

Contemporary Issues in Comparative Politics

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Lecturer

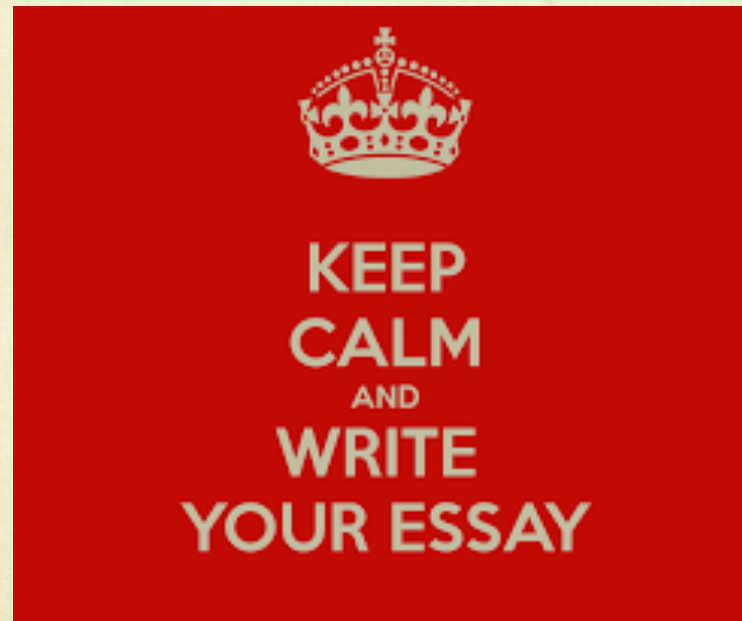
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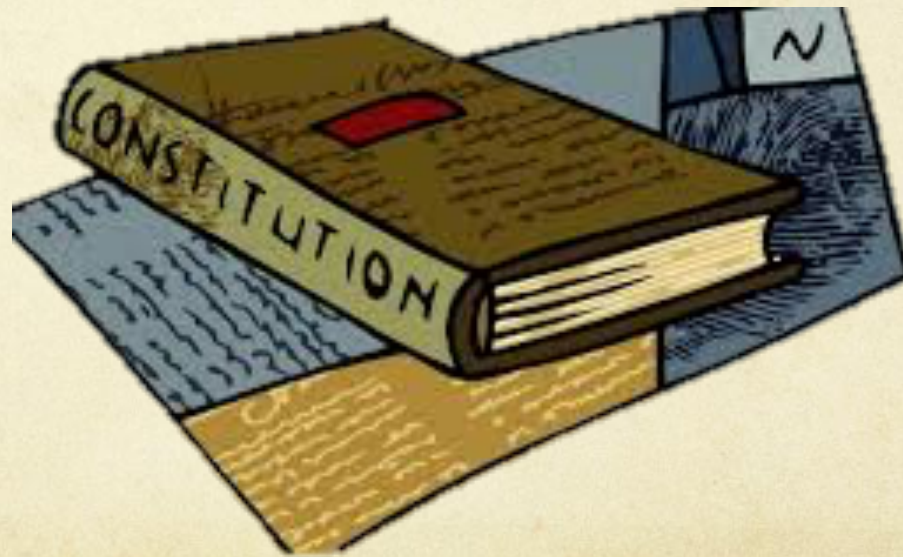
Essay

- Please do talk to me about your essays if you're not sure how you're going to approach the question!



Last Week

- Constitutions
- Legislatives
- Mock Convention



WEEK 6

- Executives
- Formal and informal powers possessed by executives in different systems.
- Major theories about the relationship between institutional design and stability of governments.
- Political Parties and Party Systems
- Major theories about the causes and effects of different party systems.

Heads of State and Government

- Executive: *The branch of government, or the individual(s) at the top of that branch, that executes or administers policies and laws in a country*
- Head of state
 - A person with executive functions that is a country's symbolic representative
- Head of government
 - The top executive official responsible for forming governments and formulating and implementing policies

Heads of State and Government



- Prime minister
 - A chief executive in a parliamentary system of government

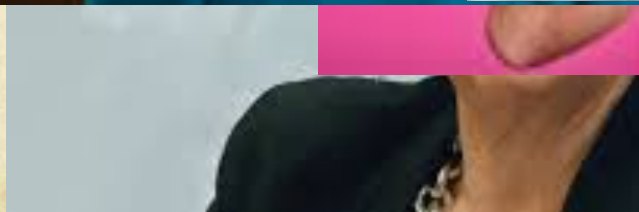
- President
 - An executive leader that typically combines the functions of head of state and head of government, and is not directly responsible to a legislature.



