous mistakes. In this theory it is information that determines the effectiveness of power. The government acts as a cybernetic system: it makes decisions independently on the basis of information about the external environment and about its own state. It is necessary for information to circulate throughout the system, nerve it with numerous networks, “nerves of government” [4]. There is a need for power to be informed and to be able to inform for effective governance. It is necessary that there are various communication networks, information channels, movement of information from power to citizens and from citizens to power.

The abovementioned concepts open new horizons in political science. These approaches are very useful for macroanalysis problems, for studying the variables on which the preservation of the type of system depends, and they are very suitable for systematic empirical analysis.

Also, the systems approach in comparative political science allows comprehensive coverage of such problems in comparative political science as models

of democracy and dictatorship, horizontal and vertical, functional and territorial separation of powers, essences and forms of state, political institutions, institutions of political leadership, legislative and judicial institutions, electoral systems, political cultures in a comparative perspective.

The scope of comparative political science is extremely varied. The object of comparative analysis can be the territorial organization of power in different countries, which is characterized by different forms of vertical and horizontal distribution of power, different forms of political institutions.

The comparativist's field of vision includes the problem of correlation of unitarianism, federalism, confederation with different types of political system and regimes. The US and the Soviet Union had a federal form of government, but America was ruled by a democratic system, while the USSR had an authoritarian model. Are there any correlations between the form of government and the type of political system? Comparative political science tries to answer this question.

A topical issue in political comparativism is the problem of development and political modernisation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Modernisation is understood as the transformation from a traditional society to a transition society or from a modernising society to an industrial society. Modernisation presupposes certain types of political system necessary for different stages of political development.

Comparative studies of political behaviour have yielded significant results in studying changes in citizens' values. Previously, studies of political behaviour focused on the correlation between the development of industrial society and the changing values of the population. More recently, this field has expanded with an analysis of the process of changing values that accompanies the development of post-industrial society.

In this sense, Ronald Inglehart's idea of the movement of value orientations in the direction of post materialism is interesting. His interpretation of changes in the value system is based on two assumptions. In-

glehart suggests that priorities in society are formed in accordance with an orientation towards scarcity of something: people attach more value to what is relatively scarce in society. And second, Inglehart assumes that a person's own values and attitudes reflect the conditions under which they were socialised. The combination of these two attitudes creates a general model for the formation of value orientations: a person's basic value orientations are formed early in life as a response to the socio-economic conditions (personal and social) of that period and, once formed, these values remain unchanged.

Inglehart believes that the socio-economic conditions transforming Western industrial societies are also changing the value priorities of the population. People of the older generation emphasise the importance of material goals of society, such as economic welfare, public safety, law and order, religious values and strong national defence. The younger generation in Western countries looks to post-material goals – self-expression, personal freedom, social equality, self-realisation and maintaining quality of life [5.]

Another facet of the application of comparative political science is changes in the electoral process. Elections are a central element in the mechanism of representation of modern democracies. Changes in the relevance of factors influencing voter decisions are becoming one of the main themes of research on the electoral process. Political choice in most Western democracies has traditionally been determined by class, religious and other social factors. In the second edition of *Political Man*, Seymour Martin Lipset using comparative tools, showed the declining influence of voter class on voting outcomes in a number of Western democracies. Similar comparative studies have been conducted in Australia, Britain, Germany and Japan. The main conclusion of studies of the electoral process is that social position does not determine a person's political position. M. Franklin, using the example of 14 Western democracies, revealed a blurring of the rigid correlation of social structure with voting outcomes. M. Franklin's comparative analysis of the electoral process was sum-

marized by the following conclusion – practically in all the countries we studied the influence of social differentiation on a voter's choice is noticeable.

Also, comparative researchers have documented an increased influence of a candidate's image on Americans' voting decisions. Comparing a number of Western democracies, there is an increase in the personalisation of election campaigns in Western countries: photographs, interviews, meetings with people on the streets, and televised debates.

All these changes in the electoral process lead to an "individualisation of politics". Citizens try to figure out politics for themselves and make their own political decisions.

Comparative research has provided a unique opportunity to examine the process of establishing democratic party systems in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia. New democracies explore their formation process, examining how sympathy for new parties is strengthened, how images of new parties are created, and how citizens learn to make choices and learn about representative democracy.

### **Types of comparative research**

Comparisons are structurally different depending on the number of objects being compared, on the number of grounds on which objects are compared and on the nature of the relationships being revealed.

