

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q1(a)

Systems Approach.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · PSIR GS 1 · 10 marks · Political Theory

Political Theory: meaning and approaches.

Core demand of the question

- **Comment on the following in about 150 words:** Systems Approach. (10 marks)

Revision summary

Easton treated politics as **authoritative allocation** inside a system of inputs, conversion, outputs, and feedback.

Almond restated conversion as interest and rule functions plus political culture.

The method compared new states by function, not by legal text alone.

Critics charge equilibrium bias and neglect of class, ideology, and silent power.

It remains a map of process, not a theory of justice.

Introduction

The systems approach treats politics as a set of interrelated parts that convert demands into binding decisions. It was the behavioural answer to legal-institutional description of offices alone.

Body**The model**

- **David Easton** defined politics as the **authoritative allocation** of values for a society.
- Inputs are demands and support. The political system converts them. Outputs are decisions and policies. Feedback returns as new inputs.
- **The environment is extra-political:** economy, culture, and international pressure.
- **Gabriel Almond** added conversion functions: interest articulation, aggregation, rule-making, rule application, and rule adjudication, with political culture as the subjective weather of the system.
- **Karl Deutsch** stressed communication and steering. **David Apter** used systems language for modernisation.

Use and limit

- The approach compared regimes by function, not only by written constitutions, which helped the study of new states after decolonisation.
- **Critics said it was conservative:** equilibrium and persistence look like the good, and conflict and class look like noise.
- **Marxist** writers and later **Foucault** said allocation hides who is silenced before a demand is even voiced, which **Steven Lukes** called the third face of power.

- **Easton's** later post-behavioural turn admitted relevance and values, which the first systems sketch had postponed.

Flow diagram

Environment -> Demands and support
Demands and support -> Political system Easton
Political system Easton -> Authoritative outputs
Authoritative outputs -> Feedback
Feedback -> Demands and support

Conclusion

The systems approach maps politics as input, conversion, output, and feedback. **Easton** and **Almond** made it the teaching kit of comparative politics. It describes persistence better than it explains domination.

Facts & figures

Easton

The Political System (1953) and A **Systems Analysis of Political Life** (1965) set the input-output model.

Almond

With Coleman and later Powell, listed conversion functions and civic culture as system properties.

Authoritative allocation

Easton's definition of the political: binding decisions about valued things.

Lukes

Power: A Radical View added non-decision and preference-shaping, which systems talk of 'demands' can miss.