- Monarch
 - Head of state in a monarchy, who usually inherits a position for life
 - May have either substantial political powers or very limited ceremonial powers



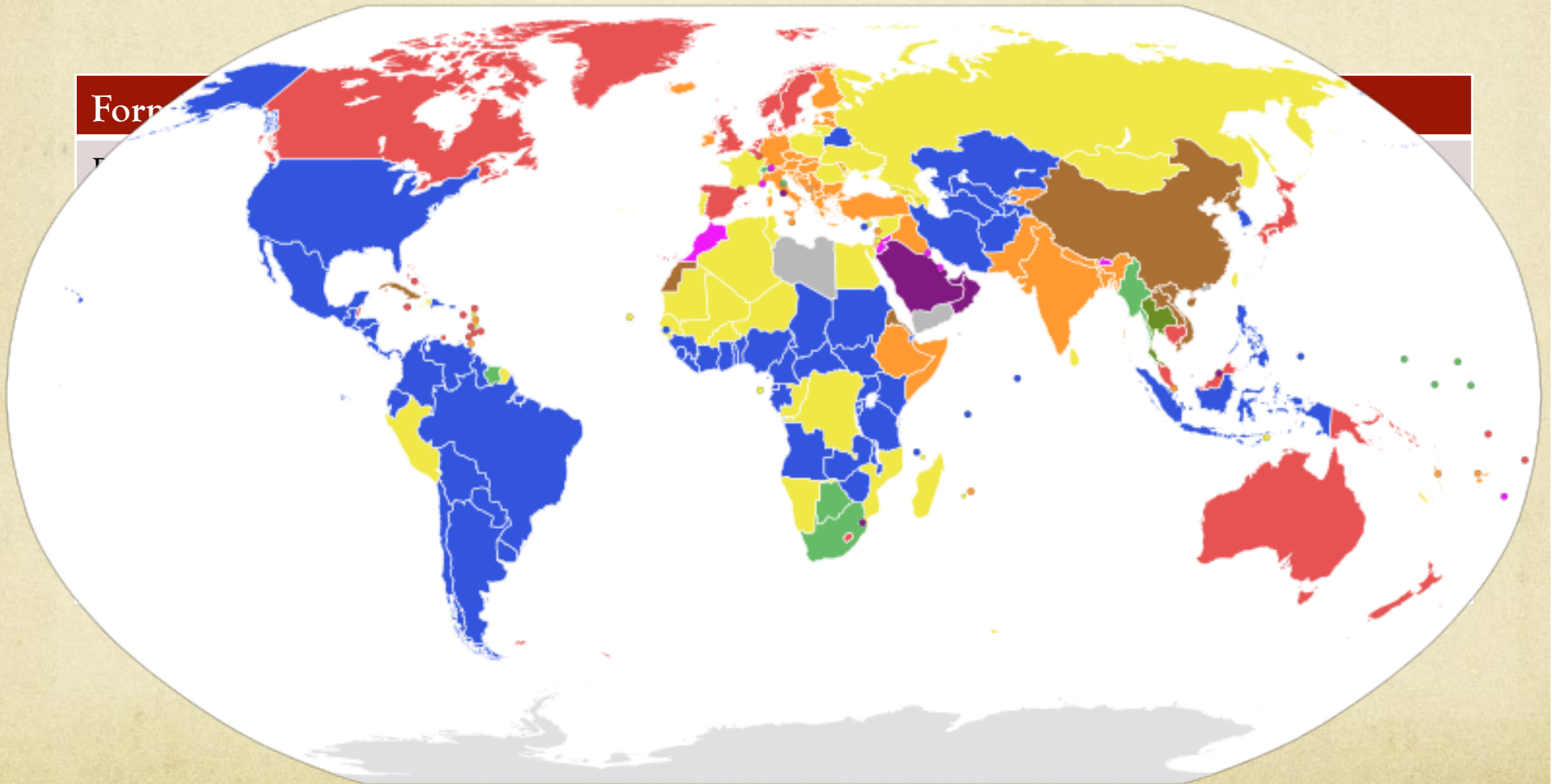
Examples



Parliamentarism and Presidentialism

- Parliamentarism
 - *A system of government in which the head of government is elected by and accountable to a parliament or legislature*
- Presidentialism
 - *A system of government in which a president serves as chief executive*
 - *President is independent of the legislature*
 - *Often combines the functions of head of state and head of government*

Executive Structures



Regime Types

Head of government's taking office rests on support of	Fixed term	
	Yes	No
Electorate	Presidential (US)	Parliamentary with directly elected PM (Israel)
Parliament	Semi-presidentialism (F)	
	Directorial government (Switzerland)	Parliamentary (UK)

