

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND DIPLOMACY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Algis Krupavičius • Vytautas Isoda • Tomas Vaišnoras

Introduction to Comparative Politics

DIDACTICAL GUIDELINES

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Foreword

This book was written as a part of a European Union funded project, the aim of which was to adapt several courses taught at Vytautas Magnus University for the purpose of teaching these subjects in English. Introduction to comparative politics was one of these courses. This book draws much of its substantive contents and structure from some of the best contemporary textbooks in comparative politics, namely Daniele Caramani's (ed.) *Comparative Politics* (published with Oxford University Press), Kenneth Newton and Jan van Deth's *Foundations of Comparative Politics* (Cambridge University Press), Rod Hague and Martin Harrop's *Comparative Government and Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan), as well as others. Not aiming for a distinctively original body of teaching material, we set ourselves the task of collecting the best of what these seminal textbooks had to offer and compiling it into one short publication for students at VMU to enjoy. In doing this, however, a careful regard was put on keeping in line with the copyrights of the respective authors, as well as covering the basic subject-matter of the field.

Algis Krupavičius, Vytautas Isoda and Tomas Vaišnoras
Kaunas, November 2012

An Introduction: What is Comparative Politics?

- Understanding or substance of comparative politics
- The evolution of comparative politics
- Comparative method

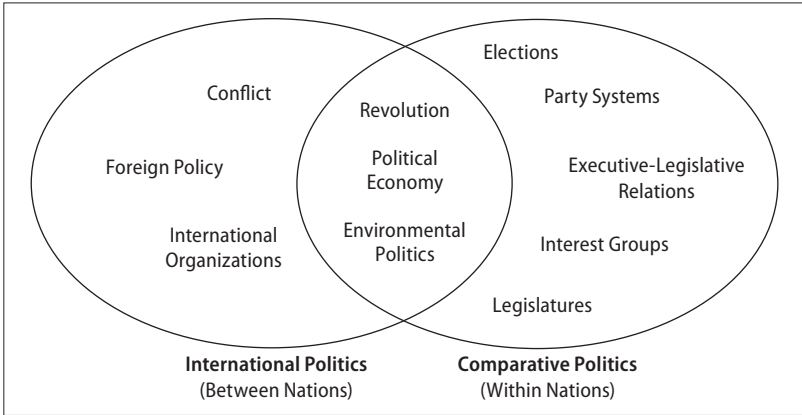
Comparative politics is an integral and significant subdiscipline, and one of the three major fields of political science, alongside political theory and international relations. Comparative politics, as a field of study, provides us with a ready array of conceptual and analytical tools that we can use to address and answer a wide range of questions about the social world (Lim, 2010: 2).

Understanding or substance of comparative politics

Many textbooks on comparative politics provide clear and simple answers to the question, what is comparative politics? The goal of political science is to promote the comparison of different political entities, and comparative politics is the study of politics within states (Fabbrini, Molutsi, 2011). As a subject of study, comparative politics focuses on understanding and explaining political phenomena that take place within a **state, society, country, or political system**. In other words comparative politics focuses on internal political structures (like parliaments and executives), actors (voters, parties, interest groups), processes (policy-making, communication, political culture) and analysing them empirically by defining, describing, explaining and predicting their variety (similarities and differences) across political systems – be they national political systems, regional, municipal, or even supra-national political systems (Caramani, 2011: 2).

As Sodaro noted, it is ‘scientific’ when it engages in the following operations: **definition, description, explanation, prediction, and prescription**. This might be done through the intensive analyses of one or few cases as well as extensive analysis of many cases, and can be either *synchronic* or *diachronic*. The comparative politics uses

Figure 1. One view of political science



Source: Clark et al, 2009: 5

both qualitative and quantitative data and research methods (Sodaro, 2011: 1).

What is studying comparative politics? It is focused first of all on each country's internal politics, or how governments are structured, i. e. what are governing institutions and how their function; how governments interact with their population and what decisions are made; how political leaders and population behave in politics and how decisions are made; how and who makes or influences decisions or policy orientations, leadership, and other attributes of political decisions are vital components of comparative politics.

Famous American political scientist Robert Dahl was thinking that the essence of comparative politics is a study of power distribution in decision making situations. On the other hand, Jean Blondel noted that a primary object of comparative politics is public policy or outcomes of political action.

Why we need to study comparative politics? According to Sodaro (2008: 28–29) the main purposes of studying comparative politics are as follows:

- widen our understanding of politics in other countries;
- increase our appreciation of the advantages and disadvantages of our own political system and to enable us to learn from other countries;

- develop a more sophisticated understanding of politics in general e. g., the relationships between governments and people, and other concepts and processes;
- help us understand the linkages between domestic and international affairs;
- help us see the relationship between politics and such fields as science and technology, the environment, public health, law, business, religion, ethnicity, and culture;

Box 1. What is comparative politics?

Traditionally, the field of comparative politics has been characterized by many related, but distinct, endeavors. An influential comparative politics textbook by Joseph LaPalombara (1974) is titled *Politics Within Nations*. LaPalombara's title distinguishes comparative politics from international politics, which Hans Morgenthau (1948) famously calls *Politics Among Nations*. This definition of comparative politics, with its complementary definition of international politics, has one of the desirable features of all good scientific typologies in that it is logically exhaustive. By defining comparative and international politics in this way, these scholars have exhausted the logical possibilities involved in the study of politics – political phenomena occur either within countries or between countries.

Still, all good scientific typologies should also be mutually exclusive. Whereas logical exhaustion implies that we have a place to categorize every entity that is observed, mutual exclusivity requires that it not be possible to assign any single case to more than one category. Unfortunately, the typology just presented does not satisfy mutual exclusivity. A quick glance at today's newspapers clearly reveals that many contemporary political issues contain healthy doses of both 'within country' and 'between country' factors. As a consequence, the line between comparative and international politics is often blurred. For example, because many violent anti-state movements receive support from abroad, it is hard to categorize the study of revolutions, terrorism, and civil war as being solely in the domain of either comparative or international politics.

Nonetheless, it is possible to retain the basic insights of LaPalombara and Morgenthau by simply saying that comparative politics is the study of political phenomena that are predominantly 'within country' relationships and that international politics is the study of political phenomena that are predominantly 'between countries' relationships.

Source: Clark et al, 2009: 5

Box 2. A Few definitions of comparative politics

‘Comparative politics involves the systematic study and comparison of the world’s political systems. It seeks to explain differences between as well as similarities among countries. In contrast to journalistic reporting on a single country, comparative politics is particularly interested in exploring patterns, processes, and regularities among political systems’ (Wiarda 2000, p. 7).

‘Comparative politics involves both a subject of study – foreign countries – and a method of study – comparison’ (Wilson 1996, p. 4).

‘What is comparative politics? It is two things, first a world, second a discipline. As a ‘world,’ comparative politics encompasses political behavior and institutions in all parts of the earth... The ‘discipline’ of comparative politics is a field of study that desperately tries to keep up with, to encompass, to understand, to explain, and perhaps to influence the fascinating and often riotous world of comparative politics’ (Lane 1997, p. 2).

‘Comparative politics involves no more and no less than a comparative study of politics – a search for similarities and differences between and among political phenomena, including political institutions (such as legislatures, political parties, or political interest groups), political behavior (such as voting, demonstrating, or reading political pamphlets), or political ideas (such as liberalism, conservatism, or Marxism). Everything that politics studies, comparative politics studies; the latter just undertakes the study with an explicit comparative methodology in mind’ (Mahler 2000, p. 3).

Van Biezen, Caramani (2006): ... we understand comparative politics as defined by a combination of substance (the study of countries and their political systems, actors and processes) and method (identifying and explaining differences and similarities between cases following established rules and standards of comparative analysis and using concepts that are applicable in more than one case or country.

Source: Lim, 2010:10

- enable us to become more informed citizens: form our own political opinions, participate in political life, evaluate the actions and proposals of political leaders, and make our own political decisions and electoral choices;
- sharpen our critical thinking skills by applying scientific logic and coherent argumentation to our understanding of political phenomena.

The evolution of comparative politics

Edward Freeman in one of the first books in the field of comparative politics noted that ‘the establishment of Comparative Method of study has been the greatest intellectual achievement of our time’ (Freeman 1896: 1). However, the roots of comparative political analysis are found in Ancient Greece as the first comparative studies begin with Aristotle (384–322 B. C. E), who studied different constitutions of Greek city-states.

As Klaus von Beyme recently noted, Machiavelli in the pre-modern era came closest to a modern social science approach. Moreover, great social theorists made an invaluable impact on the development of contemporary comparative politics. For instance, Machiavelli (1469–1527) sought to compare and evaluate the merits of different forms of rule. Thomas Hobbes (1632–1704) developed the idea of a ‘social contract’ and Karl Marx (1818–1883) developed the theory of economic and political development and revolutionary change.

However, comparative politics was established as an academic discipline only in the very late 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Still prior to the 1950s comparative politics was mostly normative and descriptive or dominated by the so-called traditional approach and being at the pre-modern phase of its development.

In 1955 Roy Macridis launched a diatribe against traditional comparative politics. He accused the discipline of being formal-legalistic because of the studying of formal institutions over non-formal political processes, descriptive rather than analytic, case study-orientated rather than genuinely comparative, and Eurocentric with its emphasis on Great Britain, France, Germany and the Soviet Union.

‘Scientific’ comparative politics begins mainly with the rise of behaviourism in social sciences. Behaviouralism in comparative politics, as in other fields of political science, stood for two distinct ideas. One concerned the proper subject matter of comparative politics. In this regard, behaviouralists reacted against a definition of the field that restricted its scope to the formal institutions of government and sought to include a range of informal procedures and behaviours – related to interest groups, political parties, mass communication, political culture, and political socialization – that were seen as key

to the functioning of the political system. A second key idea was the need for a scientific approach to theory and methods. Behaviouralists were opposed to what they saw as vague, rarefied theory and atheoretical empirics, and argued for systematic theory and empirical testing. The behavioural era in comparative politics is sometimes described as a modern period of its evolution.

Table 1. Main periods of evolution of comparative politics

		Period of evolution		
		Pre-modern	Modern	Post-modern
Key features	–	Speculative, normative, ethnocentric and anecdotal.	Separate disciplines of sociology and political science established since Chicago school	Social facts are social constructs
	–	Boundaries with philosophy, history and jurisprudence were not clearly defined.	Behaviourism is a dominant approach with an empirical testing of generalizations	Theories, contents and methods are influenced by political events
	–	Machiavelli, Montesquieu, de Tocqueville came close to founding of comparative politics.	Comparative politics is established in academia	Modernization, de-colonization, transition to democracy and so on influenced comparative politics.
	–	Main goal of analysis was to establish classifications and typologies, to describe polity, but not politics or policies.	From classifications to analysis of politics and policies.	
	–	Concerned with evolutionary models.		

Source: adapted from Beyme, 2008: 24–32

Post-modernism in comparative politics meant first of all domination of new historical institutionalism in a style of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim’s early system approach. Moreover, economic theories and cultural approaches appeared in comparative research as well. Klaus von Beyme noted that ‘the evolution of comparative politics was not a self-steering development, but one that proved to be deeply influenced by political events’ (Beyme 2008: 35) such as decolonization, transition to democracy and so on.

Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder traced key developments in the field of comparative politics during the twentieth century in their book *Passion, Craft and Method of Comparative Politics*. They selected 15 of the most influential contributors to the field in second half of the 20th century (see Table 2).

Table 2. The most influential researchers of comparative politics in the second half of the 20th century

Researcher	Contribution
Gabriel A. Almond	Structural functionalism and political development
Barrington Moore, Jr.	The critical spirit and comparative historical analysis
Robert A. Dahl	Normative theory, empirical research, and democracy
Juan J. Linz	Political regimes and the quest for knowledge
Samuel p. Huntington	Order and conflict in global perspective
Arend Lijphart	Political institutions, divided societies, and consociational democracy
Guillermo O'Donnell	Democratization, political engagement, and agenda-setting research
Philippe C. Schmitter	Corporatism, democracy, and conceptual travelling
James C. Scott	Peasants, power, and the art of resistance
Alfred Stepan	Democratic governance and the craft of case-based research
Adam Przeworski	Capitalism, democracy, and science
Robert H. Bates	Markets, politics, and choice
David Collier	Critical junctions, concepts, and methods
David D. Laitin	Culture, rationality, and the search for discipline
Theda Skocpol	States, revolutions, and the comparative historical imagination.

Howard J. Wiarda once noted that *comparative politics is the queen of the [political science] discipline*. Indeed, if we were to make an alternative list of the most important scholars from the late 20th century until the beginning of the 21st century and looking exclusively at the recipients of the Johan Skytte Prize in political science since 1995 (this award is given to the scholars who have made the most valuable contribution to political science), it is obvious that most awardees belonged to the field of comparative politics.

Moreover, the only recipient from political science of the Nobel Prize is Elinor Ostrom, who might well be identified with comparative politics. All this shows the huge importance of comparative politics in the discipline of political science.

Table 3. Recipients of the Johan Skytte Prize in political science

1995	Robert A. Dahl	CP and PT
1996	Juan J. Linz	CP and PT
1997	Arend Lijphart	CP
1998	Alexander L. George	IR and CP
1999	Elinor Ostrom	PT and CP
2000	Fritz W. Scharpf	CP
2001	Brian Barry	PT
2002	Sidney Verba	CP
2003	Hanna Pitkin	PT
2004	Jean Blondel	CP
2005	Robert Keohane	IR
2006	Robert Putnam	CP and PT
2007	ThedaSkocpol	CP and PT
2008	Rein Taagepera	CP
2009	Philippe C. Schmitter	CP
2010	Adam Przeworski	CP
2011	Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris	CP and PT
2012	Carole Pateman	PT and CP

CP = comparative politics; IR = international relations; PT = political theory.

Comparative method

In general the comparative method is the oldest and most popular method of acquiring knowledge. Ph. Schmitter observed that comparison is an analytical method – perhaps, the best available one for advancing valid and cumulative knowledge about politics (Schmitter 2006: 1).

The foundations of the comparative method were laid down in the mid-19th century by John Stuart Mill, who described a number of methods for finding causal factors. In the case of Mill’s method of agreement one needs to look for events that occur whenever the phenomenon being studied occurs. The single event that is found to be common to all occurrences of the phenomenon is said to be the cause. Mill’s method of difference asks to see if changes in a phenomenon occur whenever a particular event changes. The single event that is found to change when differences occur in the phenomenon is said to be the cause.

Arend Lijphart was among the first scholars who started a discussion on the comparative method within political science. In his famous article *Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method* he described the comparative method 'as one of the basic methods, the others being: the experimental, statistical, and case study methods of establishing general empirical propositions.' It is, in the first place, definitely a method, not just 'a convenient term vaguely symbolizing the focus of one's research interests.' Nor is it a special set of substantive concerns in the sense of Shmuel N. Eisenstadt's definition of the comparative approach in social research; he states that the term does not 'properly designate a specific method..., but rather a special focus on cross-societal, institutional, or macro-societal aspects of societies and social analysis' (quoted from Lijphart 1971: 682).

As Charles Ragin points out, comparative researchers examine patterns of similarities and differences across a moderate number of cases. The typical comparative study has anywhere from a handful to fifty or more cases. The number of cases is limited because one of the concerns of comparative research is to establish familiarity with each case included in a study. According to Ragin there are three main goals of comparative research: 1) exploring diversity, 2) interpreting cultural or historical significance, and 3) advancing theory.

Todd Landman noted that there are four main reasons for comparison, including *contextual description, classification and 'typologizing', hypothesis-testing and theory-building and prediction.*

Description and classification are the building blocks of comparative politics. Classification simplifies descriptions of the important objects of comparative inquiry. Good classification should have well-defined categories into which empirical evidence can be organized. Categories that make up a classification scheme can be derived inductively from careful consideration of available evidence or through a process of deduction in which 'ideal' types are generated (Landman 2008: 7).

The most famous effort at classification is found in Aristotle's *Politics*, in which he establishes six types of rule. Based on the combination of their form of rule (good or corrupt) and the number of those who rule (one, few, or many), Aristotle derived the following six forms: monarchy, aristocracy, polity, tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy (Landman 2008: 7).

Figure 2. Aristotle’s classification forms of governance

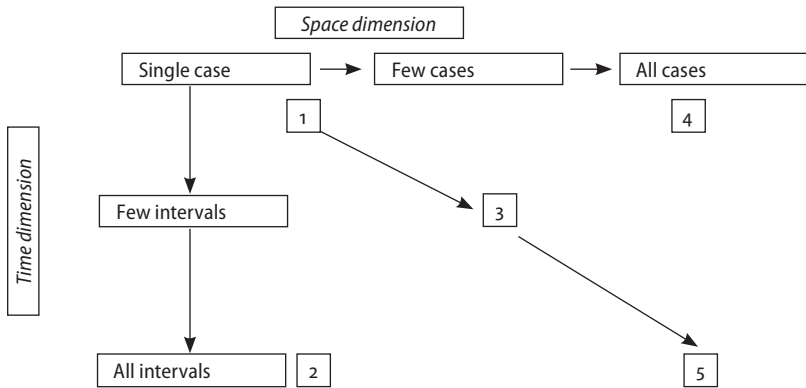
		Those Who Rule		
		One	Few	Many
Form of Rule	Good	Monarchy (kingship)	Aristocracy	Polity
	Corrupt	Tyranny	Oligarchy	Democracy

Hypothesis-testing is the second step in a comparative analysis. Once things have been described and classified, the comparative scholar can move on to search for those factors that may help explain what has been described and classified. Since the 1950s, political scientists have increasingly sought to use comparative methods to help build more complete theories of politics. Comparison of countries allows rival explanations to be ruled out and hypotheses derived from certain theoretical perspectives to be tested through examining cross-national similarities and differences (Landman 2008: 6).

Prediction is the final and most difficult objective of comparative study as it is a logical extension of hypothesis-testing to make predictions about outcomes in other countries based on the generalizations from the initial comparison, or to make claims about future political outcomes. Prediction in comparative politics tends to be made in probabilistic terms, such as ‘countries with systems of proportional representation are more likely to have multiple political parties’ (Landman 2008: 10).

There are five options of comparative study (see Figure 3): 1) The single case study (*either a country, an event or systemic feature*); 2) The single case study over time (*i. e. a historical study or time series analysis*); 3) Two or more cases at a few time intervals (*i. e. closed universe of discourse*); 4) All cases that are relevant regarding the Research Question under review; 5) All relevant cases across time and space (*pooled time series analysis*).

Contemporary comparative politics has tended to focus on variables. The antiquated version tried to explain the behaviour of whole cases – often one of them at a time. The usual approach has been to choose a problem, select some variable(s) from an opposite theory to explain it, decide upon a universe of relevant cases, fasten upon some subset of them to control for other potentially relevant variables, and

Figure 3. Options of comparative study

go searching for ‘significant’ associations (Schmitter 2006: 30). With the comparative method political scientists should be equipping themselves to conceptualize, measure and understand the great increase in the complexity of relations of power, influence and authority in the world that surrounds them (Schmitter 2006: 39).