Plato does not compare ancient polities in general, but is interested in the forms of government. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba compare five nations, defining the domain of political culture for analysis. Maurice Duverger compares political parties and party systems, and Daniel J. Elazar concentrates on the modes of territorial organization, which is the basis for comparing different federal systems. Arend Lijphart explores the conditions for democracy in multicultural societies.

There are various typologies of comparisons. One of them is a typology of possible comparisons. The first type of such scholarly analysis is the morphological type of comparison. In this case, phenomena are compared according to structures and functions. An

example of morphological comparison is the comparison of "polities" with the help of the classical triad "monarchy – aristocracy – democracy". The next type is a substantive comparison, which compares not the forms but their content. Comparisons of this type are very popular in the study of Eastern, post-Soviet and similar systems. The mythological type of comparison is based on contrasting "antitheses". Examples of such comparisons are the categories Europe, West, Civilisation, etc. with their counterparts Asia, East, Barbarism, etc. Integral comparisons imply a comprehensive assessment of the nature and degree of influence of the geographical environment, economy, culture on political institutions. And the reverse impact of policies on these environments

Comparisons can be made on a small temporal scale. Comparisons are also made between similar events in political history. An evolutionary type of comparison is also made, i.e. political phenomena are compared with a certain stage of evolutionary development. The diffusive and genetic types of comparison, pseudomorphic and pseudo-substantial types are also distinguished.

Russian comparatist L. V. Smorgunov offers his typology of comparative studies, dividing them into "case-studies", binary regional, global and cross-temporal [6]. Soviet philosopher V. I. Barton distinguishes qualitative and quantitative comparison; incidental, deployed, universal and ideal forms of comparison; monorelative and polyrelative comparison [7].

Another facet of the problem field of comparative political science, the methodological peculiarity, according to Russian political scientist Mitrokhina T. N., is extrapolation of scientific knowledge, the essence of which consists in borrowing cognitive systems from other sciences [8]. This problem is also noted by the American political science researcher J. Jackson [9]. As a result of such borrowing of scientific knowledge, political science, political comparativism was enriched with cybernetic models and such technological terms as "process", "sys-

tem”, “element”, “feedback”. From economic theory, rational choice theory has been taken into political comparativism. From mathematics, Boolean algebra came to comparative political science, the essence of which is to analyse a large body of data on different countries by means of logical addition and multiplication operations. Factorial and correlation analyses were borrowed from statics, synergetics and systems analysis from the natural sciences. From psychology, psychometric methods as well as scale analysis, from sociology, sociometry, and from probability theory, sampling analysis of the general population. The extrapolative use of methodological techniques from other sciences makes it possible to extend the range of research into political phenomena.

The question of the identity of the content of the main categories is among the debatable issues discussed in comparativism. A theoretical concept formulated on the grounds of one political community, when transferred to another, ceases to work. For example, the classical definition of a political party as a voluntary mass organisation is inadequate when studying US political life. In Russia, where personified parties operate, this notion also undergoes adjustments. J. Lapalombara also notes that comparativists are uncomfortable with the fact that political terms carry different meanings in different contexts. This point is made by scholars of democratisation processes in former communist countries, where the term is associated with an anti-democratic system of comparison [10].

The Russian political scientist E. N. Moschelkov. He believes that the problem of incompatibility, non-identity of political science categories is caused by differences in philosophical and intellectual traditions in different countries. As an example, he cites the notion of “authoritarian – democratic” widely used in the political lexicon. In political encyclopaedias and dictionaries in the West, ‘authoritarian’ is interpreted as a social anomaly, as the antipode of democracy. In Russia, the interpretations of authoritarianism and democracy are different. Since

the birth of Russian statehood in the ninth and tenth centuries, authoritarian forms of government have existed in Russia. It was the authoritarian form of power which allowed the territorial integrity of the vast country to be maintained. Thanks to centralisation, Russia survived the most difficult periods of its history. The Russian authoritarian form of power ensured the stability of society [11].

Russian political scientist K. S. Gadzhiev also pays attention to the problem of the lack of identity of political terms in different countries. He notes that grass-roots democracy in Russia may have a different content, different parameters than in the US: “The impartation and institutionalization of democratic forms of political self-organization of society on this or that national soil cannot be reduced to mechanical transplantation of ready-made norms, principles and institutions of Western democracy” [12]. Democracy can be institutionalised on a particular national level if democratic values become the behavioural guidelines of the majority of the population. “It is easy to erect a statue of freedom and put it up in Tiananmen Square. But to live by these assumptions, these attitudes, is quite another matter” [13].