Executive Powers

Formal Powers

- *Powers derived from their constitutional or legal position*
 - Veto
 - Dissolution of legislature (calling new elections)
 - Decrees and executive orders
 - State of emergency declarations



Executive Powers

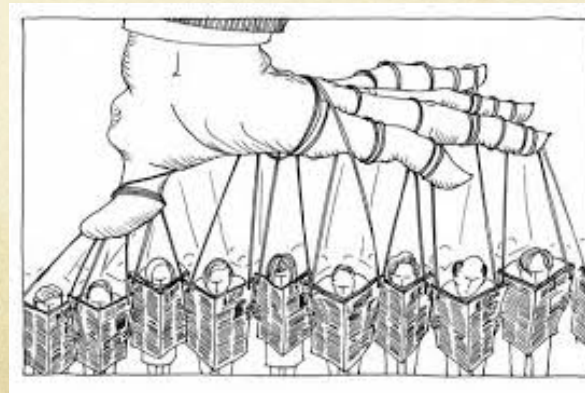
Partisan Powers

- *Powers derived from the official's leverage or power over members of a political party*
- Executives sometimes can control legislatures through control of career paths
 - Party nominations for candidates, e.g.

Executive Powers

Informal Powers

- *Powers possessed by an office holder that are not “official” but rather based on custom, convention, or other sources of influence*
- Includes chance to set agenda
- Patronage can be an informal power
 - *use of government favors, typically in the form of employment, to garner political support*



Presidential Regimes





Presidential or semi-presidential regimes:



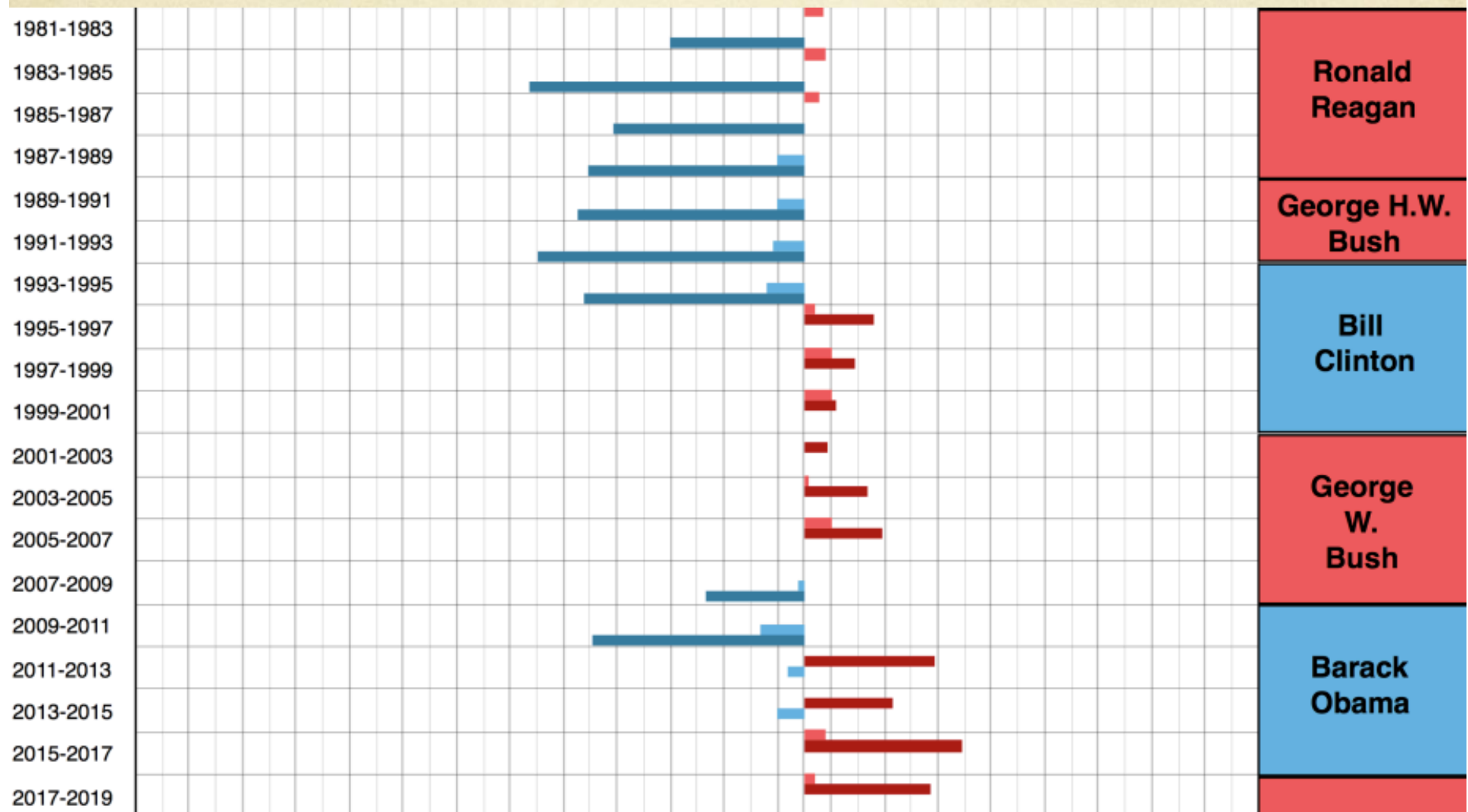
Cox and Morgenstern (2002) distinguish four presidential strategies:

- **Dictating** – dominant president, subservient assembly. Ex. Mexico during PRI single party dominance
- **Undertaking unilateral actions** – imperial president, recalcitrant assembly. Ex. Chile's Allende.
- **Bargaining** – coalitional president, workable assembly
- **Paying-off** – nationally oriented president, parochial assembly. Ex. Recent history of Brazil. Presidents offer goods and services to representatives who are mainly interested in getting re-elected.



Presidential or semi-presidential regimes:

Divided Governments:



Parliamentary Regimes



Parliamentary Regimes

(1) Majority (50% plus one seat) vs. minority governments (<50%):

- **Theoretically:** Minority governments are expected to be unstable
- **Empirically:** Minority governments are frequent and often stable. They rely on on a legislative majority coalition.

The rationale of minority governments?

- Occupying the ideological centre and dividing the opposition
- Policy-oriented rather than office-seeking politicians
- Anticipated voter reactions restrict office-seeking behaviour from other parties

Parliamentary Regimes

(2) Single-party vs. coalition governments:

- **Single-party government:**

Homogeneous, quick decisions, avoidance of compromise, internal rivalry becomes a problem when exposed to the public

- **Coalition governments:**

Time consuming internal decision-making process

Coalitions

Coalition Type	Definition
Minimum Winning	No extra or surplus parties that are not needed to govern
Minimum Connected Winning	Minimum winning and parties are connected on policy spectrum
Minimum Size	As close as possible to minimum number of seats needed (often 50%)
Minimum Number of Parties	Fewest number of parties needed to form majority
Median Party	Includes the median party in the middle of the political spectrum
Minimum Range	Minimum number of spaces between parties on policy spectrum

Causes and Effects: Executive Structures and Democracy

- Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism
- *Theory*: Parliamentarism is better for democracy than presidentialism
- Five reasons (according to Juan Linz, *Perils of Presidentialism and Virtues of Parliamentarism*, 1990)
 - Competing/dual vs. clear legitimacy
 - Fixed vs. flexible terms of office – hard to change unpopular leaders
 - Winner-Take-All vs. power-sharing (more inclusive)
 - Presidential (authoritarian and bombastic) vs. prime ministerial style (negotiating)
 - Outsider vs. insider executives – parliamentary leaders have been in politics for decades.

Causes and Effects: Executive Structures and Democracy

- Mainwaring and Shugart, 1997: Critiquing advantages of parliamentarism for democracy
- *Empirical Critique:*
 - Parliamentary countries have often been wealthier, European countries
 - Presidential countries have often been poorer countries
- *Theoretical Critique:*
 - Parliamentarism depends on other institutions (elections, e.g.) and can be winner-take-all – Case of dominant single parties.

Political Parties



Concepts

- **Political Parties**

- *Political organizations that seek to influence policy by getting candidates and members elected or appointed to public office*

- **Party Systems**

- *Patterns of party politics characterized by the number of relevant parties in a country*

- **Interest Groups**

- *Organizations that make demands in the political system on behalf of their constituents and members*

Political Parties



- **Elite Parties**

- Political parties in which membership and scope were largely restricted to a small number of political elites.

- **Mass Parties**

- Parties with large numbers of citizens as members and that undertake massive political mobilization

- **Catch-All Parties**

- Political parties that are flexible on their ideological positions and aim to attract support from a broad range of interest groups and voters.

The genealogy of party systems

Two factors induced the formation of parties and party families:

- National Revolution (early 19th century; restricted electorates)
- Industrial Revolution (late 19th century; suffrage extension)

Industrial and National Revolution created socio-economic and cultural conflicts. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) named these conflicts **cleavages**.