Questions

1. What is comparative politics?
2. Who are the main contributors to contemporary comparative politics?
3. Explain the difference between hypothesis-testing and prediction.

Further Reading

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1. The State

- Definitions of the state
- State institutions
- Development of the modern state
- Organization of the state

State is the main object of most discussions of comparative politics. This chapter addresses the concept, definitions and development of the state. As Gianfranco Poggi notes, ‘The comparative analysis of the arrangements under which political activity is carried out refers chiefly to a multiplicity of independent but separate, to a greater or lesser extent autonomous, units – let us call them polities. Polities differ among themselves in numerous, relevant respects, and entertain with one another relations – friendly or antagonistic – which reflect those differences. These exist against the background of considerable similarities. The most significant of these qualify the polities making up the modern political environment, for being called states’.

The expression of state is sometimes used for some pre-modern polities such as ancient Egypt or imperial China, but according to Poggi the most appropriate use of this term would be in the context of the modern political environment, which formed in Western Europe at the end of the Middle Ages.

In the words of Hague and Harrop (2004:7), ‘the state is a unique institution, standing above all other organizations in society. The state can legitimately use force to enforce its will and citizens must accept its authority as long as they continue to live within its borders’.

Table 1. 1. UN member states

Number of UN member states								
Year	1949	1959	1969	1979	1989	1999	2009	2011
Number	59	82	126	152	159	188	192	193

Source: <http://www.un.org/en/members/growth.shtml#2000>

Definitions

State is a dominant principle of political organization in the modern world (the number of states grew from 59 to 193 over the past 60 years (see Table 1); however, there is no single definition of this concept. According to Bob Jessop it is not clear how we should define 'state' – by its legal form, coercive capacities, institutional composition or sovereign place in the international system. Is state a subject, a social relation or a construct that helps to orient political action? The German sociologist Max Webber (1978:56) tried to distinguish characteristics of the state, according to him:

“The primary formal characteristics of the modern state are as follows: it possesses an administrative and legal order subject to change by legislation, to which the organized activities of the administrative staff, which are also controlled by regulations, are oriented. This system of order claims authority, not only over the member of the state, the citizens, most of whom have obtained membership by birth, but also to a very large extent over all action taking place in the area of its jurisdiction. It is thus a compulsory organization with a territorial basis. Furthermore, today, the use of force is regarded as legitimate only so far as it is permitted by the state or prescribed by it.”

Michael J. Sodaro (2008:124) defines state as a ‘totality of country’s governmental institutions and officials, together with the laws and procedures that structure their activities.’ Sodaro agrees that ‘the most important feature of the state that distinguishes it from other entities – such as social groups or private firms – is that the state monopolizes legal authority. In other words, only the state possesses the legal authority to make, and coercively enforce, laws that are binding on the population. This legal authority makes the state’s decisions ‘authoritative’”.

Hague and Harrop (2004:8) note that even though ‘state’, ‘country’ and ‘territory’ are related concepts, they are not the same. According to them, “The state is a political community formed by territorial population which is subject to one government. A country usually refers to a state’s territory and population, rather than its government. In international law, a state’s territory extends to its airspace, continental shelf and territorial waters.”

In talking about the definition we have to address the question of the purpose of the state. Why do we have a state? What should a state do? There is no universal answer to these questions. The debates about the purpose of this institution have raged for several ages. According to Thomas Hobbes, 'the state's main purpose would be to leave humanity free to pursue science, art, exploration, and other aspects of civilization without the pressures of continual fear, and danger of violent death.' In other words the main purpose of the state is to guarantee security and order. John Locke saw humans as born free and having the natural rights to life, liberty and property, so the main purpose of the state is to protect the possessions of its citizens as well as their individual rights and freedoms. According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'the chief purpose of the state is to enable the sovereign people to express and carry out their general will. In practical terms, he believed that this goal could be accomplished by a small elite making day-to-day decisions, as long as the citizens exercised their supervisory authority by meeting periodically in popular assemblies.' To Adam Smith, 'state's chief purpose should be to promote private enterprise and allow the forces of market economy to work without excessive government interference'. In Smith's view, 'the state should limit itself to providing a legal system designed to enable commerce to flow smoothly and to undertaking large projects that are too unprofitable for private entrepreneurs to take on themselves, such as building bridges and canals and funding public education and cultural activities'.

Even though there is no common understanding of what a state really is, according to Gianfranco Poggi, there are five main elements typical to any state – monopoly of legitimate violence, territoriality, sovereignty, plurality and relation with the population.

Monopoly of legitimate violence. Poggi (2011) notes that 'states are in the first place polities where a single centre of rules has established its executive entitlement to control and employ the ultimate medium of political activity – organized violence – over a definite territory. Individuals and bodies operating within that territory may occasionally exercise violence, but if they do so without mandate or permission from the centre of rule, the latter considers that exercise illegitimate and seeks to suppress it'. States which cannot control and

suppress illegitimate violence in their own territory are considered ‘failed states’. According to Sodaro (2008:124), such states lose their monopoly of coercive power and are seriously challenged by domestic groups which routinely ignore the laws. Basically ‘a failed state is a state that has little or no ability to govern its entire territory.’

Territoriality. One of the most significant elements of the state has to be its territory. If polity is to qualify as a state it must not only be able to manage internal conflicts, but also to defend its territory from external threats. ‘<...> relation between state and territory is an intimate one. The territory is not simply a locale of the state’s activities (violent or other), or it’s however cherished possession. Rather, it represents the physical aspect of the state’s own Identity, the very ground of its existence and of its historical continuity.’ (Poggi 2011)

Sovereignty. Sovereignty is one of the key elements of a state. Michael J. Sodaro (2008:126) defines it as ‘exclusive legal authority of a government over its population and territory, independent of external authorities’.

Box 1. 1. Types of Sovereignty

Internal sovereignty	refers to law-making power within territory
External Sovereignty	describes international recognition of sovereign’s jurisdiction over its territory

Source: Hague & Harrop 2004:8

In other words a sovereign state rejects the rights of any external actor to impose its rules or interfere in states domestic policies. As Gianfranco Poggi (2011:68) puts it a sovereign state ‘recognizes no power superior to itself. It engages in political activity on nobody’s mandate but its own, commits resources of its own, and operates under its own steam, at its own risk. It is the sole judge of its own interests and bears the sole responsibility for pursuing those interests, beginning with its own security’ However, that doesn’t mean that the state is above the law. Newton and van Deth (2010:21) note that ‘most states constrain their sovereign power by subjecting them to the rules of a constitution’. There are two types of sovereignty – internal and external (see Box 1. 1).

Sovereignty was developed in Europe and as Hague and Harrop (2004:8) note, ‘beyond Europe <...> the notion of sovereignty remained weaker. In federal ‘United States’, for instance, political authority is shared between the central and state governments, all

operating under the constitution made by 'we, the people' and enforced by the Supreme Court. In these circumstances, the idea of sovereignty is diluted and so too is the concept of the state itself.'

Plurality. In the words of Poggi (2011:69), 'the modern political environment consists in a plurality of territorially discrete, self-empowering, self-activating, self-securing states. Each of these presupposes the existence of all others, and each is in principle their equal, since it shares with them (and acknowledges in them) its own characteristics.'

Relation with the population. Population is an integral part of every state. According to Poggi (2011:69), 'the relationship between the state and its population is not a purely factual one; the population is not perceived as a mere demographic entity but as a people. As such it entertains a more significant, more intimate, one might say constitutive, relation with state itself.'

If we take a more expansive concept of the state, Gianfranco Poggi suggests adding the role of law. Law may be understood as a set of rules, commands and prohibitions, which help to prevent antisocial behaviour and distribute material resources between social groups and individuals. But 'in the West, however, law has been put to a third use in establishing polities, deciding issues of policy, instituting public agencies and offices, activating and controlling their operations.' (Poggi 2011:70). In other words the state is bound to the laws it created.

It is important to make a distinction between state and society. According to Gianfranco Poggi (2011:71), 'the state, in principal, is an ensemble of institutional arrangements and practices which <...> address all and only the political aspects of the management of a territorially bounded society'. The state represents itself through political activities such as legislation, jurisdiction, military action, etc. Society, on the other hand, is not necessarily linked to political activities. 'Individuals undertake those activities in their private capacities, pursuing values and interests of their own, and establishing among themselves relations which are not the concern of public policy' (Poggi 2011:71).

State institutions

Institutions are an inseparable element of state. According to Michael J. Sodaro, ‘political outcomes – such as governmental decisions that determine ‘who gets what’– are often decisively affected by a country’s institutional framework, and not simply by the direct impact of influential social groups or nongovernmental organizations. <...> different outcomes may result depending on how a country organizes its executive branch, its legislature, its judiciary, and other institutions, and how these organs function in practice’. According to Bob Jessop, (2006:112) there is ‘a core set of institutions with increasingly vague boundaries. From the political executive, legislature, judiciary, army, police, and public administration, the list may extend to education, trade unions, mass media, religion and even family. Such lists typically fail to specify what lends these institutions the quality of statehood’. However, Michael J. Sodaro distinguishes the five most important governmental institutions – the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, the bureaucracy and the military.

The Executive. The executive is a primary branch of political system. Generally the head of executives – may it be prime minister or president, is on the very top in the governmental hierarchy and is the one who shapes a state’s policies and is responsible for its outcome. It is important to stress the difference between *head of state* and *head of government*. The head of state ‘is a ceremonial position that carries little or no real decision-making power’ (Sodaro 2008:129). Basically it is a symbolic, prestigious but politically neutral post, which represents a nation’s unity and is above political battles. The head of government ‘is usually the country’s chief political officer and is responsible for presenting and conducting its principal policies. <...> He or she normally supervises the entire executive branch of the state, including its senior ministers (who together comprise the cabinet) and their respective ministries, as well as a host of executive-level agencies designed to propose and execute government policies.’ (Sodaro 2008:129) This distinction between head of government and head of state according to Hague and Harrop (2004:7) shows that state is not the same as government – ‘state defines the political community of which government is only the executive branch.’

Box 1. 2. Difference between the head of state and the head of government

Head of the state	a ceremonial position that carries little or no real decision-making power
Head of the government	country's chief political officer responsible for presenting and conducting principal policies.

Source: Sodaro 2008:129

The Legislature is a very important state institution whose main function is to make laws and represent citizens in the lawmaking process. The legislature may also monitor and investigate executive branch activities. In parliamentary systems (such as Britain, Germany or Italy) the legislature elects the head of the government, therefore, he or she is accountable to the parliament. In presidential systems (such as the US) the powers of the executive and legislature branches are more or less even. According to Michael J. Sodaro (2008:130), ‘even authoritarian regimes often have legislative bodies that play a certain role in the political system, though their real law making powers may be negligible or nonexistent.’

The Judiciary. The significance of judiciary according to Michael J. Sodaro (2008:131) varies from place to place.

All states have some form of legal structure, and the role of judiciary is rarely limited to such routine tasks as adjudicating civil and criminal cases. Inevitably the system of justice is intimately bound up with state's political essence. Justice is not always blind; it is often keenly political. The political importance of the judiciary was especially evident when the US Supreme Court decided the outcome of the 2000 presidential election. When the dispute arose over whether George W. Bush or Al Gore should be awarded Florida's Electoral College votes, The Court sided with Bush by a 5-4 vote.

The judiciary around the world may differ in a variety of ways – in some countries it is relatively independent and may even impose some restrictions on political leaders, in other countries (especially authoritarian) it may be a highly politicized, judiciary system and can be based on secular or religious law (such as shariah law in Iran). Some countries have constitutional courts which interpret the high-

est law of the state. Some of these courts have the power of *judicial review* which is ‘the right to invalidate laws made by the legislature and executive bodies as unconstitutional.’ (Sodaro 2008:131)

The Bureaucracy is a necessary part of every government. ‘Without a well-developed network of state organs charged with advising political decision-makers about different policy options and implementing policies once they have been decided upon, governments could not govern. The modern state invariably includes a vast array of ministries, departments, agencies, bureaus, and other officiously titled institutions whose purview may range from the domestic economy to education, health, the environment, international trade, foreign relations, and so on. The growth of bureaucracy has been a long-term political phenomenon in most countries, as have more recent efforts in some countries (including the United States) to trim their size to less costly proportions.’ (Sodaro 2008:131).

The Military. According to Michael J. Sodaro (2008:132), ‘military establishments can have a formidable impact of their own on the organization of institutional authority’. State can be ruled directly by the military, or military officials may try to influence civil government indirectly. This is especially evident in the states which are in the transitional period to democracy (it was the case in the transition of Spain, Portugal or Greece). A *coup d’état* is ‘a forceful takeover of state power by the military’. Studies show that the main causes of a coup d’état are economic stagnation, breakdown in law and order, poor governmental performance, etc.

Poggi also adds citizenship as an important institution. According to Hague and Harrop (2004:11), ‘citizenship refers to the rights and obligations following from membership of a state; it represents a political and legal status which can, in principle, be shared by people with different national identities.’

Development of the modern state

The modern state and all its features is a result of a long historical evolution (you can see aspects of the growth of modern state in table 1. 2.). Gianfranco Poggi distinguishes three broad phases in the development of the state.

Consolidation of rule. It is estimated that ‘consolidation of rule’ took place between the 12th and 17th centuries. During this period the number of political centres decreased and the remaining ones expanded their territories. ‘The political map of the continent (Europe) becomes simpler, for each centre now practices rule, in an increasingly uniform manner, over bigger territories. These, furthermore, tend to become geographically more continuous and historically more stable...’ (Poggi 2011:76). The process of consolidation of rule could happen in a peaceful way, through royal marriages for instance, but in most cases consolidation was the outcome of military conflicts.

Military activity itself requires and produces rules on its own, the very core of an emerging body of law seeking, more or less successfully, to regulate aspects of the relations between states. Another significant part of such law makes conflict over territory less likely by laying down clear principles of succession into vacant seats of power, which generally make the exclusive entitlement to rule dependent on legitimate descent. (Poggi 2011:77).

Developments in cartography also allowed states to determine their geographical borders more precisely, so each political centre could rule in clearly delimited borders.

Rationalization of rule is the second phase in state development and it basically determines in which ways the power of the state will be exercised. Rationalization can be characterized in three aspects – centralization, hierarchy and functions.

Centralization is basically the building of bureaucracies. The process of consolidation of rule forced rulers to co-operate with various subordinate but privileged power holders such as aristocratic families. These power holders maintained to some degree autonomous control over certain resources or man power. So in order to use those resources the ruler had to make arrangements with these groups or families. This considerably limited the rulers’ freedom of action. In the long run, ‘instead of relying on their former co-operators, they choose to avail themselves of agents and agencies, that is individuals and bodies which the rulers themselves select, empower, activate, control, fund, discipline, and reward.’ (Poggi 2011:78). For this reason, some institutions had to be built –such as the police to maintain

domestic order, the military to ensure external security, or taxes to finance state affairs (Newton, van Deth 2010:25).

‘Ensembles of individuals who carry out political and administrative activities – the bureaucratic units- must be *hierarchically* structured. At the bottom of the structure, even lowly office-holders are empowered to give orders (issue verdicts, collect taxes, conscript military recruits, deny or give permissions) to those lying below the structure itself. Those holders themselves however, are supposed to do so in compliance with directives communicated with their superiors<...> Law plays a significant role in structuring these arrangements of rule. First, law itself <...> is a hierarchically structured set of authoritative commands. Second, law can be taught and learned, and the knowledge of it (at various levels) can determine, to a greater or lesser extent, the content of the agents’ political and administrative operation.’(Poggi 2011:79)

The third element of the rationalization of rule is *function*. A centralized system is internally differentiated, that means every office is responsible for a specific field, and has to deal with the corresponding problems. In order to solve those problems every office has to have required resources (be a certain type of knowledge or some sort of material resources).

Traditional power holders had usually engaged in collaborating with rulers’ material and other resources from their own patrimony; their collaboration was self-financed and unavoidably self-interested. Now agencies operate by spending public funds allocated to them on the basis of express, periodic decisions (budgets) and are held accountable for how those funds are spent. Office holders are typically salaried, manage resources that do not belong to them but their offices, and as they comply with their duties are not expected to seek personal gain, except through career advancement.(Poggi 2011:79)

In the long run the masses acquired the right to participate in governmental decision-making. ‘Political parties were founded to link citizens with elites in assemblies and parliaments. Less visible – but certainly not less significant – was the institutionalization of opposition parties: gradually these political systems accepted the idea that peaceful opposition to the government was legitimate, and even the

idea of peaceful change of groups or parties in government'. (Newton, van Deth 2010:26) Legitimacy of political power was achieved through mass elections.

The expansion of rule. For a long time the main concerns of the state were recognition and the ability to pursue its own interests on the international scene and maintaining law and order within its own territory. However, in the second half of the 19th century states became more and more active in a diverse range of social interests. According to Gianfranco Poggi (2011:79),

Essentially, the state no longer simply ordains through legislation the autonomous undertakings of individuals and groups or sanctions their private arrangements through its judicial system. Increasingly, it intervenes in private concerns by modifying those arrangements or by collecting greater resources and then redistributing them more to some parties than others. Also it seeks to manage social activities according to its own judgments and preferences, for it consider the outcome of those activities as a legitimate public concern, which should reflect a broader and higher interest.

Table 1. 2. Growth of the Western state, 1789–1975

Aspects of the growth of the Western state, 1789–1975		
Aspect	Definition	Examples
Centralization	The centralization of power over a specific territory	Law enforcement border control
Standardization	Greater uniformity within society	Common language, standard weights and measures, consistent time zones
Force	Strengthen monopoly of legitimate force	National police force
Mobilization	Increased capacity to extract resources from society	Taxation, conscription
Differentiation	State institutions and employees are increasingly distinct from society	The idea of public service
Functions	Growth in the state's tasks and it's intervention in society	War-making, welfare provision
Size	Expansion of state's budget and personnel	Growth of public sector.

Source: Adapted from Hague & Harrop 2004, Box 2. 2, p. 21

After World War II in Europe ‘the warfare state gave way to the welfare state, with governments accepting direct responsibility for protecting their citizens from the scourges of illness, unemployment and old age’ (Hague and Harrop 2004:20).

Rokkan also names *nation building* as one of phases in the development of the state. Nation building concerns cultural issues such as a common language, history, religion, etc. The goal of nation building was to create a common identity, a feeling of belonging and allegiance to the state. This was mainly achieved through the compulsory education of every child. ‘In order to heighten national identity, ‘systems of symbols’ – such as a national hymn, national flag and national heroes – were emphasized. By developing this sense of ‘belonging’, elites tried to transform their states into nation states’ (Newton, van Deth 2010: 25).