Another problem in comparative political science is the need to conduct research at the intersection of political comparativism proper, world politics and world relations. Political comparativism today faces new challenges, new demands. This implies the inclusion of supranational and transnational interactions into the sphere of analysis. According to A. Yu. Melville, “literally before our eyes a fundamentally new transnational political environment is forming, functioning as if “above” traditional nation states” [14]. New actors in world relations are emerging. These are transnational corporations (TNC), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including international (INGOs), social, political and other movements, interest groups and individuals. These non-traditional actors in world politics are referred to as transnational actors (TNA). Non-traditional channels and instruments of transnational interac-

tions are emerging, including new information and communication technologies. Therefore, comparative political science is facing new dimensions of political processes and new research parameters.

In general comparative political science as a discipline has a growing tendency to separate into more or less self-sufficient groups, e.g. Europeanists, Latin Americans, Africanists, with little contact with each other. This is partly a consequence of growing specialisation, but also the result of increasing professionalism. Gabriel Almond has sadly remarked, albeit on the state of political science in general, that in political science groups are “tables” according to their ideological orientation (“right-wing” – “left-wing”) and methodology (“hard” – “soft” methods) (15). It is possible to imagine separate “tables” at which specialists by region with their particular European, Asian, Latin American or African cuisine are seated, and even within this framework there is a further division by scientific specialisation: those studying political parties dine separately from those studying public policy, those studying local government dine separately from those analysing electoral processes. The development of comparative political science has not only led to the isolation of regional specialists from one another, but within the same region there is also a trend towards greater self-sufficiency of fields of study, each with its own narrow network of links and its own set of academic journals. This all points to increasing fragmentation.

There is also a methodological debate in comparative political science around the benefits of comparing small numbers of cases (“small N”). A number of researchers emphasise the advantages of detailed, in-depth analysis of a small number of countries.

It is important to mention some of the particular problems that confront comparative political science. The first is whether states are still a meaningful unit of study. The absolute relevance of the country as a unit of analysis is questioned even without regard to the international context. Countries change, so temporal differences need to be borne in mind. If political institutions matter, then how can we com-

pare countries in which those very institutions are changing? Increasingly, researchers are having to abandon the unit of analysis as a country and isolate specific subclasses of variables. Arend Lijphart, for example, studies electoral systems and the political consequences of their functioning, rather than countries as such. This strategy is gaining acceptance, it suggests the possibility of experimenting with alternative units of analysis and creates the conditions for accounting for temporal differences [16].

One further challenge in comparative political science relates to the reliability of the measurement tools and indicators used to translate the findings from individual states into comparable operational categories. There are many examples where potentially erroneous or arbitrarily taken indicators have been given absolute status. For example, the indicators originally proposed by Lijphart as a means of elaborating his famous division of democracies into majoritarian (majority rule) and consensus (universal consent), which have subsequently been incorporated into many different studies. These indicators serve as the best means of distinguishing between the two types of democracy, they are not necessarily the only possible ones, it is necessary in any use to keep in mind the specific time period to which they have been applied. The disadvantage of comparative political science is that more attention is paid to the analysis of the relationship between variables than to the quality and reliability of those variables themselves. It is the scarcity of reliable comparable data that leads to the absolutization of those indicators that are available [16].

The current stage in the development of comparative political science is characterised by a collaboration of scholars with an interest in specific cases and contexts. For comparative studies, a clear limitation of the sphere on which the analysis will focus is essential. When examining the state apparatus, trade unions, women’s suffrage, the comparativist leaves out the contextual differences between countries. Context is often embedded in the subject and there-

fore requires special study. In political science, this kind of problem is called the Galton's problem.

One of the pressing problems of comparativism is to determine the parameters that lend themselves to comparison with one another. The objects of comparative analysis are political systems in their integrity, their forms, types and varieties. Political institutions, leadership institutions, legislatures, parties, electoral systems, mechanisms of political socialisation and culture are taken as objects of comparison.

Also among the cardinal questions of comparative political science are: what are the differences between the existing types of political systems with respect to their 'formative' function, how different types are established and how they are reinforced. It is generally accepted that the best system is democracy, so most comparative political research aims to study democracy: how to establish, maintain, adapt and improve it, as well as to counter threats to its existence.