Modern party families appeared as the political translations of those cleavages.



Owner



Church



Urban



Centre



Worker



State



Rural



Periphery

The genealogy of party systems

National Revolution induced two cleavages:

(1) Centre-periphery cleavage due to :

- Administrative centralization (e.g. fiscal integration)
 - Cultural standardization (e.g. compulsory schooling, official language)
- The centre-periphery cleavage led to regionalist parties (e.g. Scottish National Party, the Swedish Party in Finland).



The genealogy of party systems

(2) State-church cleavage:

- The liberal ideology of the National Revolution asked for secular institutions
- Conflicts between state/church, abolition of the church's privileges
- The state-church cleavage led to the formation of conservative and religious parties (e.g. Christian Democratic Union, Swiss Catholic Party).

The logo of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is displayed in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The letters are thick and closely spaced, with a slight shadow effect.

The genealogy of party systems

The Industrial revolution induced two further cleavages:

(3) **Rural-urban cleavage:**

- Conflict mainly about trade policies
 - Agrarians favour trade barriers, industrialist free markets
- The rural-urban cleavage led to agrarian and peasant parties (e.g. Australian Country Party).



The genealogy of party systems

(4) Workers-employers cleavage:

- Conflict between “capital” and “labour”
 - Workers promoted social rights and welfare provisions
- Formation of workers and social-democratic parties (e.g. British Labour Party). The Soviet Revolution (1917) produced a cleavage within the worker's movement, splitting it into socialist and communist fractions.
- The workers-employers cleavage is the most important one. Up to the present, it characterizes the left-right alignment.



The genealogy of party systems

The Post industrial Revolution created two more recent cleavages:

(5) **Materialism-post-materialism cleavage (1960s/1970s):**

- Conflict mainly between generations
- Younger generation favouring “post-materialist-values”
- A number of social movements emerged (e.g. civil rights movement in the US).
- Minor impact on party systems, formation of Green Parties



The genealogy of party systems

The Post industrial Revolution created two more recent cleavages:

(6) The globalization cleavage

- Cleavage between "winners" and "losers" of globalization
- Formation of neo-populist protest parties, often right-winged and xenophobic (e.g. Front National in France). Left-winged in Latin America



The genealogy of party systems

Not all cleavages exist in all countries. There are many different constellations and party-systems.

Generally two types of cleavage-constellations are distinguished:

- **Homogenous constellations:** Predominant cleavage, namely left-right (e.g. Britain)
- **Heterogeneous constellations:** Various overlapping cleavages exist (e.g. Canada)

Types of Party Systems

Dominant-Party Systems

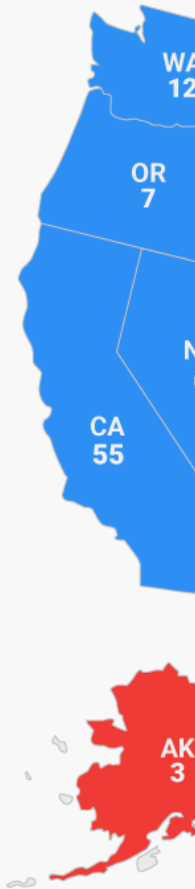
- Country contains one large political party that predominates politically
 - Dominant party often controls legislative and executive branches
- Can happen in democracies
 - Ex. India (1947 – 1970s)
 - Ex. South Africa (1994 – present)
- Often less than fully democratic if dominant party has advantages (but other parties are allowed)
 - Ex. Mexico (1920s – 2000)