Organization of the state

States can be classified by their organizational structure. National government is one of the most important elements of the state; however, local governments can also play a significant role. The importance of sub-national governmental bodies varies from state to state, but basically three main models can be distinguished. In *unitary states* ‘decision-making authority and disposition over revenues tend to be concentrated in the central institutions’. Examples of such states are France and Japan. *Federations* ‘seek to combine a relatively strong central government with real authority for various administrative units below the national level’. Even though sub-national units in federations are dependent on national governments for some part of their budget, they can collect local taxes, elect local officials and to a certain degree pass their own laws. Examples of federal states are the USA, Germany or the Russian Federation. Confederation ‘is an even looser arrangement characterized by a weak central government and a group of constituent sub-national elements that enjoy significant local autonomy or even independence as sovereign states’. In confederal states the national government performs only the basic tasks such as national defence or national currency. For the national government to take action, the

consent of the sub-national government is needed. Examples of confederations are Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates.

We can also classify states into nation-states and multinational states. *Nation-states* contain only the people belonging to its nation. Even though there are not many pure nation-states nowadays (Iceland could be one example), this term is still significant. In France or Germany state is still based on a strong national identity despite numerous minorities in these countries – ‘in essence, these countries remain nation-states, even if they lack the ethnic homogeneity of Iceland’ (Hague & Harrop 2004:11). *Multinational states* contain people belonging to more than one nation, for example Great Britain or Belgium. These examples show that multinational states can achieve political stability; however, some multinational states – like Bosnia experienced vicious conflicts between inner national groups.

State is one of the main concepts in comparative politics. Even in the age of globalization, when some scientists are talking about the ‘withering away’ of the state, this concept is one of the most important building blocks of comparative politics. As Newton and van Deth (2010:13) note, we cannot ‘understand the politics of the European Union, a form of political organization that is above and beyond individual states, unless we understand what states are and what they do’. So the concept of the state is still essential for understanding the political organization of the modern world.

Questions

1. What are the key elements of the state?
2. Why is bureaucracy essential to the modern state?
3. Explain the term sovereignty. What is the difference between internal and external sovereignty?
4. What is citizenship?
5. What is a failed state?
6. What is the difference between the head of government and the head of state?
7. What is the role of law in the modern state?
8. What is meant by ‘expansion of rule’?

Further reading

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Web links

- Website of the Thirty Years' War which gave rise to the modern states after the Peace of Westphalia 1648)
www.pipeline.com/~cwa/TYWHome.htm -
Website on the French Revolution
<http://userweb.port.ac.uk/~adressd/frlinks.htm> -
Website about Italian unification, independence and democratization
www.arcaini.com/ITALY/ItalyHistory/ItalianUnification.htm -
Website about the American Civil War.
<http://americancivilwar.com/> -

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2. Political Regimes

- Definitions of different types of political regime
- Historical development and change of regimes
- Typologies of democracy and authoritarian rule

The multiplicity of forms that modern states take is an obvious fact, but there is no one criterion of classifying them. Probably the most holistic criterion that defines the political system of any state as a whole is its political regime. According to Philippe C. Schmitter and Guillermo O'Donnell (1986: 73), a political regime is an aggregate of

<...> patterns, explicit or not, that determines the forms and channels of access to principal governmental positions, the characteristics of the actors that are admitted or excluded from such access, and the resources and strategies that they can use to gain access. This necessarily involves institutionalization, i.e., the patterns defining a given regime must be habitually known, practiced, and accepted, at least by those which these same patterns define as participants in the process. <...> For the purposes of summary comparison and generalization, these ensembles of patterns are given generic labels such as authoritarian and democratic, and occasionally broken down further into subtypes.

Thus, even if a state is defined as a democratic republic by its constitution, it may not be a democracy in terms of the habitual practices that define its political regime. Regimes describe informal institutions as much as the formal or the official form of government – be that a republic, a monarchy, a theocracy, or any other. The latter is not the same variable in cross-national comparative research as political regime.

As was mentioned above, the most general patterns of political process that amount to the two broadest categories of political regime are democratic and authoritarian rule. Although historically countries were governed by authoritarian regimes (normally, absolute monarchies), the rapid increase in democratic polities over the last century has boosted a scholarly interest in cross-national studies of democratic institutions and democratization. Authoritarian regimes, however, have not perished and those that have survived up

until nowadays are mostly systems of a new kind, very different from ancient monarchies. Some states are still, and some would argue will permanently be, in a transitional phase between authoritarianism and democracy. The scope of this chapter, therefore, is to identify the main attributes of the most prominent types of political regime without a claim to present an exhaustive list or an overall classification of such types.

Definitions of different types of political regime

Given that by political regime we simply mean accepted and institutionalized ‘procedures that regulate access to state power’ (Munck, 2001: 123), any particular type of regime must be defined with reference to the concrete procedures and practices it involves. **Democracy**, for example, is ultimately defined by free (i. e. unrestricted) competition for power and popular choice of the ruling few, usually by means of free and popular election. Except for cases of collective decision-making of the whole population – *direct democracy* – which is highly unsuitable for such populous polities as modern nation-states, in democratic regimes people nominally rule through their representatives. A procedural definition of democracy was best articulated by the economist and political theorist Joseph A. Schumpeter more than half a century ago; according to him, democracy is

[an] institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote. <...> [This] is of course no more definite than is the concept of competition. <...> To simplify matters we have restricted the kind of competition for leadership which is to define democracy, to free competition for a free vote (Schumpeter, 2003 [1943]: 269–271).

The modern-day conception of democracy, however, goes beyond mere procedures of political competition. As Michael J. Sodaro (2008: 171) notes, ‘*democracies also impose legal limits on the government’s authority by guaranteeing certain rights and freedoms to their citizens.*’ Some would argue that such definition only applies to a particular subtype of democracy, a *liberal democracy*. If the definitive features of democracy, as mentioned above, are free competition for

state power, a universal right to vote for any of the competing parties, and civil liberties guaranteed to every citizen, then a regime lacking any of these pillars can be considered only partially democratic. Neither is a polity fully democratic if the popularly and freely elected government does not effectively control the policy-making and the main policy decisions are made or influenced by some unelected and publicly unaccountable body (the military, religious clergy, etc.). Political scientists have introduced a number of terms to describe such regimes that David Collier and Steven Levitsky (1997) wittily call ‘democracies with adjectives’. Table 2. 1 shows what shortcomings of democracy some of these terms primarily refer to and the names of the political scientists who established them.

Table 2. 1. Examples of diminished subtypes of democracy

Missing Attribute	Diminished Subtype	Term used by
Full Suffrage	Limited democracy	Ronald P. Archer (1995)
	Male democracy	Georg Sørensen (1993)
	Oligarchical democracy	Jonathan Hartlyn & Arturo Valenzuela (1994)
Full Contestation	Controlled democracy	Bruce M. Bagley (1984)
	De facto one-party democracy	Adrian Leftwich (1993)
	Restrictive democracy	Carlos H. Waisman (1989)
Civil Liberties	Electoral democracy	Axel Hadenius (1994)
	Hard democracy	Guillermo O’Donnell & Philippe Schmitter (1986)
	Illiberal democracy	Donald Emmerson (1994)
Effective Power of the Elected Government	Guarded democracy	Edelberto Torres Rivas (1994)
	Protected democracy	Brian Loveman (1994)
	Tutelary democracy	Adam Przeworski (1988)

Source: Collier and Levitsky, 1997: 440

The bottom line, however, is that any regime which does not secure both political and civil liberties, as well as electoral control over policy outcomes is only **semi-democratic** – something between a democracy and authoritarian rule. As Peter Mair (2011: 89–90) notes, ‘With real-world cases, we see not only a separation between the <...> pillars of democracy in theory, but also in practice. In other words,

many new democracies are seen to have democratized only in terms of the election, and to have neglected the building of corresponding constitutional guarantees and liberties.’ For the last thirty years or so it was conventional wisdom to believe that new democracies which have not yet acquired all the democratic characteristics are in a transitional phase to becoming liberal democracies. However, political scientists like Thomas Carothers have recently suggested that some of these countries have habitualized non-democratic practices as part of their hybrid political regimes. In his seminal article ‘*The End of the Transition Paradigm*,’ Carothers (2002: 18) argues that,

what is often thought of as an uneasy, precarious middle ground between full-fledged democracy and outright dictatorship is actually the most common political condition today of countries in the developing world and the post-communist world. <...> It is a state of normality for many societies.

Rod Hague and Martin Harrop (2004: 47) further developed a distinction between ‘new democracies’ that are still developing in terms of political regime and already established semi-democratic regimes:

A *semi-democracy* blends democratic and authoritarian elements in *stable* combination. <...> By contrast, a *new democracy* is one that has not yet had time to consolidate; that is, democracy has not become the „only game in town’. In practice, new democracies and semi-democracies show similar characteristics but a new democracy is transitional while a semi-democracy is not. Assuming a new democracy does not slide back into authoritarian rule, it will develop into either an established democracy or a semi-democracy.

There is no particular timeframe of when to ‘call off the jury’ on a new democracy and simply label it as a semi-democratic regime, but it clearly involves a relatively deep institutionalization of certain undemocratic elements. Box 2. 1. sums up some of the most important definitions regarding democratic and semi-democratic regimes.

The other ideal type of political regime which diametrically contrasts democracy is **authoritarianism**. There are, however, two meanings in which political scientists use this term: according to Hague and Harrop (2004: 52), ‘authoritarian rule’ can mean ‘1) any form

Box 2. 1. Definitions of democracy

<i>Form</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Direct democracy	The citizens themselves assemble to debate and decide on collective issues
Representative democracy	Citizens elect politicians to reach collective decisions on their behalf, with the governing parties held to account at the next election
Liberal democracy	The scope of democracy includes constitutional protection of individual rights, including freedom of assembly, property, religion and speech
New democracy	A democracy in which an authoritarian legacy continues to influence political action and debate. Democracy is not the only game in town
Semi-democracy	An illiberal democracy in which elected politicians do not respect individual rights, or in which elected governments form a façade behind which previous rulers continue to exercise effective power

Source: Hague and Harrop, 2004: 35

of non-democratic rule or 2) those non-democratic regimes which, unlike totalitarian states, do not seek to transform society and the people in it'. The first usage implies that a **totalitarian** regime is just an extreme version of authoritarianism; in the second case, totalitarian and authoritarian rule are two ideal types in their own right. Two of the most prominent scholars of non-democratic regimes Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan use four key dimensions (pluralism, ideology, form of leadership, and political mobilization) to define political regimes and eventually came up with three (instead of two) ideal types – democracy, authoritarianism and totalitarianism. They define authoritarian regime as

political system with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities [of the people], without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group excercises power within formally ill-defined limits, but actually quite predictable ones (Linz and Stepan, 1996 [2010]: 207).

At the same time, they define totalitarianism as a regime that 'has eliminated almost all pre-existing political, economic, and social pluralism, has a unified, articulated, guiding, utopian ideology, has

intensive and extensive mobilization, and has a leadership that rules, often charismatically, with undefined limits and great unpredictability and vulnerability for elites and nonelites alike' (Linz and Stepan, 1996 [2010]: 208). The same authors also speak of *post-totalitarian* regimes, such as post-Stalinist Soviet Union or post-Maoist China, where there is a considerable shift from a commitment to a certain social utopia towards pragmatism (although the ideological façade still remains), some checks on leadership via party structures and 'internal democracy' with top regime officials being less charismatic, and some limited social and economic (but not political) pluralism often spawning a 'second (unofficial) culture' or 'parallel society' (Linz and Stepan, 1996 [2010]: 209-215). Box 2.2 includes some important definitions regarding non-democratic regimes.

Box 2. 2. Definitions of authoritarian rule

<i>Form</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Authoritarian rule	(1) Any form of non-democratic rule. (2) Those non-democratic regimes which, unlike totalitarian states, do not seek to transform society and the people in it
Totalitarian rule	A regime that aims for total penetration of society in an attempt, at least in theory, to transform it
Communist regime	Political system in which the communist party monopolizes power, leading to an all-encompassing bureaucratic state. In theory, the objective is to implement Marx's vision of a classless society
Fascist regime	A regime based on an anti-liberal doctrine that glorifies the nation and advocates a warrior state, led by an all-powerful leader, to whom the masses show passionate commitment and submission
Military rule	Government by the military, often ruling through a junta comprising the leader from each branch of the forces

Source: Hague and Harrop, 2004: 52-53

Historical development and change of regimes

As was already mentioned in the introductory section,

[u]ntil modern times states were normally ruled by authoritarian regimes and most of these were hereditary monarchies. These monarchical authoritarian regimes were based on a traditional form of inherited personal rule that was restrained to varying degrees by traditional customs and institutions. However, <...> once democracy began to compete with the monarchies, <...> [the latter] would increasingly be replaced by at least semi-democratic republics or constitutional monarchies (Brooker, 2011: 103).

In his highly influential book *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century* (1991) American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington suggested that historically there were three major periods of transition from various forms of authoritarian rule to democracy worldwide. He calls them *waves of democratization* (see Table 2. 2). In between these waves there were significant shifts back to authoritarianism in some of the newly democratized countries (*reverse waves*).

The first wave had its roots in the American and French revolutions. The actual emergence of national democratic institutions, however, is a 19th century phenomenon. In most countries during that century democratic institutions developed gradually. <...> [O]ne can say that the United States began the first wave <...> roughly about 1828 <...> [when] universal manhood suffrage boosted to well over 50% the proportion of white males actually voting in the 1828 presidential elections. In the following decades other countries gradually expanded the suffrage, reduced plural voting, introduced the secret ballot, and established the responsibility of prime ministers and cabinets to parliaments.

<...> The first reverse wave began in 1922 with the March on Rome and Mussolini's easy disposal of Italy's fragile and rather corrupt democracy. <...> The dominant political development of the 1920s and 1930s was the shift away from democracy and either the return to traditional forms of authoritarian rule or the introduction of new mass-based, more brutal and pervasive forms of totalitarianism. <...> These regime changes reflected the rise of communist, fascist, and militaristic ideologies.

<...> Starting in World War II a second, short wave of democratization occurred. Allied occupation promoted inauguration of democratic institutions in West Germany, Italy, Austria, Japan, and Korea. <...> In the late 1940s and early 1950s Turkey and Greece moved towards democracy. In Latin America Uruguay, <...> Brazil and Costa Rica shifted to democracy in the 1940s. <...> Meanwhile, the beginning of the end of Western colonial rule produced a number of new states [and] <...> in a few new states – India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Israel – democratic institutions were sustained for a decade or more.

<...> By the early 1960s the second wave of democratization had exhausted itself <...> and regime transitions were taking on a heavily authoritarian cast. The change was <...> dramatic in Latin America, <...> [but] the decolonization of Africa led to the largest multiplication in independent authoritarian governments in history. The global swing away from democracy in the 1960s and early 1970s was impressive: in 1962, by one count, 13 governments in the world were the product of coups d'état; by 1975, 38 were. <...> This wave of transitions away from democracy [i. e., second reverse wave] was even more striking because it involved several countries, such as Chile, Uruguay („the Switzerland of South America'), India, and the Philippines, that had sustained democratic regimes for a quarter century or more.

<...> Once again, however, <...> following the end of the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974, democratic regimes replaced authoritarian ones in approximately 30 countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America. <...> This [third] democratic tide manifested itself first in Southern Europe. Three months after the Portuguese coup, the military regime that had governed Greece since 1967 collapsed and a civilian government took over. <...> On November 20, 1975, <...> the death of Gen. Francisco Franco ended his thirty-six-year rule in Spain. <...> In the late 1970s the democratic wave moved on to Latin America <...> [and] in 1977, the premier democracy of the Third World, India, which for 1,5 years had been under emergency rule, returned to the democratic path. In 1980 <...> the Turkish military for the third [and the last] time took over the government of that country; in 1983, however, they withdrew and elections produced a civilian government. <...> At the end of the decade, the democratic wave engulfed the communist world. <...> Overall, the movement towards democracy was a global one. In 15 years the democratic wave moved across Southern Europe, swept through Latin America, moved on to Asia, and decimated dictatorship in the Soviet bloc. <...> By 1990, close to 39% of humankind lived in free societies (Huntington, 1991: 16–25).

Table 2. 2. Samuel Huntington's three waves of democratization

<i>Wave</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Examples</i>
First	1828–1926	Britain, France, USA
Second	1943–1962	India, Israel, Japan, West Germany
Third	1974–1991	Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, parts of Africa

Source: Hague and Harrop, 2004: 40

Rather than identifying prominent periods of regime change throughout human history, some political scientists are more interested in the particular path (or paths) of how the democratic regimes replaced authoritarian ones, first and foremost the traditional rule of the blue-blooded dynasties. For example, Robert A. Dahl argued that early democracy in Western countries was developed in three stages: 1) *incorporation* of the masses into political society, 2) *parliamentary representation* of politically active groups, and 3) *organization of the opposition* to vote out the government. Mair (2011: 91) notes that

Dahl was referring primarily to the stages that were reached during Huntington's long first wave of democratization, in which these milestones were passed one by one, and often over an extended period of time. During the third-wave transitions, by contrast, the milestones were reached more or less simultaneously.

The first milestone [*incorporation*] was reached when citizens won the right to participate in government decisions by casting a vote, which implied a widening of political society and the opening up of the polity to the involvement of – eventually – all adult citizens. Among the older and more long-standing democracies, this milestone began to be passed in the mid-19th century.

Such Western European countries as France, Germany, and Switzerland had introduced universal male suffrage already by the 1840s, but the universal female suffrage was not adopted to a worldwide extent until the beginning of the 20th century (see Table 2. 3.).

The *second* of Dahl's milestones was the organization of politically active people into parties and *representation* of such parties in parliaments. As Mair (2011: 92) suggests, '[o]ne useful if not wholly accurate indication of the passing of this milestone was the shift

Table 2. 3. The introduction of voting rights

	Universal male suffrage	Universal female suffrage
Australia	1902	1902
Austria	1897	1919
Belgium	1894	1949
Canada	1918	1918
Denmark	1918	1918
Finland	1907	1907
France	1848	1945
Germany	1848	1919
Italy	1913	1946
Japan	1947	1947
Netherlands	1918	1922
New Zealand	1893	1893
Norway	1900	1915
Sweden	1911	1921
Switzerland	1848	1971
United Kingdom	1918	1928
United States	1870	1920

Source: Mair, 2011: 91

from the conventional majoritarian voting systems that characterized more exclusive regimes in the 19th century to a more open and proportional voting formulae' (see Table 2. 4).

Dahl's *third* milestone was marked by the right of an *organized opposition* to appeal for votes against the government in elections and in parliament. <...> In parliamentary systems, this milestone is reached when the executive becomes fully responsible to the legislature, and hence when it can be dismissed by a majority in parliament. One rough indicator of when this milestone was reached among the more long-standing democracies can be seen in the timing of the first acceptance of socialist or social democratic parties into government. <...> Given that these parties constituted the last major opposition to develop in most democracies prior to 1989, their acceptance into executive office marked a crucial watershed in democratic development (Mair, 2011: 92–93).