Today, three new strands stand out in comparative studies: institutionalism, developmentalism (political and economic) and neo-institutionalism [17]. The first approach focuses on the specific mechanisms of the political system as such: presidential or parliamentary systems of government, unitary or federal polities, political parties and voting, commissions and elections. The second approach combines most theories of societal change. The third is a combination of the first two. The institutional approach forms the basis of comparative political science. Developmentalism, which calls itself the "new" comparative political science, focuses on the changes that occur in society rather than on the techniques of governance in politics, economics. And neo-institutionalism has returned the study of the functioning of the political system and states to the field of research.

By examining the political system, institutionalism sought to cover the whole range of problems: order and freedom of choice; individual and social interests; civil rights and duties; legislative and executive powers; the electoral system; the powers of courts and judges and

the advantages of written and unwritten constitutions, the advantages of a unitary state over a federal state, a parliamentary system over a presidential system; the evolution of local government, procedural rules of conduct in parliament, and political parties.

Institutionalism remains the mainstream approach in comparative political science. However, institutionalism proved unable to accept the undeniable divergence between institutionalist theory and practice when it came to establishing democratic systems in the newly independent states after the first and second world wars. It became clear that psychological, economic, social and organisational factors had to be studied beyond the institutional analysis. The democratic constitution of the Weimar Republic could not guarantee a functioning democracy. That is to say that institutionalism became inadequate when attempting to construct constitutions.

Developmentalism or "new" comparative political science with its emphasis on developmental problems emerged in the atmosphere of the post-war period. Two alternatives to development dominated comparative studies: modernisation theory and dependency theory. Modernisation theorists represented a group of comparative political science specialists, including Almond, Huntington, Apter, some of them combined individual case studies with broad-based analytical work on the comparative study of development processes. The proponents of the dependency theory include economists P. Baran, political scientists G. Kitching and C. Lees. For those in the first group, the formula "decolonisation plus growth plus democratisation" was a legitimate strategy for independence. The second group opted for a strategy of hegemony and domination. As a result, researchers using the same material from the same countries could come to completely opposite conclusions.

The criticism of modernisation theory and dependency theory has been that both theories treat politics as a reflection of economics or societal processes.

Neo-institutionalism combines the former institutionalism with development theories. Neo-

institutionalism analyses political behaviour, including electoral behaviour, the dynamics of success and failure of political parties, their significance for the state, problems of elites and democratisation.

The object of comparative research has been political parties, their functioning, bloc building, changing people's attitudes, and the role of elites, bureaucracies and politicians in different political regimes. While developmentalists stressed the need for economic growth as a condition for democracy, neo-institutionalism explored the challenges posed to the government by the negative consequences of growth, including environmental, adaptation of immigrants. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, phenomena such as separatism and religious sectarianism and fundamentalism intensified, none of which were predicted or could be explained by theories of social change [17].

Neo-institutionalism is receptive to economic analysis, for it deals with financial and monetary policy, banks, markets, globalisation. It also examines changes in the legislative process, shifts in party politics. Neo-institutionalism, compared to institutionalism, is more concerned with social and political theory as well as with political economy.

In comparative political science the search for suitable methods, units of comparison for data collection and processing, compilation of working hypotheses, and development of new techniques continues. Discussions continue around what is better: "small number of examples", detailed description of a single case, what are the advantages and disadvantages of big theories. In any case, comparative analysis makes political science more sensitive to the diversity of norms, values, institutions and social structures and to the interconnectedness of different forms of political behaviour.

Comparative study of modernisations. There have been two major projects in global comparativism. The first one is connected with large-scale comparisons of modern democratic polities. This is first of all a study of 114 polities by Robert A. Dahl. And the study by

Tatu Vanhanen – 119 countries in 1984, 147 in 1990 and 172 in 1997. Lijphart made a stricter comparison of democracies: 21 in 1984 and 32 in 1999.

The second set, this Stanford project, is the book *Crisis, Choice and Change. Historical Studies of Political Development*, published in 1973. This collection includes articles analysing eight historical incidents of qualitative political change. The authors took turning points and tried to use mathematical tools to formalise the balance of political power as it developed in each of these mishaps.