Types of Party Systems

Single-Party System

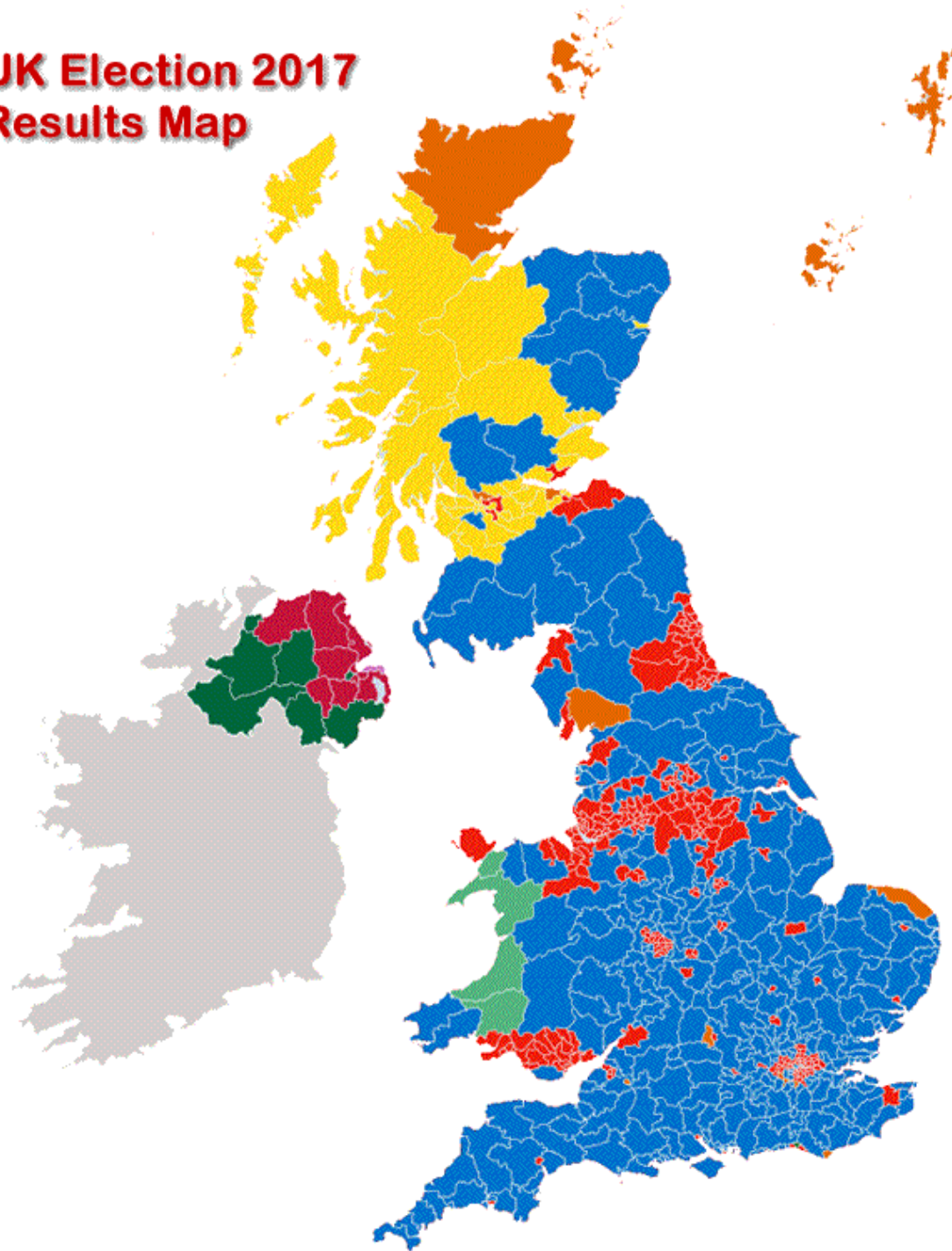
- One form of dominant-party system
- Authoritarian system in which parties besides the single dominant party are banned or disallowed
 - Ex. Soviet Union (1917 – 1991)
 - Ex. Nazi Germany (1933 - 1945)
 - Ex. North Korea (1948 – present)