Table 2. 4. The Adoption of Proportional Voting Formulae

	PR first introduced:
Australia	1918/19*
Austria	1919
Belgium	1900
Canada	-
Denmark	1920
Finland	1907
France	1945
Germany	1919
Italy	1919
Japan	1947
Netherlands	1918
New Zealand	1993
Norway	1921
Sweden	1911
Switzerland	1919
United Kingdom	-
United States	-

Source: Mair, 2011: 92 (*Alternative vote in single-member districts)

Table 2. 5. The inclusion of socialist parties in cabinets

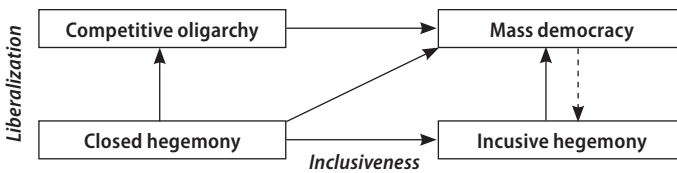
	First socialist party presence in cabinet
Australia	1904
Austria	1919
Belgium	1917
Canada	-
Denmark	1918
Finland	1926
France	1936
Germany	1919
Italy	1945
Japan	1993
Netherlands	1939
New Zealand	1935
Norway	1928
Sweden	1917
Switzerland	1943
United Kingdom	1924
United States	-

Source: Mair, 2011: 93

Table 2. 5. shows the dates of when left-wing parties first assumed top executive offices in the oldest democracies of the Western world. In some well-established democracies, such as Canada and the USA, the socialist opposition never effectively challenged the ruling elite, but these countries nevertheless managed to develop a bipolar party competition with major parties or coalitions regularly altering each other in the government.

Historically Dahl's milestones were reached selectively and in different orders across different polities. Some of them took the path of 1) *liberalization* by allowing more political groups to be represented in the parliament and oppose the government without extending universal suffrage to the masses. Such polities, which were classified as *competitive oligarchies* by Dahl, included the parliamentary regimes of the UK and France prior to World War I. Other countries chose 2) *inclusiveness* over public competition for government office, thus relying on a non-competitive mass electoral process. Among such *inclusive hegemonies* were Nazi Germany and the Soviet bloc countries. According to Mair (2011: 94), 'the polities that became effectively democratic <...> did so by *both* liberalizing *and* becoming more inclusive, whether simultaneously or in stages' (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2. 1. Robert Dahl's typology of democratization processes



Source: Mair, 2011: 94

Typologies of Democracy and Authoritarian Rule

Both democratic and authoritarian regimes are often further divided into subtypes although political scientists rarely include more than one criteria for classification. This section will only deal with the most recognized and most holistic typologies that take into account various aspects of the given type of political regime.

Models of democracy. According to Peter Mair (2010: 95),

[t]here have been only a handful of attempts by scholars to devise typologies of democracies as whole systems, and the most comprehensive of these has been the influential distinction between **majoritarian** and **consensus** democracies that was elaborated by Arend Lijphart.

Lijphart's ideal models of majoritarian and consensus democracy were fashioned inductively and based on real-world political systems: the first is best represented by the UK and some of its former colonies (hence the majoritarian model is sometimes also called the 'Westminster model') and the second – by such continental European countries as Switzerland and Belgium. The basis of this typology is implied by the idea of democracy itself and the different ways it is interpreted in practice. In the words of Lijphart (1999: 1–2),

[d]efining democracy as „government *by* and *for* the people' raises a fundamental question: who will do the governing and to whose interests <...> when the people are in disagreement and have divergent preferences? One answer to this dilemma is: the majority of the people. This is the essence of the *majoritarian model* of democracy. <...> The alternative answer to the dilemma is: as many people as possible. This is the crux of the *consensus model*. It does not differ from the majoritarian model in accepting that majority rule is better than minority rule, but it accepts majority rule only as a minimum requirement: instead of being satisfied with narrow decision-making majorities, it seeks to maximize the size of these majorities. Its rules and institutions aim at broad participation in government and broad agreement on the policies that the government should pursue. <...> [While] the majoritarian model concentrates political power in the hands of a bare majority <...> the consensus model tries to share, disperse, and limit power in a variety of ways. <...> [In a nutshell], the majoritarian model of democracy is exclusive, competitive, and adversarial, whereas the consensus model is characterized by inclusiveness, bargaining, and compromise.

Majoritarian democracies, however, are not 'less democratic' in the sense that today's minority has the full institutional capacity to become tomorrow's majority. While the majoritarian model involves a regular alternation of the ruling party, in consensus democracies 'a change in government <...> usually means only a partial change in the party composition of the government' (Lijphart, 1999: 6). Natu-

rally, the institutional arrangement in majoritarian systems is much more suitable for a regular and complete swap between the position and the opposition: this includes a two-party system, a disproportional (usually majoritarian) electoral system, single-party cabinets, etc. Overall, Lijphart uses 10 institutional variables to distinguish between majoritarian and consensus models. These ten variables cluster rather neatly in two separate dimensions: the first (which Lijphart himself calls the *executives-parties dimension*) describes the horizontal power relation among the main political institutions – the legislature, the executive, political parties; the second (*federal-unitary dimension*) mostly deals with the vertical concentration/dispersion of power among different levels of government. Table 2.6 shows the institutional features of Lijphart’s ideal models against the 10 variables suggested by the author.

Table 2. 6. Majoritarian and Consensus models of democracy

<i>Institutional feature</i>	<i>Majoritarian (Westminster) model</i>	<i>Consensus model</i>
Executive	Concentration of executive power in single-party majority cabinets or minimum winning coalitions	Executive power-sharing in broad multiparty coalitions
Executive-legislative relations	Executive dominates legislature	Balance of power in executive-legislative relations
Party system	Two-party system	Multiparty system
Electoral system	Majoritarian and disproportional	Proportional representation (PR)
Interest group system	Pluralist	Corporatist
Type of government	Unitary and centralized government	Federal and decentralized government
Legislature	Unicameral	Strong and incongruent bicameral
Constitution	Flexible and easily amended	Rigid and difficult to amend
Judicial review	Parliamentary sovereignty	Constitutional court
Central bank	Dependent on executive	Independent from executive

Source: Mair, 2011: 86

A more recent attempt to construct a holistic typology of democracies was set forth by John Gerring and Strom Thacker (2008). Much

like Lijphart, these authors distinguish between two contrasting ideal types of **decentralist** and **centripetal** democracy. Although these theoretical models also reflect first and foremost on the centralization of power within democratic polities, unlike Lijphart's pure majoritarianism, which denotes exclusive and concentrated power, Gerring and Thacker's *centripetalism* involves both inclusiveness and powerful authority:

Institutions [in a centripetal system] must be *inclusive* – they must reach out to all interests, ideas, and identities <...> and they must be *authoritative* – they must provide an effective mechanism for reaching agreement and implementing that agreement. The concept of centripetalism thus implies both (a) broad-based inclusion and (b) centralized authority. <...> Centripetal institutions thus encourage a search for common ground and culminate in an authoritative decision-making process, one not easily waylaid by minority objections (Gerring et al., 2005: 569–570).

Similarly to Lijphart's consensus model, *decentralist* democracy of Gerring and Thacker is also based on such organizing principles as

diffusion of power, broad political participation, and limits on governmental action. <...> Decentralist government is limited government. Each independent institution acts as a check against the others, establishing a high level of interbranch accountability. <...> The existence of multiple veto points forces a consensual style of decision-making. <...> Decentralized authority structures may also lead to greater popular control over <...> political decision-making. Efficiency is enhanced by political bodies that lie close to the constituents they serve.

<...> What are the specific institutional embodiments of decentralism? Separate powers implies two elective lawmaking authorities as well as a strong and independent judiciary. Federalism presumes the shared sovereignty of territorial units within the nation-state. Both also suggest a bicameral legislature, to further divide power at the apex and to ensure regional representation. <...> [T]he decentralist model seems to imply a written constitution, perhaps with enumerated individual rights and explicit restrictions on the authority of the central state. Most decentralists embrace the single-member district as a principle of electoral law, maximizing local-level accountability. Some advocate preferential-vote options <...> or a system of open primaries, thus decentralizing the process of candidate selection (Gerring and Thacker, 2008: 8–9).

Such institutional arrangement is approximated by the political system of the USA. The centripetal democracy, by contrast, results from a completely different institutional juncture:

unitary (rather than federal) sovereignty, unicameralism or weak bicameralism <...>, parliamentarism (rather than presidentialism), and a party-list proportional electoral system <...>. In addition, the centripetal polity should be characterized by a strong cabinet, medium-strength legislative committees, strong party cohesion, <...> no limits on tenure in office, <...> congruent election cycles, closed procedures of candidate selection (limited to party members), <...> party-centered political campaigns, multiparty (rather than two-party) competition, centralized and well-bounded party organizations, centralized and party-aligned interest groups, <...> a restrained (nonactivist) judiciary, and a neutral and relatively centralized bureaucracy (Gerring et al., 2005: 570).

Table 2. 7. indicates the 21 most significant institutional differences between centripetal and decentralist systems. Gerring and Thacker make clear that the centripetal model does not fully correspond to the Westminster system defined by Lijphart; in empirical terms the former is best represented by the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian polities rather than the UK.

There are at least two problems with the holistic models of democracy, such as those proposed by Lijphart and Gerring *et al.* According to Peter Mair (2011: 97), ‘in practice, <...> democracies rarely prove as sharply bounded or as internally coherent as the various theoretically informed whole-system models might suggest.’ Most of the real-world cases usually have certain features of both of the contrasting ideal types. What is more,

[h]olistic models are <...> increasingly undermined by cross-national learning processes, and the diffusion of particular institutional arrangements. <...> Democracies, in short, are less and less likely to be closed or self-contained systems, and in this sense they are also less and less likely to reflect totally consistent patterns when subject to comparative whole-system analysis (Mair, 2011: 97–98).

Types of authoritarian rule. Since all democracies, by definition, must fulfil the minimum institutional requirement of a popularly

Table 2. 7. Decentralist and centripetal paradigms of governance

Institutional feature	Decentralism	Centripetalism
Territorial sovereignty	Federal	Unitary
Legislative branch	Bicameral, symmetrical, and incongruent	Unicameral, asymmetrical, or congruent
Executive	Presidential	Parliamentary
Electoral system	Single-member district or preferential vote	Party-list PR
Constitution	Written, with explicit limits on sovereignty	Unwritten or ambiguous; no explicit limits on sovereignty
Cabinet	Weak, durable	Strong, slightly less durable
Parliamentary committees	Strong	Medium-strength
Party cohesion	Weak	Strong
Dissolution	No (i. e., fixed terms)	Yes
Term limits	Perhaps	No
Elective offices	Many	Few
Election cycles	Incongruent	Congruent
Candidate selection	Open, diffuse	Closed
Voting cues	Personal vote	Party vote
Campaigns	Media, interest groups, candidate organizations	Parties and party leaders
Party systems	Two-party dominant	Multiparty
Party organization	Weak, decentralized, porous	Strong, centralized, bounded
Interest groups	Fragmented, nonpartisan	Centralized, party-aligned
Referenda	Possibly	No (or only at instigation of legislature)
Judiciary	Activist, independent	Restrained, independent
Bureaucracy	Multiple independent agencies	Neutral, relatively centralized

Source: Gerring *et al.*, 2005: 571

elected government, political scientists use other institutional variables to distinguish between subtypes of democratic regimes. By contrast, the origin of the ruling elite may vary substantially across authoritarian regimes. As Paul Brooker (2011: 105) notes,

[t]he question „who rules?’ has long been used <...> to categorize regimes. <...> In the case of authoritarian regimes an obvious distinction is between rule by an organization and rule by the leader of an organization. But often priority has been given to the distinction between rule by two different forms of organization: a professional military and a political party. <...> The emphasis on either the military or the party as the subject of study has sometimes resulted in the personal dictatorship by either a military or party leader being included as part of the study of military regimes or one-party states.

Personal rule, however, is very different from organizational rule. Although occasionally a personal dictator may have been brought to power by the military or a party, he ‘has loosened the principal-agent relationship between him and the military or party organization to such a degree that he is able to ‘shirk’ his responsibilities to his organizational principal. Indeed he may have gone even further and actually reversed the relationship by converting the military or party organization into merely an instrument of his personal rule, as in the classic Stalin’s achievement of absolutist ‘totalitarian’ personal rule in the 1930s’ (Brooker, 2011: 107). In addition to such *organization-based* (but nevertheless) *personal dictatorships*, personal authoritarian regimes are also exemplified by *ruling monarchies* (as opposed to merely reigning ones) and *populist presidential dictatorships*. The former are very rare in the contemporary world (found only in the Arabian/Persian Gulf region) and presumably have survived until nowadays only because ‘their royal families are very large and have shown willingness to ‘engage in public service’ in government, the civil service, and the military. <...> This gives the dynastic royal families the sort of extensive control over the state’ (Brooker, 2011: 106). The latter subtype is historically novel but has spread worldwide since the third wave of democratization of the 1970s–1990s. According to Brooker (2011: 108), populist presidential authoritarianism

emerges through an elected president’s personal misappropriation of power, which Latin America long ago labelled an *autogolpe* or ‘self-coup’. <...> Although [it] does not involve any military or party organization, it can be analysed in principal-agent terms as a reversal of the relationship between the electorate as principal and the elected

president as its agent. By reversing the relationship the president makes the electorate the instrument of his personal rule in the sense of providing him with a claim to democratic legitimacy, which he usually confirms by having himself re-elected. These new elections will be undemocratic, but the populist president <...> may be genuinely popular with a wide section of the people.

Organizational authoritarianism, as mentioned above, has been recognized to take two forms: military and one-party rule (see Figure 2.2). *Military regimes* are highly unstable with an average lifespan of several years rather than decades (with the exception of Burma/Myanmar). Usually resulting from military coups d'état, they may continue their existence as *open* military rule (with top military officials forming a ruling junta or occupying key government positions) or they can 'disguise' themselves in civilian façade. In the words of Brooker (2011: 109), 'the *civilianization* of a military dictatorship involves a highly publicized ending of such obvious features <...> as a junta or a military officer holding the post of president, though often the supposed civilianization of the presidency involves no more than the military incumbent [officially] resigning or retiring from the military.'

One-party rule can produce more long-standing dictatorships than a military coup d'état. An authoritarian regime of this kind 'comes about through a dictatorial party either seizing power through a revolution or misappropriating power after it has won key government positions through democratic elections' (Brooker, 2011: 109). A one-party state can be established legally banning all other parties, or effectively preventing them from competing properly against the ruling party. However, as Brooker notes (2011: 109), 'a one-party state is not necessarily a case of one-party rule. The various structural forms of one-party state have sometimes been established by military dictatorships, personal dictators and even ruling monarchs' (as did the Shah of Iran several years before the 1979 revolution). The one official party may be merely an instrument in the hands of the actual ruler(s) of the country who does (do) not play by the institutional rules of that party. Internal party cohesion is best secured by some guiding ideology; that is why party dictatorships are usually categorized by political scientists according to their ideological/

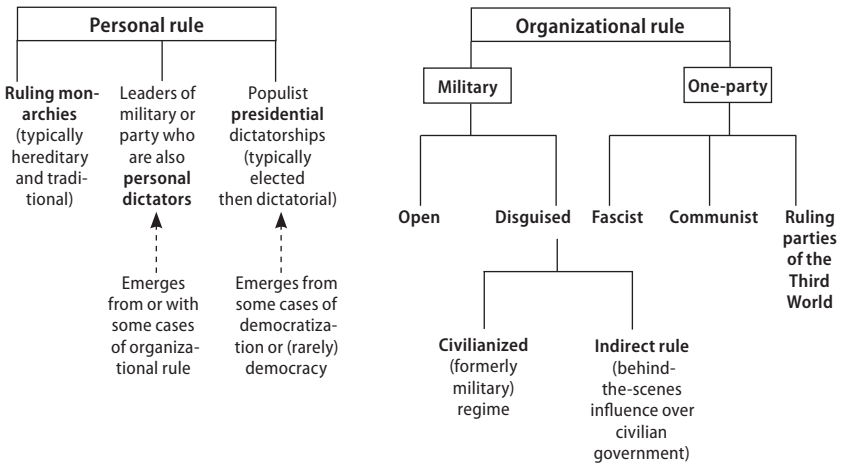
policy orientation. Fascist regimes have historically been the rarest subtype of one-party rule and have been extinct since the military defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945. By contrast,

[t]he communist regime is historically the most important as well as most numerous subtype. It produced one of the 20th century's superpowers, the <...> Soviet Union, and seems set to produce another superpower in the 21st century if China maintains its rate of economic progress. <...> At their numerical peak in the 1980s there were nearly two dozen regimes that espoused the basic communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism. But about a third of these regimes were actually <...> personal dictatorships, <...> which left less than a dozen „true' cases of organizational rule by the communist party. And so many communist regimes collapsed in the late 1980s and early 1990s that now only three of these organizational dictatorships still survive – China, Vietnam, and Laos (Brooker, 2011: 110).

* * *

Political regime is arguably the most holistic criterion that defines the political system of any state. Covering all patterns that determine the actors, procedures, and resources to access state power, po-

Figure 2. 2. Typology of authoritarian regimes



Source: Brooker, 2011: 109

litical regimes ultimately fall under the two main categories known to political science – democracy and authoritarian rule. There are, however, real-world political systems that manage to incorporate both democratic and authoritarian institutions. Some of them are in a transitional phase on the way to either authoritarianism or democracy. The others, as the post-transition paradigm in comparative politics would have us believe, have reached a stable institutional condition and are best classified as hybrid semi-democratic regimes.

From a historical point of view, certain types of political regime have been more prevalent at some points in human history than others. The authoritarian rule of absolute monarchs, which was the dominant type of political regime since the advent of the modern (nation-)state, throughout the last hundred years or so was gradually supplanted by democracy (at least in the Western world). So far political science has identified *three* major waves of worldwide transitions to democracy and *two* periods of backsliding to authoritarianism. Notably, ‘each reverse wave has eliminated some but *not all* of the transitions to democracy of the previous democratization wave’ (Huntington, 1991: 25), thus according democracy the upper hand in the 21st century. Although most of the democratic countries of today reached all the institutional milestones of democracy simultaneously (which is especially characteristic of third wave democracies), some have taken a ‘detour’ of first *liberalizing* the political competition for government office and then caught up with universal suffrage later. Others (notably one-party regimes) chose the path of *including* the masses into the electoral process without real competition among elite groups and thus it took them a few more decades and the demise of one-party rule to establish real democracy.

For the purpose of comparison and causal explanation both democracies and authoritarian regimes are further subdivided into subtypes. Democracies mainly differ in terms of horizontal and/or vertical concentration of power and such binary divisions as Arendt Lijphart’s majoritarian vs. consensus democracy or John Gerring *et al.*’s centripetal vs. decentralist democracy are meant to correspond to these differences. Authoritarian regimes are differentiated according to who actually controls the state apparatus. In practice it can be either an individual dictator or an organization, whether the

military or the ruling party. However, all these subtypes of democracy and authoritarianism are merely ideal models created by political scientists trying to make sense of the vast variety of political units 'out there'; real-world polities hardly ever manifest all the definitive features of such models.