Powell analysed the events surrounding the 1832 Reform Act in Britain, Cavan the crisis of 1931 in Britain, Mundt the establishment of the Third Republic in France, Rittberger the formation of the Weimar Republic, White the Meiji Restoration in Japan, and applications that quantified with a single mathematical tool the dynamics of political coalition building. The main achievement of the study is an update of the comparative methodology. Through such parameters of comparison "statics-dynamics", "determination-choice", the group participants were able to achieve a synthesis of deductive (generative) and inductive (taxonomic) comparison strategies.

Ideal-typical frameworks are used as comparisons. The basic unit of comparison is the constitution as the stable framework of a particular polity. The following can be used as the main parameters of comparison: configuration of the functional division of sovereign power; configuration of the territorial division of sovereign power; configuration of the substantive (corporate, communal, consociational) division of power.

Configuration of mediation structures between individuals (subjects, citizens) and locus(s) of sovereign power, including electoral systems and elections, party systems.

An additional unit of comparison is the regime as the mode of organisation of power in a particular polity embedded in the constitution and filling it. The following schemes can be used as comparison parameters: the realisation of the functional division of sov-



ereign power; the realisation of the territorial division of sovereign power; the realisation of the substantive (corporate, communal, consociational) division of sovereign power; the relationship between the ruling locus of regime and opposition (opposition), including forms of political participation of individuals, their politically organised groups and other non-sovereign actors; legitimation and delegitimation of the actual regime and the virtual regimes of opposition.

Comparative research is today an objective need, a necessary and living reality. Comparative analysis allows to understand political practice in different countries, to make political forecasts, helps to identify valuable experiences and to take into account the negative aspects and inefficiencies of one or another political decision. Comparative research allows us to go beyond the boundaries of a particular country, to make broader scientific generalisations. They provide an opportunity to test hypotheses on a broader material, as well as to share experiences with representatives of other countries. Comparative political research is a means and manifestation of international cooperation in political science, contributes to global consensus building, and is a powerful universal tool that enhances the ability to understand other countries' political processes and assess one's own axioms.

In the words of Ronald H. Chilcote: "Comparative political science is not a settled field and old and new ideas continue to impact on its evolution. This diversity not only permits controversy and debate, but also keeps open a rich dialogue on issues and permits both scholar and student to delve into previously unexplored questions or to challenge and reconsider established assumptions on a rapidly changing and evolving world" [18].

Already since the late 1960s comparative political science has been increasingly influenced by new methodological orientations associated with a renewed interest in political philosophy and a critique of the rational foundations of science. Around this time, a critique of behaviouralism unfolds. Several grounds for this criticism can be identified. Firstly,

political science in general and comparative political science in particular proved to be immune to the new social and political changes that emerged so violently in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the form of countercultural youth movements. Secondly, the attempt to create, on the basis of behavioralism and structural functionalism, a political science devoid of values actually led to the dominance of only one theoretical paradigm, associated with the ideology of "bourgeois liberalism". Thirdly, it turned out that the behavioural and structural-functional methodologies of comparative analysis, oriented towards the search for patterns and similarities, actually led to a picture of the political world that was stripped of much of its uniqueness and diversity. Fourthly, the predominance of quantitative methods of analysis in comparative political science, while creating an opportunity for hypothesis testing, also impoverished it. In fact, by means of statistical testing, either rather trivial truths or already known dependencies were often asserted. Fifth, although comparative political science included Asian, African and Latin American countries in its field of vision, the teleological concept of dependent development was protested by Western comparativists and non-Western scholars alike.

The resurgence of interest in political theory and philosophy was bound to have an impact on the state of empirically oriented comparative political science. Some scholars have even spoken of a crisis of this science. However, while agreeing with the critique of empirically oriented comparative political science, there seems to be some transformation of methodological research models and a shift of interest from looking for similarities and common dependencies to showing differences and creating new and more diverse classifications.

In the 1970s, comparative political science once again faced the challenge of renewal. Although Gabriel Almond said that the crisis in comparative political science was political rather than intellectual, the discipline began to change both methodologically and substantively [19]. The topic of comparative

studies is characterized by a shift from studying traditional institutions and factors of political activity (state, parties, elections, media) to comprehending new phenomena (environment of politics, group interests and neo-corporatism, new mass movements, post-material values, ethnic, linguistic, age and gender factors). Particular importance is attached to research into how policy is shaped and how old and new institutions and factors influence it. An entire independent subfield of comparative public policy is emerging.