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SOURCES: Associated

UK Election 2017 Results Map



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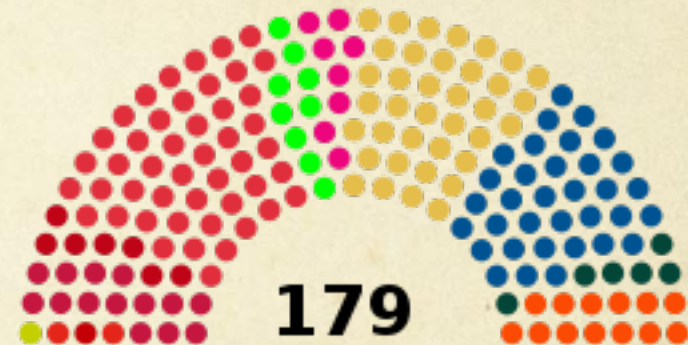
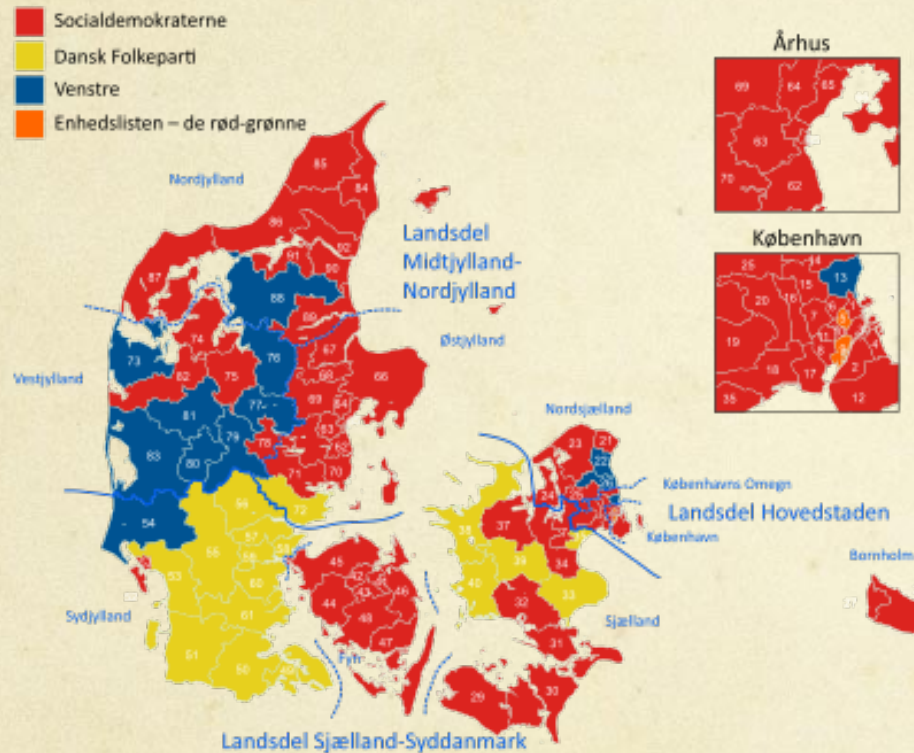
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Types of Party Systems

Multiparty Systems

- Political party system with more than two major parties that have opportunities to govern
 - Ex.: Northern Europe
 - Ex.: Brazil
- Multiparty systems can be:
 - Relatively *fragmented* (many small parties)
 - Relatively *concentrated* (few large parties)

Danish General Election - 2015



TV Series Suggestion

- Borgen
- Danish Coalition Politics

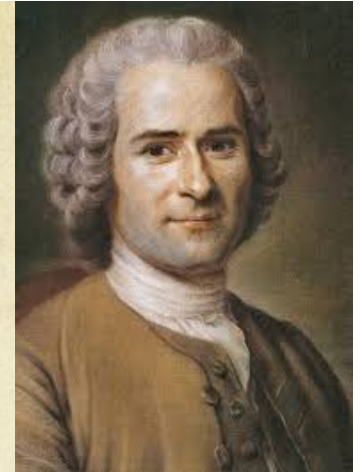


Interest Groups



- Interests play an important role in modern political systems, but how interests are articulated varies from country to country
- Interest groups are membership organizations which make policy-related appeals to the political system. They seek to advance particular interests in the political process.
- How can this be reconciled with the general interest of the people in a democracy?

Interest Group Representation



Republican theory – **interest associations: a threat to democracy**
(Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1762):

- **Interest associations** promote special interests rather than the general will of the people
- **Role of the state:** guaranteeing a “**one and indivisible republic**” by restricting the power of any partial bodies that may corrupt the relation between individual citizens and the state

But how can one be sure that restrictions of the freedom of association don't serve the interests of those that have acquired a dominant role in politics?

Interest Group Representation



- Pluralism
 - Groups compete openly to influence government decisions and policy
 - Specific groups do not have official preferential access
 - Interest associations play an important role in democratic societies as safeguards against despotic influences of the people in power
 - Role of the state: guaranteeing the “freedom of association” (Tocqueville – USA in the 19th century)
 - But how can one be sure that free competition between interest associations does not serve the partial interests of those that are most well off?

Interest Groups and Representation

- Pluralism and representation
 - Advantages
 - Equal opportunity for groups to influence policy
 - Marketplace of ideas
 - Disadvantages
 - Collective action problem: “Special interests” vs. interests of the populace at large
 - Important groups may be excluded from policy discussion at times, depending on election results

Interest Group Representation

- Corporatism

- Certain major groups are officially designated as representatives of certain interests
 - Ex.: major union representing labor
 - Ex.: major business organization representing capital
- These groups have a more structured interaction with the government in power and state administration
- **Role of the state:** Ensuring a **balance of power and compromise** between opposing social interests, notably between capital & labour
- Many European & South American political systems include “power sharing” arrangements between conflicting interests (Schmitter 1974; Lijphart 1984)



Interest Groups and Representation

- Corporatism and representation
 - Advantages
 - Ensures representation across major groups in society, regardless of government in power at any one time
 - Can facilitate consensus and national strategy
 - Disadvantages
 - Authoritarian corporatism: states can co-opt groups
 - No “arm’s length” relations: can lead to cronyism and elitism; can impede reform and adaptations over time