Questions

1. How would you define political regime and how is it different from the official form of state government (usually indicated in the constitution)?
2. What are the main pillars that define democracy?
3. What is the difference between a new democracy and a semi-democracy?
4. What is the difference between a totalitarian regime and an authoritarian regime in the narrow sense?
5. What examples of first, second and third wave democracies do you know?
6. What historical paths towards democracy were identified by Robert Dahl?
7. What overall principle sets apart majoritarian from consensus democracies according to Arendt Lijphart?
8. How is John Gerring and Strom Thucker's classification of democracies different from that of Lijphart?
9. What are the problems of using holistic (multivariable) models of democracies in comparative research?
10. What forms of authoritarian rule have been recognized so far?

Further Reading

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Websites

International Forum for Democratic Studies:

<http://www.ned.org/research>

Freedom House:

<http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Website covering events in the twenty-eight post-communist countries:

<http://www.tol.org>

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3. Legislature

- Definition of legislature
- The role of legislature
- Structures of legislature

Legislatures are one of the most important institutions in the modern state; they are present throughout the world and play a central role in almost all political systems. However, according to Amie Keppel (2011:122), ‘Different scholars have come to very different conclusions about political power and policy influence of legislatures <...> general evaluations vary depending on the cases that are studied, the theoretical framework employed, the historical period under examination, and the precise understandings of ‘power’ and ‘influence’ invoked.’

Nonetheless, legislatures are symbols of representation in politics. According to Hague and Harrop (2004:247), ‘they are not governing bodies, they do not take major decisions and usually they do not even initiate proposals for laws. Yet they are still the foundation of both liberal and democratic politics. How then does their significance arise? <...> legislatures join society to the legal structure of authority in the state. Legislatures are representative bodies: they reflect the sentiments and opinions of the citizens’.

Definition

Even though legislatures are present in almost all political systems there is no single definition for this institution. Hague and Harrop (2004:247) define legislature as ‘a multimember representative body which considers public issues. Its main function is to give assent, on behalf of a political community that extends beyond the executive authority, to binding measures of public policy.’ However, it is not so easy to answer the question ‘what is a legislature?’ The terms may vary from ‘assembly’, ‘congress’ to ‘parliament’ (see Box 3. 1). According to Amie Keppel (2011:122), ‘all four are defined as a ‘legislative body’ or a ‘body of persons having the power to legislate’, making efforts to clearly distinguish between them difficult. And yet, most would

Box 3. 1. Definitions.

Term	Definition
Assembly	A legislative body; specifically, the lower house of a legislature
Legislature	A body of persons having the power to legislate; specifically, an organized body having the authority to make laws for a political unit
Parliament	The supreme legislative body of usually major political unit that is a continuing institution comprising a series of individual assemblages
Congress	The supreme legislative body of a nation and especially of a republic

Source: Adapted from Kreppel 2011, Box 7. 1., p. 12

agree that the terms are not interchangeable, and that there are different meanings implied by the use of one rather than the others.’

Assembly in the broadest definition – ‘a group of persons gathered together, usually for a particular purpose, whether religious, political, educational, or social. <...> This understanding of legislature is expansive enough to include a wide array of very different institutions, while still distinguishing between legislature and other types of assemblies organizes for religious, educational or social purposes.’ (Keppel 2011:122). Hague and Harrop distinguish two types of assemblies – talking assembly and working assembly (see Box 3. 2.).

Box 3. 2. Types of assemblies

Type	Function
Talking assembly	such as the British House of Commons, where floor debate is the central activity; it is here that major issues are addressed and reputations are won and lost.
Working assembly	such as American Congress, where the core activity takes place in committee rooms. There, legislators shape bills, authorize expenditure and scrutinize the executive.

Source: adapted from Hague & Harrop 2004, p. 251

In parliamentary systems legislatures are referred to as *parliaments*. As Kreppel (2011:123) puts it: ‘this name reflects not only the type of system in which the legislature resides, but also its central task. The word parliament is derived from the French verb *parler*, to speak <...> the name is well chosen as the institutional and political con-

strains on parliaments generally serves to focus their activities on debate and discussion.’

Congress is a different type of legislature most commonly present in presidential (separation of powers) systems. In these systems ‘the legislative and executive branches are selected independently and neither has the ability to dissolve or remove the other from office (except in the case of incapacity or significant legal wrongdoing). <...> The use of congress to denote legislatures within separation-of-powers systems in general is justified by the policy-making focus of the primary activities they tend to pursue, as well as the increased likelihood of a more conflictual relationship with the executive branch when compared to fused power systems.’ (Keppel 2011:123).

The role of legislatures

The roles of the legislatures can significantly vary according to the broader political environment; however, Keppel distinguishes three main categories – linkage and representation; oversight and control; and policy-making.

Linkage and representation. Many scholars see citizens’ linkage to the government as a fundamental task of any legislature. As Kreppel (2011:125) puts it,

<...> even when the legislature is weak in terms of its other roles, it is always able to serve ‘as an intermediary between the constituency and the central government. In this context, legislatures act as a conduit of information allowing local-level demands to be heard by the central government and the policies and actions of the central government to be explained to citizens

According to John M. Carey (2006:432), ‘legislatures are plural bodies with larger membership than executives, and so offer the possibility both to represent the range of diversity in the polity, and to foster closer connections between representatives and voters.’

However, legislatures are expected not only to provide linkage between citizens and government, but also to represent their constituents. As Kreppel (2011:125) puts it, ‘legislators are responsible for

advocating for their constituents in their stead, ensuring that the opinions, perspectives, and values of citizens are present in the policy-making process'. However, there are different interpretations of a legislator's responsibility to represent its constituent. That depends on how members of the legislature are understood – as *delegates*, or as *trustees* (see Box 3. 3).

Box 3. 3. Interpretations of the representative responsibility

Delegates	Members of legislatures are expected to act as mechanistic agents of their constituents, unquestioningly carrying messages and initiatives from them to central government.
Trustees	Members of legislatures are expected to serve as a more active interpreter of their constituents' interests and incorporate the needs of the country as a whole, as well as their own moral and intellectual judgment, when acting within the political, and especially policy realm.

Source: adapted from Kreppel 2011, p. 125

An important function of legislature is to be a stage for public debate, where different opinions and opposing views engage with one another.

According to Kreppel (2011:126), 'debate function will be a more central and important activity in those legislatures with limited direct control over the policy-making process, which includes most non-democratic systems. This is because public debate within the legislature has the capacity to affect public opinion, thus providing legislators with an opportunity to influence policy-making indirectly by increasing public awareness of critical issues'. All in all '...the ability of legislature to create links between citizens and government by providing adequate representation to critical groups and minority interests and fostering public debate will determine both its institutional legitimacy and its ability to provide legitimacy for the political system as a whole.' (Keppel 2011: 126).

Control and oversight

One of the foundations of representative democracy is the ability of the governed to control the government. Generally this is achieved through free and fair elections, however, according to Kreppel (2011:126), ‘in most cases citizens lack sufficient time, access, and information, as well as the technical skills needed, to effectively oversee the details of the daily political activity of the executive branch. It is the task of the legislature to fill this lacuna.’ (see Box 3. 4).

Box 3. 4. Legislatives’ control functions in different systems

Separation of powers	The control functions of congress type legislatures are limited. The executive cannot be removed from office because a majority in the legislature disapproves of its politics. The legislature’s ability to remove an executive from office is extremely limited – restricted to cases of illegal activity and/or physical or mental incapacity.
Fused powers	Parliament-type legislatures are explicitly tasked with policy related control of the executive branch. Executives are responsible to the legislature for their policy agenda and may be removed from office if their policy goals are deemed unacceptable by a majority in legislature.

Source: adapted from Kreppel 2011, p. 126

According to Carey (2006:433), ‘notwithstanding the privileged place of majorities in almost all democracies, unrestrained majority rule is widely mistrusted as subject to excesses and abuse of minority rights. Opposition groups may use the legislature as a forum to oppose, and perhaps to obstruct, actions by majority coalitions’. That is why, according to Keppel (2011:127),

legislatures in both separation-of-powers and fused-powers systems (see box 3. 4.) play critical role in ensuring proper oversight of both the budgetary implications of policies and their implementation.<...> Legislative oversight of the executive branch is generally quite broad, entailing both the monitoring of executive agencies tasked with implementation of policy decisions and regular engagement with the political.

Oversight can be conducted in a number of ways from question time to investigative committees (see Box 3. 5.).

Control over expenditure is one of the oldest functions of legislature, and even though, according to Hague and Harrop, nowadays it became nominal, Kreppel (2011:127) argues that ‘control and oversight of expenditure, even if limited by entitlements and other political artifices, is a

Box 3. 5. Ways of conducting oversight

Question time	Generally used in parliaments and provides a regularly scheduled opportunity for members of legislature to present oral and written questions to members of the government, including the prime minister.
Special inquiries and hearings	Organized on an ad hoc basis to investigate specific topics or issues that are considered important by some legislators and are present in both separation-of-powers and fused-powers systems.
Investigative committees	Are more formalized than hearings and tend to investigate higher order issues, and often have longer duration. Investigative committees exist in both separation-of-powers and fused-powers systems.
Reports on specific issues	Legislatures may request, or even require, that the executive or its bureaucratic agencies provide it with reports on specific issues of concern.

Source: adopted from Kreppel 2011, p. 127

powerful tool that can provide even the weakest of legislatures the opportunity to influence policy decisions. There are few policy goals that can be achieved without some level of funding. As a result, the ability of the legislature to withhold or decrease funding for initiatives supported by the executive branch can become a useful bargaining tool.’

Policy-making. There are a number of ways in which legislators can affect policy-making. Kreppel distinguishes three main ways – consultation, delay and veto, amendment and initiation.

According to Kreppel (2011:128), ‘the most basic, and generally least influential, type of legislative is *consultation*. This power grants the legislature the authority to present an opinion about a specific legislative proposal, general plan of action, or broad policy programme. Consultation in no way guarantees that the executive branch will abide by the opinion of the legislature. Yet, the ability to present an opinion and to differentiate the views of the legislature from that of the executive can be important in many contexts.’

Delay and veto can be called a negative power of legislature. Delay can only slow down the process of legislation, despite this, ‘the ability to delay passage of a proposal can be an effective bargaining tool when the executive branch prefers rapid action’. Veto power can block policies from being adopted regardless of the position of the executive. That’s why, according to Kreppel, it can be ‘effective bargaining tool for the legislature when the executive bargaining tool for the legislature when the executive branch has a strong interest in changing the policy status quo.’ (Keppel 2011:128).

Of course the most important positive legislative tool is the right to *amend and initiate* proposals. As Kreppel (2011:128) puts it, ‘the ability to substantively amend bills allows the legislature to change aspects of the executive branch’s proposal to achieve an outcome more in line with the preferences of a majority of its members. Frequent restrictions to amendment power include limitations on the stage in the process at which amendments can be introduced (Spain), the number of amendments that can be introduced (Austria), or the ability of the legislature to make changes that would incur additional costs (Israel).’ However, according to Hague and Harrop (2004:254), ‘legislation is rarely the function where ‘legislatures’ exert most influence. <...> At national level legislatures must approve bills but effective control over legislation usually rests with the government.’ It is difficult to note what functions of legislature can be called central, or most influential. For some legislatures (like the UK or Greece) oversight functions are pre-eminent, but on the other hand, in the US or Italy legislatures place far more emphasis on policy-making.

Structures of legislature

Every legislature has its own internal structure. According to Keppel (2011:129), ‘that allows for an effective division of labour, the development of specialized expertise, access to independent sources of information, and other basic organizational resources.’

Number of chambers. The most obvious and important variations that exist between legislatures is the number of chambers.

‘In most cases legislature have either one chamber (unicameral) or two (bicameral). Multi-chamber legislatures are generally created to ensure adequate representation for different groups within the political system. The lower (and usually larger) chamber provides representation for the population as a whole, while the upper chamber represents specific socially or territorially different groups. These can be political subunits such as states (US), Länder (Germany), or cantons (Switzerland), or different groups of citizens such as aristocrats (UK) or ethnicities (South Africa under apartheid). Unicameral legislatures are more likely to be found in unitary political systems with comparatively homogeneous populations (such as Scandinavia).’ (Keppel 2011:129).

There is ongoing debate about whether unicameralism is better than bicameralism, or vice versa. More detailed arguments of both sides are presented in Box 3. 6.

Box 3. 6. One chamber or two?

<i>Pro-unicameralism</i>	<i>Pro-bicameralism</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power is mainly located in one assembly. No confusion of roles, responsibilities, or accountability • No overlap or duplication between assemblies. Two assemblies can result in rivalry and even deadlock between the two. • There is room for only one elected, representative body. 'If second chamber agrees with the first, it is useless; if it disagrees it is dangerous' (Abbe Sieyes). • Most legislatures are unicameral, and the number is increasing. Many new states have adopted unicameralism with apparent success. • Unicameralism is particularly suitable for unitary states. • Unicameralism seems to work best in small countries. • Second chambers with appointed members are often criticized as being places where 'has-been politicians' go to die. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two chambers provide another set of checks and balances, with powers to delay, criticize, amend, or veto – a constitutional backstop. • Two forms of representation, usually direct election to lower chamber, and another form of election (indirect) or appointment to the higher. • A second chamber can reduce the workload of the first by considering legislation in detail, leaving the first chamber to deal with broad issues. • Bicameralism is suited to federal systems, where territorial units of government within the state can be represented at national level: 80% of bicameral systems are in federal states. • Some claim the main defence of bicameralism is political – upper chambers are conservative bodies with the job of tempering the actions of the lower house. • Bicameralism seems to work best in countries that are large or socially and ethnically diverse – it helps to resolve regional conflict.

Source: adapted from Newton and van Deth 2010, p. 78

Not only the number of chambers, but also the relationship between them is very important. 'In the unicameral system all of the powers of the legislative branch are contained within the single chamber. However, in bicameral systems these powers may be 1) *equally shared* (both chambers can exercise all legislative powers), 2) *equally divided* (each chamber has specific, but more or less equally important powers), or 3) *unequally distributed* (one chamber has significantly greater powers than the other). The first two cases are considered *symmetric bicameral* systems, while the latter are *asymmetric bicameral* systems.' (Keppel 2011:129). Symmetric (also known as *strong*) bicameralism may lead to serious conflict or even deadlock, that is why according to Newton and van Deth (2010:79), 'there are rather few

cases of successful strong bicameralism.’ Most bicameral systems are asymmetric (or *weak*). Typically in such systems ‘the lower house initiates legislation and controls financial matters and the upper house has limited powers to delay and recommend amendments’ (Newton and van Deth 2010:79). The two chamber structure also raises the question of how second the chamber should be chosen. According to Hague and Harrop (2004:249), ‘the three main methods are: direct election (used by 27 of 66 upper houses), indirect election through regional or local governments (21/66), and appointment, usually by the government (16/66).’

Number, quality, and consistency of members

A few basic descriptive statistics, such as the size of the parliament, the length of a session, or the extent of professionalism of members (that is are they allowed to maintain additional employment) can also reveal a great deal about the political role and characteristics of legislature.

Table 3. 1. Size of legislatures (lower house) in some Central East European countries

	Number of MPs <i>de facto</i>	Number of MPs according cube-root rule	Difference between <i>de facto</i> and cube-root MPs
Bulgaria	240	209	31
Czech Republic	200	218	-18
Slovakia	150	174	-24
Estonia	101	117	-16
Latvia	100	139	-39
Lithuania	141	154	-13
Hungary	386	219	167
Poland	460	338	122
Romania	341	286	55
Slovenia	90	125	-35

For example, size is important, because it is harder to reach coherent decisions in large and diverse parliaments. Hague & Harrop (2004:248) note, ‘With legislatures – unlike countries – size rarely

Box 3. 7. Types of parliamentary committee

<i>Type</i>	<i>Function</i>
Standing (permanent) committee	To consider bills in detail
Select committee	To scrutinize the executive, often one committee for each main government department Ad hoc committees to investigate particular matters of public interest
Conference or mediation committee	A joint committee to reconcile difference in the version of a bill passed by each chamber (bicameral legislatures only)

Source: adopted from Hague & Harrop 2004, p. 251

indicates strength. Rather the opposite applies: very large chambers are rendered impotent by their inability to act as a cohesive body. <...> by contrast, a very small chamber – say, under 100 – offers opportunities for all deputies to have their say in a collegial environment.’

The rightsizing of legislature is a frequently discussed issue in democratic countries, especially in new democracies. The size of the legislature is usually measured according to cube-root rule, i. e. a legislature should have a number of members equal to the cube-root of the population being represented.

The length of sessions can also be an indicator of the role of the legislature in a political system – ‘at one extreme are legislatures that are formally or functionally ‘in session’ more or less year-round. On the other end of the spectrum are ‘part-time’ legislatures that meet for only a few days of the year and must accomplish all of their policy-making and oversight tasks during these limited periods.’ (Kreppel 2011:130).

Committees. According to Hague and Harrop (2004:250), ‘given the complexity of modern politics, a powerful assembly needs a well-developed committee structure if it is to develop the detailed expertise needed for real influence. Committees have become the working horses of effective legislatures’. That is why internal organization of almost all legislatures is based on the committee system. However, there can be numerous variations that may exist between these committees (see Box 3. 7).

According to Kreppel (2011:131):

One of the most important aspects of committees is their permanency. Committees that are created on an ad hoc basis not only tend to be less efficiently organized, but their members lack the opportunity to develop area-specific expertise or the contacts with external actors that facilitate independent and informed decision-making. Given the size of most legislatures committees often serve as a forum for the bulk of legislative activity, including the bargaining and coalition-building that must often be achieved between (or even within), political parties. The smaller size and less public nature of committees increase their utility as a forum for these types of activities. However, if the committees are not permanent they are unlikely to provide the necessary level of stability required to reap these benefits.

According to Hague and Harrop (2004:252), ‘apart from the party system, the key to the influence of committees lies in three factors: expertise, intimacy and support.’ (see Box 3. 8.)

Box 3. 8. Influence of committees

Expertise	Emerges over time from committees with specialized responsibilities and a clear field of operation. Expertise is most likely to develop in permanent committees with continuity of operation and membership.
Intimacy	Emerges from smallsize and is reinforced by stable membership. Particularly when meetings take place in private, a small group setting can encourage co-operation and consensus, overcoming any initial hostility between members from competing parties
Support	Refers to the use of qualified staff to advise committees. Expert researchers can help busy politicians to produce well-founded recommendations.

Source: adopted from Hague & Harrop 2004, p. 252

The order in which proposals move between full plenary and committees is an indicator of the role of committees in a particular legislature. According to Kreppel (2011:134), ‘if legislation is fully vetted on the full floor prior to being sent to committees, committees are unlikely to play a substantial role in policy-making. <...> In contrast, when bills are reviewed and amended within the committees first, the legislature is more likely to have a more substantial influence on policy outcomes.’

Legislature’s power

According to Keppel (2011:135), ‘there are two aspects of legislature’s relative autonomy that are important: the independence of the institution as a whole; and the independence of its members individually.’

Institutional independence. The level of institutional autonomy of legislature depends on its relationship with the executive branch. In the fused power systems legislative authority tends to be central, while in separation of powers systems legislative decision-making is decentralized.