There have been and are major changes in methodology. Perhaps it is these changes that make one speak of crisis trends in comparative political science. First of all, this has to do with a reassessment of the importance of behaviouralism and structural functionalism. It is no coincidence that attacks on these methodological approaches are still going on. At the same time, one can name the following main trends that characterise the process of methodological transformation of comparative political science.

The first trend can be labelled as *radical*. It is most clearly represented in post-modern and feminist political theoretical orientations. Postmodernism and feminism differ in their approach to the critique of contemporary scientific cognition and understanding of politics. But the core of this critique is the same: a radical break with the dominance in cognition by one style, let's call it "rational-scientific" or "masculine." Although these radical orientations are reflected primarily in political theory and philosophy, but their influence is becoming increasingly visible in the methodology of political and, importantly for the topic of this article, postmodernism and feminism problematize issues of theory and method in comparative political science.

Let us note just a few points that are important for comparative political science. Political science post-modernity has problematised comparative political science itself, as it has questioned the very possibility of a true result of cognition based on a consensus on the similarity of the structures and functions of the

real political world. "The methodologies proposed by Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard (deconstruction, genealogy and paralogy, respectively) are conceived, in general, to decentralise the production of language and truth to more accurately reflect the contingent and relative nature of cognition. Society contains a plurality of heteromorphic languages. Genealogical analysis reveals that history has been a struggle between these languages". By criticising rationalism and rational models of democracy, postmodernism lays the foundations for a pluralism of methodological and theoretical orientations. However, there is a de facto return to configurative research, which was one of the main points on which the transition from "traditional" to "new" comparativism was built.

In comparative political science, the feminist wave is reflected in studies on women in different Scandinavian democracies, citizenship and political participation, public policy and the welfare state. Feminist comparative political science is emerging as an independent field with its own centres, journals and specialists.

The second trend is related to the restoration of the importance of *historical-comparative* methodology, most clearly manifested primarily in a modern reading of K. Marx and M. Weber. Although Marx and Weber are antagonists in questions of social regularities, both methodological traditions allowed during this period, on the one hand, to resist the narrowness of empirical and quantitative comparison methodology and, on the other, to enhance the role of social and socio-cultural explanatory factors (economic and social structures, religion, ethnicity, culture).

As early as the 1960s, a number of scholars began to actively use the methodology of political comparison of M. Weber and K. Marx. Weber's followers include S. Eisenstadt, R. Bendix and G. Roth. The former, using Weber's concept of 'dominance' and bureaucracy, conducted a comparative analysis of imperial forms of government as early as the 1960s, and later of clientelist relations in politics, not

to mention larger comparativist projects. R. Bendix, studying the development of nation-states in Western Europe, Russia, Japan and India, drew on Weber's notions of rationality and traditionality, patrimonialism, bureaucratization and plebiscitary democracy [20]. G. Roth attached particular importance to the concept of patrimonialism in the comparative analysis of political development in the third world.

In the 1960s and 1980s, there was a renewed interest in the Marxist concept of classes, class struggle, property, type of production as explanatory factors of political development, revolutions and the formation of states. Thus B. Moore was one of the first to use the concepts of bourgeois and agricultural social structures to explain the emergence of capitalist democracy, fascism and communism. T. Skocpol applied the concepts of social structure and conflict to explain the revolutions in France, Russia and China.

At the same time, studies devoted to the methodological problems of comparison in M. Weber and K. Marx appeared in the early 70s. Of particular importance is a fundamental work edited by I. Valier in 1971, *Comparative Methods in Sociology*, in which large chapters are devoted to K. Marx and M. Weber. Substantial attempts to integrate the Marxist tradition into political comparativism were made by P. Calvert and R. Chilcott.

Weber's approach is now characterised as a comparative-historical methodology, combining positivism and neo-Kantianism. Kahlberg, in his recent work on Weber and his method of comparison, sees the specificity of Weber's methodology, firstly, in the interpretive understanding of social action, which includes both objective and subjective components; secondly, in the concept of ideal types, which removes the opposition of interpretative theory and positivism; thirdly, in the concept of multicausality of explaining political and social phenomena. He emphasises that 'Weber speaks of a level of analysis that differs from the exclusive focus, on the one hand, on solitary and self-interested individuals, and, on the other hand, on global generalisations of "soci-

ety", on organic "systems" and a simple orientation towards norms. By doing so, he turns his attention to the unification of subjective meaning and individual action with distinctly social orientations".