Interest Groups – Overview

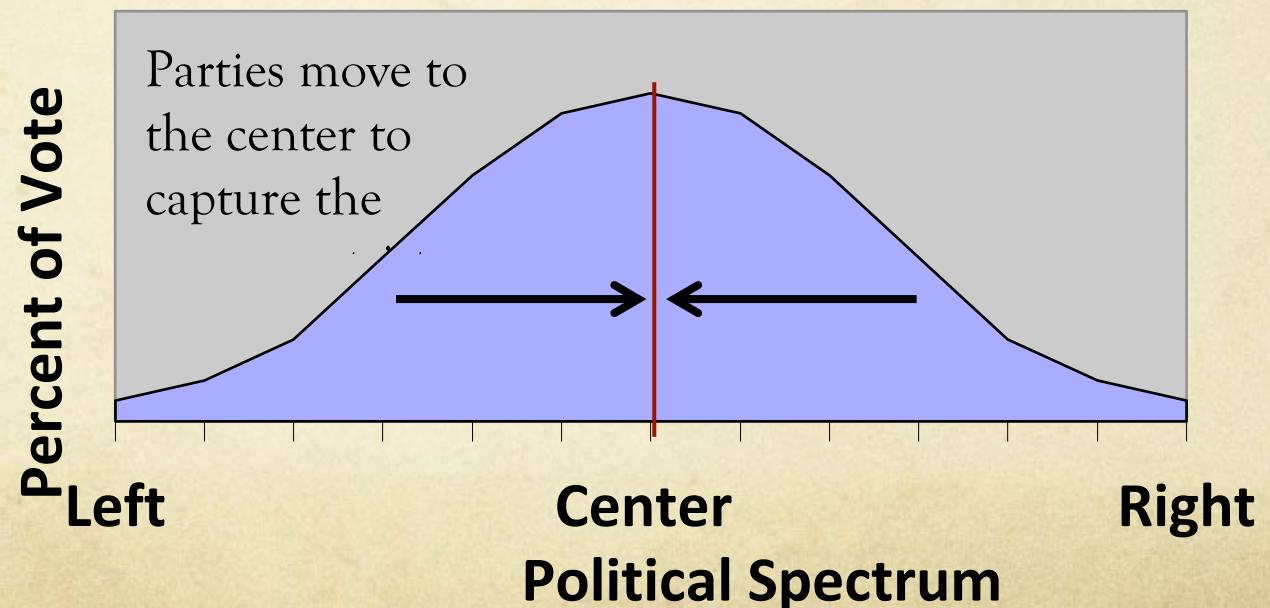
- Interest associations play a crucial role in the political process.
- However, there is no agreement on whether interest associations represent a danger or a school for democracy
- The democracy–interest association nexus is also of particular importance in studies that assess the legitimacy of international organisations such as the EU or the WTO
- What do you think?

Causes and Effects: What Shapes Party Systems?

- Electoral Rules (Duverger's Law)
 - District systems favor two-party systems
 - Proportional representation favors multi-party
- Geography, history, and economy
 - Many dominant-party states in Africa, e.g.
- Ideology and ideas
 - Communist parties, e.g.

Party Systems and Political Outcomes

- Two-party systems lead to centrism?
 - Both parties appeal to the “median voter” (Anthony Downs)
 - Strategic voting for more “extreme” voters
 - People at extremes favor moderates on their side



Next Week

- Social Movements
- Contention
- Revolutions
- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- Ideology



Coalition Formation Exercise

- We are in the kingdom of Lampetstania.
- Election Results:
 - Communist Party (Far Left) 8 seats
 - Democratic Socialist Party (Left) 21 seats
 - Progress party (Center) 26 seats
 - Conservative Party (Right) 12 seats
 - Motherland Party (Far Right) 33 seats
- Rules for coalition formation:
 - Invitation to form a government to the head of the party winning the most seats. They have five minutes to do so. If the next largest party will be invited to form a government.
 - To form a government you must distribute these cabinet positions
 - Prime Minister
 - Defense, National Security, and Foreign Policy
 - Finance and Treasury
 - Social Policy (Health, Education, Social Welfare, and Housing)
 - Energy, Agriculture, and the Environment

Discussion Questions

- What are the advantage and disadvantages of having a two party system?
- Would many parties be more preferable?

Small Group Discussion

- Countries are best governed by directly elected executives accountable to the population at large and not to the parliament; Iraq should adopt the American presidentialist model over the parliamentary model of government.
- Do you agree, or disagree?