The impact of the interdependent relationship that exists between the executive and legislature in fused-power systems is particularly important. The responsibility of the legislature for both installing and maintaining the executive branch severely constrains its ability to pursue independent legislative action. Majorities must remain comparatively stable in their support for the executive and by extension the executive's policy initiatives. In many (if not most) cases the defeat of an executive initiative of even moderate significance is considered de facto vote of no confidence with potential to force the resignation of government. The resulting instability, including the potential for new legislative elections, makes such actions risky for legislatures in fused-powers systems<...> separation-of-powers systems do not place any of these restrictions on the legislature. Because the executive branch is wholly distinct there is no need for the legislature to maintain any form of support for it. The defeat of policy proposal from the executive branch in the legislature has no capacity to impact the tenure of the executive branch or the timing of legislative and the executive branches frees the legislature from the burden of maintaining the executive in office. At the same time it liberates both branches from any need for ideological affinity or policy consensus. (Keppel 201:137)

Member independence. Two main factors indicate legislature member – party system and electoral system. Depending on the party system, the party elites' role in re-election of legislature members may be very different.

If candidate selection (or the ordering of the party lists) is controlled by the party elite, those wishing to be re-elected must maintain the support of their party leaders. On the other hand, in parties that allow local party organizations to select candidates or in which the ordering of the party lists is either predetermined or decided by a broad spectrum of party members, individual legislators will enjoy a comparatively high level of independence from party leadership. In other words, the greater the party leadership's control over a member's re-election, the smaller the member's autonomy. (Keppel 2011:137)

Electoral systems can also significantly influence members' independence:

In single-member districts voters are generally asked to select between individual candidates, while in PR systems the choice is usually between political parties. The latter method highlights the importance of parties and reinforces their primacy in mediating the citizens-government relationship. In contrast, in candidate-centered elections the political and personal attributes of the individual candidate are primary and in some cases may even overshadow the significance of party affiliation. (Keppel 2011:138)

There is a variety of types of legislature, differing on central function, power, size, structure, etc. But ultimately there is no 'best type' of legislature – there is no reason to propose that legislature with two chambers or one chamber, more powerful or less influential should be considered 'better' than the other. But it is important to understand what kind of legislatures exist, what are the strengths and weaknesses of each particular model, how are they linked to other institutions, and how they may affect the whole political system.

Questions

1. What are the core tasks of a legislature in a democratic society?
2. How are the oversight and control functions of legislatures different in fused powers and separation of powers systems?
3. Why are political parties influential in determining the autonomy of a legislature?
4. Explain the strengths and weaknesses of bicameral and unicameral systems.
5. How can legislators affect the policy-making process?
6. Explain the difference between *delegates* and *trustees*.
7. What are the types of parliamentary committees?
8. Why are legislatures generally better able to represent the interests of citizens than the executive branch?

Further reading

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Web links

Inter-Parliamentary Union's websites of national parliaments
www.ipu.org/english/parlweb.htm

Electionworld.org's Parliaments around the world website
www.electionworld.org/parliaments.htm

C-span.org's clearing house of televised legislatures and legislature websites from around the world.

www.c-span.org

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4. The Executive

- Definitions
- Evolution of the separation of powers and contemporary types of government
- Government functions and autonomy of action
- The political capacity and effectiveness of government
- Internal composition and decision-making of government: theoretical models

Within the institutional structure of modern states/political systems the executive branch of government occupies a central position so as to be perceived synonymously with ‘the government’ or ‘the state’ itself. As Wolfgang Müller notes (2011: 142), ‘a broad definition of government includes all public institutions that make or implement political decisions <...> – the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Most common, however, is to refer to a country’s *central political executive* as ‘the government’ and so it will occasionally be done in this chapter. Although in common parlance the term ‘government’ implies a collective agency, the executive power can be vested with individual actors (presidents, prime ministers, dictators, governing monarchs, etc.) as well as collectives (cabinets of ministers, Swiss *Bundesrat*, etc.). In some cases there can even be a ‘dual executive’ with president (or a relatively powerful monarch) and prime minister sharing the executive power (Sodaro, 2008: 130).

According to Rod Hague and Martin Harrop (2004: 268), ‘the executive is any regime’s energizing force, setting priorities, making decisions and supervising their implementation. Governing without an assembly or judiciary is perfectly feasible but ruling without an executive is impossible.’ Although a particular government’s powers and ability to control political outcome varies across cases and according to established institutional rules and practices,

<...> even weak governments tend to be the political system’s most important single political actor. This is a major reason why individuals and political parties mostly want to be in government. And because government is so important, positions in the central executive tend to come with other

goods that make them even more attractive: social prestige, decent income, public recognition, and privileged access to other powerful and/or famous people. The chance to govern the country and enjoy these privileges is meant to motivate the best people to compete for government office. In democracies, such competition <...> ultimately is tied to elections. Either the government is directly elected or it is responsible to a parliament that results from general elections (Müller, 2011: 142).

Even more privileged and powerful are the executives in the authoritarian (not to mention totalitarian) regimes. In the words of Hague and Harrop (2004: 268), the very ‘categories of democracy and authoritarian rule are defined by how the executive operates. Established democracies have succeeded in <...> subjecting executive power to constitutional limits. <...> In an authoritarian regime, by contrast, constitutional and electoral controls are either unacknowledged or ineffective. The scope of the executive is limited by political realities but not by the constitution.’ All in all the powers and operational modes of the executive branch of government are determined by how well and in what particular fashion the principle of the separation of powers is implemented.

Definitions

A textbook definition of political executive is implied by the term itself (*exsequi* means ‘carry out’ or ‘implement’ in Medieval Latin) and it is essentially tied to the principle of the separation of powers. It is ‘the branch of government concerned with implementing domestic and foreign policy, and applying the law’ (The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought, 2007: 232–233) adopted by the legislative branch. However, being the single most powerful actor in modern political systems the government in fact assumes a much greater role and has developed functional capacities beyond pure implementation. Kenneth Newton and Jan van Deth (2010:75) provide the following definition: ‘*the executive [is] the branch of government mainly responsible for initiating governmental actions, making and implementing public policy, and coordinating the activities of the state.*’

Hague and Harrop (2004:268) offer a similar definition, however, putting special emphasis on the political mobilization and leader-

ship potential of the executive as the perceived embodiment of the state/nation. They define it as *'the top tier of government <...> [that] directs the nation's affairs, supervises the execution of policy, mobilizes support for its goals and offers crisis leadership.'* As the primary institution that represents the whole nation and sets its political course, the central executive is bound to view things from a national standpoint as opposed to parochial. In the words of Mathew Shugart and John Carey (1992: 3–4),

[legislative] assemblies, or at least lower houses of assemblies, are intended to be representative of the population. A typical democratic assembly is elected for the purpose of giving voice to the interests of localities or to the diversity of ideological or other partisan divisions in the polity <...>. That is, assemblies are ordinarily expected to be parochial in nature. *Executives, on the other hand, are charged with acting to address the policy questions that affect the broader interest of the nation, as well as to articulate national goals.*

Although the few men and women at the apex of executive apparatus (presidents, members of the cabinet) are usually the best known to the public and are considered the most powerful, it is beyond their human capacities to run the whole country on their own. The top government officials inevitably rely on lower-rank executive officers (civil servants) to put their decisions into practice. Some of them are more important than others in carrying out the definitive functions of the executive. Rod A. W. Rhodes and Patrick Dunleavy therefore coined the term **'core executive'** which they define as *'all those organizations and structures which primarily serve to pull together and integrate central government policies, or act as final arbiters within the executive of conflicts between different elements of the government machine'* (Dunleavy and Rhodes, 1990: 4). According to Müller (2011: 142),

<...> it is difficult to pin down the precise composition of the core executive. While the government in the narrow sense constitutes its centre, the core executive also comprises top civil servants, the key members of ministers' private cabinets, and a list of actors that varies over time and space. Realistically, the demarcation line between what constitutes the core and what belongs to the remaining parts of the executive also depends on the analyst's perspective and judgement.

The main point, however, is that unlike the legislative branch, the executive – even the core of it – by definition, includes not only politicians elected by popular vote, but also unelected officials holding their office on the basis of professional performance.

Evolution of the separation of powers and contemporary types of government

As it has already been mentioned above, modern executives historically owe their position within a state's institutional structure to the separation of powers doctrine:

Today's governments emerged through the piecemeal splitting-off of the state functions from a traditionally undivided central government – mostly a monarch. In order to limit the government's power, judicial functions were transferred to courts, and legislative functions to parliaments. This process began in 12th- and 13th-century England. It had many national variations and, in Europe, was not completed before the 20th century. The constitutional doctrine of the separation of powers – as developed first and foremost by the political philosophers Locke, Montesquieu, and Madison – provided a normative justification for the separation of legislative, judicial, and executive institutions in order to guarantee liberty and justice (Müller, 2011: 142).

Throughout the course of history, however, different polities arrived at qualitatively different 'constitutional designs' to institute the separation of powers. In their seminal book *Presidents and Assemblies* Shugart and Carey (1992: 1–17) suggest that the choice of a particular constitutional design was historically first centred on the question of preserving the institution of hereditary monarchy. The initial model of an executive without a monarch was the American Presidency which was ironically designed to emulate the British executive:

[T]he Framers [of the US Constitution] <...> did not even contemplate an executive *responsible* to the representative assembly. Indeed, such a <...> type, which we would now know as parliamentarism, had yet to exist. In Britain, the cabinet was still the responsibility of the monarch, whose authority, of course, did not rest upon any connection, direct or indirect, with the electorate. <...> [Thus] the Framers were in effect replicating the essentials of a form of government that then existed in Britain <...> only with the 'monarch' [i.e., the President] popularly legitimated (Shugart and Carey, 1992: 5–6).

Therefore, historically the first type of executive was in essence the ‘presidential’ government (although the chief executive was not directly elected in any country prior the adoption of the US Constitution).

Scholars typically identify three ‘versions’ of the separation of powers: *parliamentarism*, pure *presidentialism*, and *semi-presidentialism*. <...> The distinctions across democratic regimes center around the process of selecting the executive and legislative branches, and the way in which the executive and legislature subsequently interact to make policy and administer [state affairs] (Samuels, 2007: 704–705).

More precisely, Robert Elgie singles out three criteria that the classification of contemporary government regimes is primarily based on.

The *first* characteristic which serves to distinguish regime types concerns *the procedures for electing* political leaders [i.e. the chief executives]. Most notably, it concerns the issue of whether political leaders assume office by way of some process of direct or quasi-direct popular election or as a result of the direct or quasi-direct approval of the legislature. <...> The *second* characteristic <...> concerns *the procedures for dismissing* political leaders. <...> [I]t concerns the issue of whether political leaders remain in office for a fixed term during which time they cannot be removed from power or whether they remain in office only for so long as they have the confidence of others. <...> [W]hat is important is whether or not the chief executive – usually meaning the prime minister – is *responsible* to the legislature <...> [or] whether or not the executive as a whole <...> is subject to this requirement. <...> The *third* characteristic which serves to distinguish regime types concerns *the constitutional and political powers* of political leaders (Elgie, 1998: 221–222).

Based on these three characteristics political scientists can develop an infinite number of classifications, the ideal types, however, always being parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential governments. Box 4.1 shows the definitive characteristics of these ideal types. The box also includes two contemporary systems of government that have exceptional characteristics and therefore are best classified as distinct types. These are the directorial government of Switzerland and the system with a directly elected prime minister, which is a significant modification of parliamentarism but in practice, has almost never been applied (except in Israel from 1996 to 2003).

Box 4. 1. Government creation and accountability under different regime types

Presidentialism	Parliamentarism	Directorial government	Directly elected Prime Minister	Semi-presidentialism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct or quasi-direct popular election of the president for a fixed period. • The head of state is identical to the head of government • President is not politically accountable to the legislature. • President appoints the members of government (mostly with the consent of the legislature). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The head of government (prime minister, chancellor, etc.) is different from the head of state (president or monarch). • Most parliamentary systems allow for the dissolution of the Parliament by the head of state (typically on the prime minister's or government's proposal). • The prime minister is elected by the Parliament (e. g., in Germany, Spain), appointed by the head of state (e. g. in Italy, Ireland), or the speaker of Parliament (e. g. in Sweden) with or without a subsequent vote of confidence on the composition of the government. • The prime minister and the cabinet are politically accountable to the Parliament, and can be dismissed at any time by a vote of no confidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently works only in Switzerland. The Government (Bundesrat/Conseil Fédéral) consists of seven individuals who are elected individually by Parliament for the entire term of Parliament. • The Federal President is the head of government and the head of state. The seven cabinet members rotate the presidency between them on an annual basis. • The government is not politically accountable to the Parliament. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practiced only in Israel between 1996 and 2003. The Prime minister was popularly elected at the date of each parliamentary election and when the office of Prime minister was vacant. • The cabinet was nominated by the Prime minister but required a parliamentary vote of confidence to start their term in office. • The Prime minister was politically accountable to the Parliament. However, a successful parliamentary vote of no confidence also triggered the dissolution of Parliament and hence led to new elections of both, the Prime minister and the Parliament. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct or quasi-direct popular election of the president. • President appoints the cabinet (including prime minister) • The cabinet is politically accountable to and relies on the confidence of Parliament. • President can dismiss the cabinet and/or dissolve the Parliament.

Source: Müller, 2011: 311

Government functions and autonomy of action

The very definition of the executive branch of government suggests its main functions and scope of responsibility within modern political systems. According to Newton and van Deth (2010: 75),

[t]he executive branch of government, being at the top of the political pyramid, performs three main functions:

1. *Decision-making* – initiating government action and formulating public policy;
2. *Implementation* – executives implement (apply) their policies, which means they must also run the main departments and bureaucracies of state;
3. *Coordination* – coordination and integration of the complex affairs of state.

The actions of the central executive, however, cannot be analysed in isolation from its environment. In carrying out its functions the government can in fact be an agent of a more powerful actor within the given polity. In political science literature two ‘lenses’ are more prevalent than others in defining the autonomy of a particular government: those are government–party and government–bureaucracy relations.

Government autonomy: the party dimension. According to Müller (2011: 147),

it is the electoral connection that makes governments democratic and it is political parties which play a crucial role in structuring elections, even when the electoral system allows the choice of individual candidates. Modern democracies, therefore, have *party governments* in a general sense. Yet, <...> what role parties have after the elections is subject to normative and empirical discussions.

In other words, whereas the term ‘party government’ marks an ideal model of full party control over government, empirically it is possible to speak of different extents to which the goals and policies of the executive are based on their party line. Here one particular index – that of the **‘partyness of government’** proposed by Richard Katz – is worth mentioning. According to Katz (1986: 45), this variable ‘indicates the proportion of formal governmental power exercised in ac-

cordance with the [ideal] model of party government. To the extent that system is high in partyiness of government, what formal government there is will be party government.' He also singles out several characteristics of a political system that determine the partyiness of the executive:

1. *Presidential or parliamentary government.* Party government is more likely in parliamentary systems because <...> a parliamentary cabinet needs a continuous majority of those voting to remain in office. <...> Party is a device by means of which stable majorities may be achieved. <...> Presidential government, on the other hand, makes personalism more likely. <...> A president, with the resources of the state at his command, the status and visibility of head of state and head of government, and the security of a fixed term is likely to think of himself as separate from and independent of his party. [Directly elected] presidents <...> tend to appoint officials with weak or no party ties. <...>

2. *Integration and centralisation.* <...> [D]ecentralised government also makes the centralisation of the party more difficult to maintain. This is especially so if the basis of decentralisation is geographic. <...> Implementation of policies initiated at one level may depend on cooperation of officials at another level where government has a different partisan complexion. Responsibility [to the party] is naturally obscured. <...>

3. *Electoral system.* Various aspects of the electoral system should have an impact on the level <...> of party government. Probably the most significant <...> is the presence or absence of some form of intraparty electoral choice. In some systems, voters can choose only parties; the choice of the particular individuals who will be elected if their parties are victorious is an internal party decision. In other systems, however, voters either can influence or entirely determine the choice of persons. <...> [I]t gives a successful candidate an independent base; not owing his election only to the party, he has less reason to be loyal to it. <...> Electoral systems in which the choice of candidates may cut across party lines – single transferable vote, PR with panachage, or the open primary – should be particularly inhibitive of party government. <...>

4. *Size of the public sector.* <...> [E]nlargement of the public sector is likely to decrease the partyiness of government. Firstly, a large public sector makes the ruling party more dependent on [outside] experts. <...> Secondly, the larger the sphere of government activity, the more difficult will

be the problem of coordination and the greater degree of bureaucratic uncontrollability [as such]. Thirdly, expansion of government gives more groups a greater stake in politics, <...> but many of these groups are rivals for party. Fourthly, as more of the economy comes under public control, the need for stability, the party's desire to evade responsibility if things go wrong, <...> all grow. This has led to the creation of nonpartisan <...> boards of [executive] control, for example, in banking and nationalised industries. <...>

5. *Private [as opposed to public] government.* <...> To maintain the collective responsibility that is the hallmark of party government is easier if the public is denied access to intraparty decision-making. Unable to attribute blame to any particular individual or faction, the voters are encouraged to reward or punish the party as a whole. This, in turn, gives each member of the party a stake in the success of its policies, even if he opposes them [personally]. <...>

6. *Input, representation, and communication.* When party is the primary channel for public participation, demand articulation and aggregation, and communication from leaders to followers, party government will be stronger. Where other structures, e.g., mass media and interest groups, share in performing these functions, party control over politics will be weaker. In particular, if the party is sufficiently in control of communication <...> to control the political agenda, party government will be stronger. <...>

7. *Bureaucratic anonymity.* Bureaucrats are both potential rivals for party politicians and potential scapegoats for their failures. <...> Party government is furthered when politicians cannot avoid responsibility by blaming <...> the bureaucracy and bureaucrats are more likely to implement policies they personally oppose if they know they will not suffer for efforts made. <...> Party government is undermined whenever the bureaucrats can appeal around their political masters directly to the public or to a powerful interest group clientele.

8. *Social segmentation.* Where each party represents a clearly discernable interest, segment, class, or viewpoint within society, party unity will be easier to maintain, the distinction between parties will be clearer, and party government will be more likely (Katz, 1986: 55–59).

Presidentialization of politics. The most recent academic debate concerning government autonomy (first and foremost vis-à-vis po-

litical parties) is centred on the idea of *presidentialization of politics*. As R. A. W. Rhodes suggests (2006: 327),

[i]t is difficult to overstate the scale of this debate in the academic literature. It <...> refers to three main claims: there has been a centralization of coordination, a pluralization of advice, and the personalization of party leadership and elections.