The third trend can be defined as *renewalist*. It has to do with expanding the methodological tools of scientific comparative analysis by turning to new conceptual approaches that allow the use and development of a well-established set of tools for statistical analysis while resolving the problem of the unity between quantitative and qualitative research. This trend is not alien to the use of everything positive that has been manifested in the radical and historical-comparative orientations. Among recent works of this trend we should mention the collections edited by H. Viarda "New Directions in Comparative Politics" and H. Keman, J.-E. Lane and S. Ersson "Comparative Politics: Introduction and New Approaches", G. Sartori "Comparative Constitutional Engineering. An Inquiry Into Structures, Incentives, and Outcomes", P. Pennings, H. Keman and J. J. Kleinijenhuis "Doing Research in Political Science: An Introduction to Comparative Methods and Statistics", G. Peters, "Comparative Politics. Theory and Methods". However, for the sake of greater rigour, attention will be drawn here to the renewal trend's own significance.

Firstly, structural functionalism has been criticised for its formality and its inability to answer the question of why states and political systems differ in the implementation of their functions. In this regard, Henry Toone wrote: "What established itself as a theory – structural-functional theory, or Parsons' theory – was merely a set of categories for ordering experience. Human needs as defined by Maslow, for example, served the political purposes of the welfare state rather than those of research explanation. Today, after such attention to them, they are hardly used". Hence there was an increased interest in theoretical models that would define comparative research from the outset. The role of theory in formulating hypotheses, in making comparisons and in

interpreting empirical data has increased considerably. Theory becomes the goal of comparative analysis rather than an instrumental value for comparison. The term 'theory', writes Stefan Nowak in this regard, should refer to 'a possibly unambiguous set or systems of laws, or broad law-like generalisations, united on the basis of a common unifying principle, with clearly detectable topologies and/or historical conditions of their validity'.

Secondly, much of the new understanding in theory is defined by the controversy surrounding the problem of the nation-state as the basic unit of comparative analysis. Although the comparative method differs from the statistical method, these differences were often treated as quantitative, of the 'few cases, many variables' type. Correlations between variables were seen as sufficient to test hypotheses about the causality of relationships between factors. Of course, the need to accompany quantitative data with a qualitative interpretation was mentioned, but this was seen as an additional condition of the study. The plethora of data presented in the 1960s and 1970s, using sophisticated mathematical techniques, did raise questions. And one of the main ones: could a single country or nation state be considered as independent units of analysis? As a solution to this problem, the so-called "holistic approach" began to take shape, which was interpreted differently in studies by such scholars as L. Silverman, A. Przeworski, G. Thunet, S. Anttila. "Holistic approach" implies the consideration of different spatial entities (i.e. nation-states) as some interrelated parts of the whole described by the theory [21].

Thirdly, the critical engagement with comparative macro-level studies revealed two main trends in addressing theoretical and methodological and technical-methodological problems. On the one hand, it was argued that macro theory oversimplified social reality and might even be based on false as-

sumptions. This meant that research did not receive a theoretical model that would adequately reproduce reality. The solution was seen as an emphasis on the quality of data, on the complexity and uniqueness of macro-political events and on a return to history (i.e. to "real" time, place and people). On the other hand, criticism of the comparative-historical tendency in political science and political sociology for its denial of general theory and desire for uniqueness led to attempts to create new theoretical models that would combine empirical (including quantitative) analysis with broad generalisations of causal relations. The second orientation has resulted in models of rational choice, game theory, neo-institutionalism and political network theory borrowed from economic and sociological doctrines.

Of course, the discussion of problems of comparative political science today, in the 21st century, is not entirely confined to radical, comparative-historical and renewalist tendencies. Other, more private or more traditional studies can also be noted. Therefore, the use of mathematical methods of analysis is improving and expanding (e.g., new for comparative political science use of Boolean algebra and interest in the logic of fuzzy sets), increasing importance of methods of comparison of the most similar and most dissimilar systems, special attention is paid to the problem of equivalence in comparison, the role of such variable as "time" increases, etc. We should also note the changes in the subject matter of comparative political science. Transition processes, conflicts, regional integration, political discourse, new political identity, political finance, corruption, democratic audit, etc. are coming into focus at this stage, with democratisation and transitology being relatively independent areas. On the whole, one can hardly speak of a decline in interest in comparative political science, we can only note a serious restructuring of its methodology and topics.

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