In simple terms, the concept of presidentialization ‘means *the strengthening of the chief executive <...> [which] affects the internal working of the executive, the running of political parties, and the functioning of the electoral process*’ (Müller, 2011: 148). The most systematic treatment of the concept in comparative research has been put forward by Thomas Poguntke, Paul Webb, and collaborators (2005). According to their framework, the empirical inquiry of the presidentialization phenomenon starts with

two crucially important political arenas: the political executive of the state (for governing parties) and the political party itself (for all parties). Thus, one way in which we might expect to find evidence of presidentialization of power would be through a shift in intra-executive power to the benefit of the head of government – whether this is a prime minister or a president. At the same time, executives as a whole would become increasingly independent of direct interference from ‘their’ parties. While partified government [as described above] means governing *through parties*, presidentialized government implies governing *past parties*. <...> This brings us to the third face of presidentialization, which concerns electoral processes. Again, it involves a shift from partified control <...> to the ‘personalized’ <...> or ‘candidate-centred’ campaigns of certain leaders <...> [and] the growing significance of leader effects in voting behaviour (Poguntke and Webb, 2005: 8–10).

To sum up, although the presidentialization of politics – where it is evident – implies a *greater government autonomy* vis-à-vis parties, it also involves a *greater personal power of the chief executive* vis-à-vis the rest of the government and his/her party.

Government autonomy: the bureaucratic dimension. While the concept of party government describes a certain party control over the executive, the term *bureaucratic government* denotes a similar influence from the part of the state bureaucracy. As Müller puts it (2011: 149),

[t]he idea of bureaucratic government rests on the assumption that such a small group cannot run the whole show and critically depends on the permanent bureaucracy. Bureaucrats can set the agenda of their political masters by identifying problems that need to be addressed; [thus] they can limit political choices by presenting a narrow set of alternatives and by undermining the viability of ideas that run counter to the department's common wisdom. Such ideas are labelled, for instance, as not workable, too expensive, having huge undesirable side effects, <...> etc.

Under strong bureaucratic influence the politicians may continue to dominate the public stage so that they seem to be the decisive actors, but in fact they are often just 'flying the flag' of policies thoroughly worked out by their subordinates.

The political capacity and effectiveness of government

Whatever the influence on government policy-making, the implementation of those policies is not always plain sailing and its effects are not always anticipated. The policy success of any particular government is always dependent upon certain economic, social and political conditions. The scope of this section does not allow us to discuss the former two sets of factors, although the state of the global economy, the investment decisions of private firms, and the reaction of citizens and interest groups to government decisions, often turning to mass strikes and popular unrest, can bring any executive to its knees. What follows next is first and foremost an overview of *political conditions* under which governments can theoretically find themselves working.

Majority vs. minority government. Governments that are supported by the majority of members of the legislature (at least 50% of the seats plus one) are not only better positioned to enact their political programme, but – in the case of parliamentary and semi-presidential systems – can be more secure about their very survival. Governments that do not enjoy such support – so-called **minority governments** – are not, however, an uncommon phenomenon. They are neither less stable, nor less effective than majority cabinets (see Table 4. 1.).

Table 4. 1. Cabinet majority status, duration (1945–2007) and government effectiveness index* (1996–2008)

	Minority	Majority	%	Mean duration (in months)		Government effectiveness		
	N	N		Minority	Majority	1996	2005	2008
Austria	1	23	95.8	18.2	31.6	1.99	1.60	1.71
Belgium	4	31	88.6	1.9	21.5	1.93	1.65	1.36
Denmark	29	4	12.1	23.0	26.5	2.09	2.12	2.19
Finland	17	31	75.6	6.7	20.1	2.04	2.07	1.95
France	7	21	75.0	14.5	23.0	1.94	1.46	1.54
Germany	3	25	89.3	0.8	27.8	2.01	1.51	1.65
Ireland	11	12	52.2	28.5	36.8	1.70	1.63	1.61
Italy	24	28	54.9	9.2	15.2	0.93	0.60	0.39
Luxembourg	0	16	100.0	-	40.0	2.34	1.94	1.65
Netherlands	4	23	85.2	3.6	32.9	2.44	1.95	1.86
Norway	19	10	34.5	23.2	31.7	2.13	1.99	1.95
Portugal	5	10	76.9	29.2	20.3	1.03	1.03	1.05
Spain	8	2	22.2	35.5	41.6	1.70	1.40	0.99
Sweden	20	8	28.6	29.9	20.3	2.05	1.93	1.99
United Kingdom	3	19	95.0	27.1	35.0	2.33	1.70	1.74

Source: Müller, 2011: 152, 159 (*produced by the World Bank, possible scores lie between -2.5 and 2.5. Higher scores indicate better outcome of government policies)

In his book-length study *Minority Government and Majority Rule* (1990) Kaare Strøm proposed and empirically verified several theoretical assumptions why the party forming the government would not seek to include additional parties to share cabinet portfolios so that parliamentary majority would be secured, and why the remaining parties would be disinterested in joining the government:

A parliamentary majority need not be a functional requisite for government formation. <...> [At the same time] political parties are not motivated solely by office / power considerations, but also to a significant extent by opportunities for *policy influence*. <...> One need not hold government office in order to gain policy influence, much less pleasing policy outcomes. <...> [E]ven opposition parties can enjoy some policy influence in most parliamentary democracies. <...> [Finally], full explanation requires that we investigate *the costs of holding office* as well. <...> The typical trade-off

parties face is between power (and policy influence) now and electoral success in the future. <...> The reason this temporal trade-off exists is that government incumbency typically represents an electoral disadvantage, which we can call the *incumbency effect*. <...> Several empirical studies have shown that governing parties do in fact tend to lose votes in subsequent elections (Strøm, 1990: 38–46).

Yet some policy initiatives (e. g. constitutional reforms) require the support of a qualified majority (e. g. $\frac{2}{3}$ of the seats) in the parliament which is almost impossible to achieve on an *ad hoc* basis, so the cabinet majority status does affect a government's political capacity in a major way.

Unified vs. divided government. To put it simply, **divided government** means that the presidency is held by one party and at least one of the two chambers of legislature by another; **unified government**, in turn, signifies a situation when all three are under control of the same party. According to Mathew Shugart (1995: 327),

divided government has been a common occurrence in the United States. A substantial [academic] literature has developed, mostly arguing that divided government leads to undesirable policies and interbranch stalemates <...>. Surprisingly there has been no [or very little] literature specifically devoted to divided government in other presidential systems. <...> In two-party system, like that of the United States, a president lacking a compartisan majority [in one or both legislative chambers] is the same as a president facing an *opposition majority*. However, in the multiparty systems, typical of other presidential systems, these phenomena must be kept conceptually distinct. <...> [T]he term „divided government’<...> refers only to those situations in which a legislative majority is held by a party <...> that is different to that of the president. <...> A situation in which no party holds a [legislative] majority <...> [suggests] the category of *no-majority*. <...> [I]t is useful to keep it distinct, as it includes phases in which the chief executive's [usually president's] party, albeit a minority in the legislature, may be a part of most legislative coalitions along with one or more other parties. <...> [N]o-majority situations are much more common than divided government in presidential systems outside the United States. <...> Party system variables are obviously important.

Although the concepts of unified and divided governments were invented by political scientists investigating the US political system – which is the finest example of presidentialism – according to Robert Elgie (2001: 5), ‘the arithmetical definition of divided government does have its logical equivalent in non-presidential regimes. In the case of parliamentary regimes it corresponds to minority governments. In the case of semi-presidential regimes it corresponds to periods of ‘cohabitation’, or split-executive government’, when the presidency and parliamentary majority (usually delegating the prime minister) are controlled by different parties. However, the terms ‘unified’ and ‘divided’ government are not normally used outside the context of presidentialism.

Single-party vs. coalition government. Unlike the concepts of minority and divided government that refer to the arithmetics of parliamentary support to the executive, the difference between single-party and coalition governments primarily concerns intra-governmental cohesion.

Single-party governments have the distinctive advantage that no party line of division runs through the government. That implies that the government goals will be relatively uncontroversial internally, <...> they can make decisions quickly, avoid foul compromises, and maintain a common front. Coalition governments, in turn, need to satisfy at least some of the ambitions of each of the government parties. <...> This typically lengthens the internal decision-making process and often exposes internal divisions to the public <...>. The alternative of one party quietly submitting would allocate the costs of coalition one-sidedly: that party would be considered to be selling out to its coalition partner(s) by its activists and voters. These problems tend to remain modest in ideologically homogeneous coalitions but accelerate in heterogeneous ones (Müller, 2011: 154).

Despite a higher propensity towards internal quarrels, coalition governments do not last significantly shorter than single-party cabinets (see Table 4. 2.). The latter often have their reasons to end their term before hand, for example, because of a high chance of winning in early election.

Table 4. 2. Party composition of government and cabinet duration (1945–2007)

	Single-party	Coalition	%	Mean duration (in months)		
	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>Single-party</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>All</i>
Austria	6	19	76.0	40.7	28.3	30.1
Belgium	5	30	85.7	10.2	20.8	19.2
Denmark	14	19	57.6	18.6	27.2	23.4
Finland	11	37	77.1	15.2	17.5	15.2
France	6	22	78.6	13.4	22.9	20.8
Germany	4	24	85.7	4.3	28.3	24.8
Ireland	13	10	43.5	29.8	33.8	32.9
Italy	22	34	60.7	7.4	13.7	12.2
Luxembourg	0	16	100.0	–	40.0	40.0
Netherlands	0	28	100.0	–	27.8	27.8
Norway	19	10	34.5	27.5	22.7	26.0
Spain	12	0	0.0	36.8	–	33.9
Sweden	20	8	28.6	28.5	24.2	27.4
United Kingdom	22	0	0.0	34.2	–	34.2

Source: Müller, 2011: 154

Internal composition and decision-making of government: theoretical models

This final section will focus on the internal process of government decision-making and power relations *among* the members of the (core) executive, thus leaving aside any external influences discussed above.

The constitutional texts are typically silent about the internal working <...> of government, <...> much is left to the political actors. Over time conventions may establish themselves. Conventions are normative rules that are generally respected although they are not backed up by law or other formally binding rules. <...> Political science has established a number of descriptive models of government. These models are partly derived from the constitutional order, but try to highlight how the government *actually* works and arrives at decisions. The following models thus capture which actor or actors are typically able to leave their imprint on the outcome of the government decision-making process to a greater extent than others (Müller, 2011: 144).

The main actors that can be identified within the (core) executive are the chief executive (i. e. the president or prime minister), the cabinet as a collective body, and ministers as representatives of their departmental expertise; although different political scientists may give different names to theoretical models of executive politics, ‘an exhaustive set of models must capture the full range of power relations that may logically occur amongst this set of actors’ (Elgie, 1997: 222).

Monocratic government. According to Robert Elgie (1997: 222),

monocratic government may be defined as the exercise of personal leadership. It has two variants, **presidential government** and **prime ministerial government**, the latter also corresponding to equivalent terms, such as chancellor democracy [in Germany]. Clearly, in parliamentary monarchies <...> the former [term] is inappropriate, while in <...> regimes where there are only figurehead presidents, such as Austria, Germany, Iceland, Ireland and Italy, it may be unlikely ever to apply. Nevertheless, there is still a need for two variants because of the experience of certain semi-presidential regimes, such as France, Finland, and Poland <...> where a monocratic leadership may be exercised at one time by the president and at other time by prime minister. Whatever the variant <...>, it remains the case that <...> this model is characterized by a generalized ability by the president or prime minister to decide policy across all issue areas in which he or she takes an interest; by deciding key issues which subsequently determine most remaining areas of government policy <...>. [In this] situation <...> the cabinet is a mainly residual organization in all policy areas, <...> [and] the individual ministers are generally agents of the president’s or prime minister’s will.

Collective/cabinet government. Governments that deliberate and arrive at their most important decisions collectively are historically typical of parliamentary monarchies, since the strengthening of prime ministers was for a long time withheld by monarchs. Theoretically ‘collective government may be defined <...> as <...> continuing political leadership structures and practices through which significant decisions are taken in common by a small, face-to-face body [usually cabinet of ministers] with no single member dominating their initiation or determination. Under this model, no individual is in a position to direct the decision-making process and all decision makers have more or less equal influence’ (Elgie, 1997: 223). Although, as Müller argues (2011: 145),

classical cabinet government is a thing of the past, <...> a number of authors have identified important issues that are still decided by the cabinet in substance and have stressed the role of the cabinet as ‘court of appeal’ for *both* ministers radically out of sympathy with a general line, and for a premier confronted by a ministerial colleague who insists on ploughing her or his furrow. If a cabinet fulfils these functions, i.e. deliberates and decides important issues and also functions as court of appeal, then we can speak of *post-classical cabinet government*.

Ministerial government. Contrary to power concentrated in the hands of the chief executive or the cabinet acting as a single body, the model of ministerial government describes a situation where the decision-making power is dispersed among individual cabinet members according to their departmental field of responsibility. In the words of Michael Laver and Kenneth Shepsle (1994: 8), ‘individual ministers, by virtue of their positions as the political heads of the major departments of state, are able to have a significant effect on policy in areas that fall under their jurisdiction. This entails a ‘division- and specialization-of-labour arrangement’ with the cabinet humbly ratifying departmentally ‘precooked’ decisions.

Shared government. In addition to the ideal types of monocratic, collective and ministerial government, a number of mixed models can be identified across cases, with shared government being a common pattern. As Elgie puts it (1997: 224–225),

shared government is a mixed system in which a highly restricted number of people <...> – two or three individuals and rarely more – have joint and equal decision-making responsibilities. It may occur both in semi-presidential regimes between the president and prime minister, <...> or in parliamentary regimes between the prime minister and the deputy prime minister. It may also occur in either of these regimes between the president / prime minister and a senior minister, such as the finance minister; or between a ‘troika’ consisting of, say, the president / prime minister, finance minister and foreign affairs minister. <...> The main task of other political actors will be to implement and publicly defend <...> decisions [made by these people].

An observable long-term transition from collective governments to monocratic or ministerial governments worldwide suggests that government working modes are not fixed and depend on several factors:

the personality of the chief executive, cabinet coalition status (single-party governments are more likely to become monocratic than coalition cabinets), and the peculiarity of issues on the government's agenda.

* * *

The executive branch of government is the single most important actor in modern day political systems. Although according to the separation of powers doctrine the executive is nominally entrusted with implementation tasks only, modern governments tend to assume as many functions as to determine the very direction a country will take. This is especially characteristic to polities where cohesive political parties allow the fusion of executive and legislative powers. This chapter has been primarily concerned with how and under what conditions modern governments carry out their functions.

First, the *autonomy of government decisions and actions* can be prominently restricted by political parties and state bureaucratic apparatus since the members of the central executive ultimately rely on their parties for re-election and on bureaucrats for policy resources. Secondly, the *effective functioning* of any government and its capacity to arrive at important decisions depends on the political support from other political actors, first and foremost the legislature. The executive is empowered to act in majority or unified government situations and less politically capable when faced with only minority support or divided government. Another major factor in terms of government's capabilities is cabinet coalition status, although empirical data show that coalition governments are just as stable as single-party cabinets. The last dimension that describes governments is their *internal working*; political scientists normally single out at least three ideal models of government decision-making – monocratic, collective and ministerial – as well as some mixed modes of working. These modes, however, are bound to change according to the prevailing political conditions and century-long transition from cabinet to prime ministerial or ministerial government in parliamentary democracies worldwide is probably the most prominent long-term trend.

Questions

1. How throughout the course of history did the modern institution of executive power come into being?
2. What is the 'core executive'?
3. What functions does the executive branch of government usually carry within modern political systems?
4. What are the main forms of government in democratic regimes and how are they distinguished?
5. Which actors limit the autonomy of government action and under what conditions is a party government likely to appear?
6. What features define the presidentialization of politics?
7. Why do minority governments form?
8. What kind of government is theoretically most stable and effective?
9. What are the main models of executive decision-making?
10. What factors determine the change in government working mode?

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5. Political Participation and Elections

- Understanding political participation
- Modes and factors of political participation
- Elections and electoral systems

More than two thousand years ago Aristotle noted that ‘a citizen is not a citizen because he lives in a certain place..., but the citizen is a member of a community’ (Aristotelis, 1997: 133–134). Moreover, he suggested that a citizen is someone who shares in the administration of justice and the holding of public office, i. e. in the *polis*, assemblies of citizens made decisions in bodies whose modern equivalents are law courts and city councils, and these assemblies rotated membership so that every citizen served a specific term. Aristotle ultimately argued that just government works best when the masses are allowed to participate.

Understanding political participation

In contemporary politics political participation refers to the activities of the mass public in politics, including, for example, voting in elections, helping a political campaign, giving money to a candidate or cause, writing to or calling officials, petitioning, boycotting, demonstrating, and working with other people on issues.

Political participation is usually understood as an activity that is intended to influence government action, either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies. Participation of individual, collective, or institutional actors is a constituent feature of any kind of socio-political structures and processes, including nation-states (Kaase, 2011).

However, scholars differ in their definitions of political participation. Huntington and Nelson argued that by political participation we mean activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision-making (Huntington, Nelson 1976: 3). Verba and his colleagues described political participation as an activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action either directly

by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies (Verba et al., 1995: 38). The restriction to private citizens is meant to exclude from the concept activity undertaken in their official capacity by those for whom politics and governing are a vocation. A few scholars (cf. Milbrath 1965) include political involvement and activities to support the regime as participation. For these scholars, reading about politics is also political participation, while under the dominant definition it is not since it does not have direct effects on others. Verba et al. (1995) restrict their study of participation to voluntary activity, which they define as follows: ‘by voluntary activity we mean participation that is not obligatory – no one is forced to volunteer – and that receives no pay or only token financial compensation’ (Verba et al, 1995: 38–39).

Well-known comparativists as Hague, Harrop and Breslin noticed that:

‘Political participation is activity by individuals formally intended to influence who governs or the decisions taken by those who do so. In a liberal democracy, people can choose whether to get involved in politics, to what extent and through what channels. For most people, formal participation is confined to voting at national elections; more demanding acts, such as belonging to a party, have become less common. However, less conventional participation through *social movements* and *promotional groups* demonstrate a continuing interest in political issues. Participation is also found in some non-democratic regimes. Totalitarian states required citizens to engage in regimented demonstrations of support for the government. Other non-democratic regimes often demand at least a facade of participation though this too is manipulated so that it supports rather than threatens the existing rulers’.

(<http://www.palgrave.com/politics/hague/site/dictionary/search.asp#L>)

In democratic societies, the voluntary nature of citizens’ political participation means that anyone who does not wish to participate will not. In this context many researchers speak about political involvement as an individual psychological predisposition for political actions. It is an empirical question as to what extent and under which conditions political involvement precedes political action. Jan van Deth (2008) proposed, based on 19 countries in Round 1 of the

European Social Survey, four separate elements of the involvement concept: 1) political interest, 2) frequency of engaging in political discussions with friends and family, 3) the personal importance of politics, and 4) the saliency of politics (politics is the most important of the seven life domains).

According to Newton and van Deth, among the forty-five countries surveyed in 1999–2002, an average of 45 per cent of citizens described themselves as ‘very or somewhat interested in politics’. Of the democracies, the highest placed were Austria, the Czech Republic, Israel, The Netherlands, Norway and the USA (80–66 per cent). The lowest placed were Argentina, Chile, Finland, Portugal and Spain (all below 30 per cent). On average, 75 per cent of people across forty-three countries claimed to discuss politics ‘frequently’ or ‘occasionally’ with their friends. The highest placed were East Germany, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (all new democracies, 90 per cent or more), and the lowest Belgium, Italy, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Turkey (less than 60 per cent). Feelings of personal effectiveness are frequently crucial for taking part in political activities. In Round 5 of the European Social Survey in more than twenty countries in 2010–2011 an average of 36 per cent of the citizens surveyed or a minority indicated that ‘politics too complicated to understand.’ In fourteen West European democracies in 1974–1990, between a quarter and a third of the population had no interest and took no part in political life. Another 25–40 per cent were ‘active’ in the sense that they had an interest and did engage in some way in political life (Newton and van Deth, 2005:153).

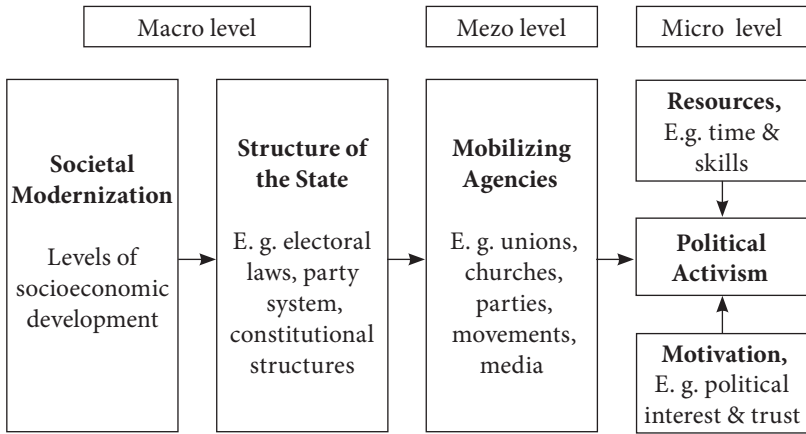
Modes and factors of political participation

The most common explanation for long-term developments in political participation comes from modernization theories advanced by Daniel Bell, Ronald Inglehart and Russell Dalton, among others, suggesting that common social trends such as rising standards of living, the growth of the service sector, and expanding educational opportunities have swept through post-industrial societies, contributing towards a new style of citizen politics in Western democracies. The socioeconomic context represents one plausible determi-

nant of dimensions of political participation, like an inevitable tide sweeping across the globe, but significant comparative research also highlights the importance of political institutions (Figure 5.1). The structure of opportunities for civic engagement within each society may be shaped and influenced by the state and the constitutional rules of the game, such as the type of majoritarian or proportional electoral system, the level of competition and fragmentation in the party system, and the degree of pluralism or corporatism in the interest group system, as well as by overall levels of democratization, and the existence of political rights and civil liberties. Rosenstone and Hansen noticed that people participate in politics not so much because of who they are but because of the political choices and incentives they are offered, and the greater role political parties, trade unions and churches, voluntary associations, and the news media play in activating citizens' participation. But even within particular contexts, some individuals are more actively engaged in public life than others. At the individual level various resources facilitate political action as education is one of the best predictors of participation, furnishing cognitive skills and civic awareness that allow citizens to make sense of the political world. The resources of time, money and civic skills, derived from family, occupation and associational membership, make it easier for individuals who are predisposed to take part, to do so. Participation also requires the motivation to become active in public affairs. Motivational attitudes may be affective, meaning that these attitudes are related to the emotional sense of civic engagement, for example, if people vote out of a sense of duty or patriotism (Norris, 2002: 10-18).

Many individuals, having an interest in politics, possessing sufficient amounts of political information, and feeling politically effective is not enough to motivate them to participate and join political organizations. Many individuals act as free-riders, while others choose to co-operate even if facing the same cost and benefit structures. In addition to motivation, citizens need to be able to participate: they need resources for political action. Political action is costly and participants, therefore, need resources – whether economic, social, cognitive or time-related. Moreover, citizens do not act in a vacuum: most political activities are collective in nature and require

Figure 5. Theoretical framework of political participation



Source: Norris P., 2002: 10.

coordination and/or co-operation between a number of citizens (Morales: 15–16).

Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) stated that many citizens do not engage in political activities simply because nobody asked them. As they emphasize, recruitment and mobilization initiatives are crucial for our understanding of political participation. In particular, one important aspect of the recruitment and mobilization processes is that they frequently interact with individual resources. In fact, past research has shown that organizational strategies for political mobilization are clearly selective: the effectiveness of the mobilizing action is maximized by aiming it at people who are most likely to respond positively (Rosenstone, Hansen 1993). The institutional opportunities for participation that citizens have are also important because they frequently affect different types of individuals differently (Morales: 19).

In the context of factors which encourage political participation individual attitudes and values have an essential importance. Trust between fellow citizens is said to be a crucial underlying condition for democracy and participation. The *World Values Studies* showed that the less democratic a system, the lower its social trust. Among the democracies, countries such as Argentina, Chile, the Domini-

can Republic and Ghana have comparatively low levels of social trust (10–20 per cent), whereas Canada, Finland, Ireland, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have high scores (50–65 per cent). A satisfaction with democracy also stimulates political activity. In forty-nine countries surveyed in 1999–2002, an average of 49 per cent of people expressed a satisfaction with democracy in their country. The figures are much higher in democracies, but even so they vary quite a lot. The lowest placed are Croatia, Ireland, Lithuania, Northern Romania and Slovakia (all below 30 per cent), and the highest placed are Austria, Canada, Germany, Luxembourg, The Netherlands and Portugal (all above 66 per cent). Post-material values encourage political participation as well. The highest levels of post-materialist values in the late 1990s were found in the comparatively wealthy democracies of Argentina, Austria, Australia, Canada, Italy and the USA (all above 25 per cent), and the lowest in Estonia, Hungary, India, Israel and Slovakia (all below 5 per cent) (Newton and van Deth, 2005: 146).

Ronald Inglehart in his classical book *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (1990: 361–362) found that:

‘Postmaterialists are more likely to engage in unconventional political protest than are Materialists. Moreover, one’s values interact with cognitive mobilization in such a way that at high levels of cognitive mobilization, the differences between value types are magnified considerably... Among those with Materialist values and low levels of cognitive mobilization, only 12 per cent have taken part, or are willing to take part in a boycott or more difficult activity. Among Postmaterialists with high levels of cognitive mobilization, 74 per cent have done so or are ready to do. The process of cognitive mobilization seems to be increasing the potential for elite-directing political action among Western publics’.

In the seminal study *Political Action*, Samuel Barnes et al. (1979) spoke of an extended repertory of political action available to citizens and coined the terms *conventional* and *unconventional political participation* to combine the elitist and participatory theories of democratic political participation. As major forms of conventional participation usually are named voting, reading newspapers, watching TV news, talking about politics, joining a political group (voluntary organization, party, or new social movement), involvement with

a client body or advisory body for public service (consumer council, school board), attending meetings, demonstrations, rallies, contacting the media, elected representatives, or public officials, contributing money, volunteering for political activity (organizing meetings, election canvassing), standing for political office, and holding political office (Table 5. 1). Unconventional participation means radical and direct action including: unofficial strikes, sit-ins, protests, demonstrations, civil disobedience, breaking laws for political reasons, political violence.

Table 5. 1. Political participation in selected countries

	Voted last national election	Worked in another organization or association	Contacted politician or government official	Worked in political party or action group	Signed petition	Taken part in lawful public demonstration	Boycotted certain products
Belgium	85,5	19,6	11,7	4,6	20,6	6,4	9,2
Bulgaria	94,5	1,4	5,3	2,7	6,4	2,6	3,6
Switzerland	79,1	13,6	15,7	5,8	31,8	3,9	27,4
Cyprus	91,1	6,4	18,7	4,3	7,2	4,1	5,4
Czech Republic	80,2	7,5	14,2	2,4	16,1	4,6	10,2
Germany	87,4	25,6	15,4	3,9	30,2	8,3	27,8
Denmark	91,5	25	17,9	4,1	29,3	7,7	21,9
Estonia	79,8	5,9	13,9	3,5	7,8	2	9,1
Spain	84,5	17,6	13,5	7	26,2	18,2	11,5
Finland	84,6	38,8	20,8	3,4	27,6	1,4	33,1
France	82,7	16,1	13,8	3,4	28,9	17,1	28,8
United Kingdom	83,5	6,3	14,8	1,7	28,1	2,4	19,6
Greece	89,2	4,7	8,6	2,9	5,1	10,3	11,9
Croatia	83,7	4,8	6,1	3,5	21,9	7,7	9,8
Hungary	87	6,6	11,9	2,6	2,8	2,7	6,1
Ireland	83,4	8,2	13,8	3	14,4	6,5	8,9
Israel	88,3	3,5	9,4	2,6	12,6	7,1	6,5
Netherlands	86,7	23,5	17,3	3,7	25,9	2,5	10,1
Norway	81,9	29,1	22,2	5,9	36,1	9,6	19,5
Poland	78,7	7,1	8,6	2,3	11,1	2,1	5,1
Portugal	86,1	4	5	1,8	5,8	3	2,2
Russian Federation	79	4,4	8,2	5,5	6,1	3,7	2,3
Sweden	91,8	28,3	16,3	3,6	37,2	4,9	35,6
Slovenia	83,5	1,7	9,1	2,9	8,6	2,2	5,7

Source: The ESS5–2010 Edition 2.0 released on 28 March 2012

Conventional and unconventional dimensions of participation were positively correlated in all countries, thereby suggesting an increase in the political action repertoire of citizens and not the demise of liberal democracy. The most important antecedents of protest potential were high levels of education and young age. On the other hand, the term *unconventional participation* is losing meaning as through processes of socio-political change these acts have become a regular and legitimate part of citizens' action repertoires.

In today's world, according to Newton and van Deth (2005: 153), the major forms of political action are as follows:

- **'Direct action.'** Research shows that 'protest behaviour' in the form of strikes, sit-ins, protests, marches and boycotts, is now a widely accepted part of the political repertoire of west European citizens, but that only a very small minority (1–3 per cent) actually engages in such behaviour.
- **Protest behavior.** Among forms of direct action, signing petition is the most frequent (an average of 43 per cent across forty nations in the early 1990s), followed by lawful demonstrations (21 per cent), boycotts (9 per cent), unofficial strikes (6 per cent) and the occupation of buildings (2 per cent).
- **Revolutionary action.** Among the democracies, no more than 2 per cent of the Austrians, Danes, Dutch, Japanese, Norwegians and (West) Germans now believe in radical change by revolutionary action, but the figures are much higher in the new democracies of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and South Africa (19–32 per cent)'.

However, participation in free, equal, and secret voting during democratic elections is the most important form of political activity in democratic politics. Moreover, this action is a legitimating mechanism by which representatives are chosen for a political office and they are entitled to take major political decisions for a limited period. Mark Franklin's comparative study *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945* addressed three major questions: a) Why do people vote at all given that according to rational choice theory, individual votes have no influence on the aggregate outcome of elections? b) Is there a general decline in turnout, and, if so, what can one learn with respect to whether such a decline has happened because of changing civic virtues and political disaffection? c) What are the major macro- and

micro-factors that influence variations in turnout within and across countries (Mark Franklin, 2004)?

Looking retrospectively, it is possible to notice that voter turnout in established democracies increased between 1950 and 1965 and since then has gradually declined until the present period. André Blais (2007) calculated an 8-percentage-point decline for 106 countries and a 9-percentage-point decline for 29 established democracies. Analysis by Franklin shed light on the reasons for this decline in attributing it to three macro-developments: a) changes in the size of the electorate through generational replacement with young cohorts less inclined to vote; b) lowering of the voting age in many countries in the late 1960s, and c) the degree and nature of party competition. On the other hand, declining trust in institutions decreases in the civic mindedness of citizens and disaffection with democracy does not contribute to the observed decline. Regarding levels of turnout, there is a lot of path dependency in the sense that major ad hoc variations in turnout are unlikely, due to stable institutional factors such as electoral laws, registration rules, or compulsory voting (Kaase, 2011).

It is important to observe that turnout differences between European countries are considerable. In some countries, i. e. Austria, Belgium, or Italy, virtually everyone votes. In other countries such as Switzerland or Lithuania turnout barely reaches 50 per cent. These differences are especially visible between new and old democracies in Europe as voter turnout in new democracies is considerably lower. (Table 5. 2).

Table 5. 2. Voter turnout in the last parliamentary and 2009 EU Parliament elections.

Country	Election type	Voter Turnout (%)
Austria	Parliamentary	81.71 (2008)
	EU Parliament	45.97 (2009)
Belgium	Parliamentary	89.22 (2010)
	EU Parliament	90.39 (2009)
Bulgaria	Parliamentary	60.64 (2009)
	EU Parliament	38.90 (2009)
Croatia	Parliamentary	54.17 (2011)
	EU Parliament	–
Czech Republic	Parliamentary	62.60 (2010)
	EU Parliament	28.22 (2009)

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Country	Election type	Voter Turnout (%)
Denmark	Parliamentary	87.74 (2011)
	EU Parliament	59.54 (2009)
Estonia	Parliamentary	63.53 (2011)
	EU Parliament	43.90 (2009)
Finland	Parliamentary	67.37 (2011)
	EU Parliament	40.48 (2009)
France	Parliamentary	59.98 (2007)
	EU Parliament	40.63 (2009)
Germany	Parliamentary	70.78 (2009)
	EU Parliament	43.27 (2009)
Greece	Parliamentary	62.47 (2012)
	EU Parliament	52.63 (2009)
Hungary	Parliamentary	46.66 (2010)
	EU Parliament	36.31 (2009)
Ireland	Parliamentary	70.05 (2011)
	EU Parliament	57.57 (2009)
Italy	Parliamentary	80.54 (2008)
	EU Parliament	65.05 (2009)
Latvia	Parliamentary	59.49 (2011)
	EU Parliament	53.69 (2009)
Lithuania	Parliamentary	32.37 (2008)
	EU Parliament	20.98 (2009)
Netherlands	Parliamentary	75.40 (2010)
	EU Parliament	36.75 (2009)
Norway	Parliamentary	76.37 (2009)
	EU Parliament	–
Poland	Parliamentary	48.92 (2011)
	EU Parliament	24.53 (2009)
Portugal	Parliamentary	58.03 (2011)
	EU Parliament	36.78 (2009)
Slovenia	Parliamentary	65.6 (2011)
	EU Parliament	28.33 (2009)
Spain	Parliamentary	68.94 (2011)
	EU Parliament	44.90 (2009)
Sweden	Parliamentary	84.63 (2010)
	EU Parliament	45.53 (2009)
Switzerland	Parliamentary	49.10 (2011)
	EU Parliament	–
United Kingdom	Parliamentary	65.77 (2010)
	EU Parliament	34.48 (2009)

Source: Voter turnout database: <http://www.idea.int/vt/viewdata.cfm>; data calculated on a basis voting age population (VAP), i. e. it includes all citizens above the legal voting age.

Newton and van Deth described determinants of voter turnout (2005: 207) naming as most important: a) the importance of elections and citizens vote if they think that the election is important; b) democracy, as turnout in older, established democracies tends to be about 15 per cent higher than in all other countries (73 per cent and 59 per cent respectively), but the gap between them has been closing slowly since 1945, and is now less than 10 per cent; c) electoral system, as average voting turnout in PR systems (68 per cent) is higher than in semi-PR systems (59 per cent) and in plurality-majority systems (59 per cent); d) competitive elections, where the largest party wins less than half the votes, have a turnout 10 per cent higher than less competitive elections, where the largest party wins more than 50 per cent of the poll; e) frequency of elections, as in countries where citizens vote too often turnout is lower.

Voting is technically compulsory in a few countries, including Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands (before 1970). However, voter turnout is only about 4–5 per cent higher in these countries compared with non-compulsory systems. This is partly because the formalities of compulsory voting are sometimes not followed up in reality. Turnout is not closely related to national wealth or population size, but it is closely associated with the UN *Human Development Index*¹. Countries with the highest HDI ratings had an average turnout of 72 per cent, those with the lowest 56 per cent (Newton, van Deth, 2005: 201).

In addition to voting, a whole range of non-electoral activities as signing a petition, boycotting, donation of money, contacting politicians and media, attending demonstration and rallies are used by citizens to get involved in politics. Moreover, since the mid-1960s the rise in protest activities, in particular petitions and demonstrations, was observed especially in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan. Russell J. Dalton defined protest as a 'direct-action technique of confronting political elites, instead of participating within a framework defined by elites' (1988: 59). Cross-national comparisons reveal that protest levels are actually higher in more affluent nations. The

1. A UN index of national development that combines measures of life expectancy, educational attainment and wealth into one measure. See the UN *Human Development Report Office website* <http://hdr.undp.org/>

fact that in these nations levels of participation in moderate forms of unconventional politics are now as high as those of activity in more conventional forms has prompted some to assert that protest has become a regular form of political action in advanced industrial societies. As Dalton noted recently that the participation repertoire also includes more direct and individualized forms of action. The cognitively mobilized, engaged citizen favours direct action over campaign work, and volunteering is preferred to party activity (2008: 92).

And last but not least, what are the predictors of political participation on an individual level. Dalton organized potential predictors of political participation into three groups: a) personal characteristics, b) group effects, and c) political attitudes. Such personal characteristics as socioeconomic status, education, age are still very important determinants of political activity. In general a political activist in the United States or even in Western Europe is a white, rich, educated, religious, middle-aged man. Individual predisposition to participation is also positively affected by group-based factors such as party preferences, membership in voluntary organizations and trade unions. Individual political beliefs and values is a third factor of influence on political participation, i. e. a high sense of political efficacy, political trust, self-expressive values, and democratic beliefs about the citizen's role might stimulate political involvement.

Elections and electoral systems

Free and competitive elections are an essential vehicle through which 'the full array of institutions that constitute a new democratic political society, such as legislatures, constituent assemblies, and competitive political parties simply cannot develop sufficient autonomy, legality, and legitimacy' (Linz, Stepan, 1996: 71). Moreover, free elections mean that the major political players accept political competition as the only meaningful way of establishing a sustainable democratic order, and it also means that these actors make 'the convocation of elections an increasingly attractive means for conflict resolution' (O'Donnell, Schmitter, 1993:40).

In brief, an election is a formal decision-making process by which the population chooses an individual to hold public office.

Elections were used as early in history as ancient Greece and ancient Rome, and throughout the medieval period to select rulers such as the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope. In ancient India, around 920 AD, in Tamil Nadu, Palm leaves were used for village assembly elections. The palm leaves with candidate names on were put inside a mud pot for counting. This was known as the Kudavolai system.

Elections have been the usual mechanism by which modern representative democracy has operated since the 17th century. Today elections may be enacted for offices in the legislature, sometimes in the executive and judiciary, and for regional and local government.

The question of who may vote is a central issue in elections. The electorate does not generally include the entire population; for example, many countries prohibit those judged mentally incompetent from voting, and all jurisdictions require a minimum age for voting. If we speak about the major constraints of voting, two of them stand out, i. e. minimum voting age and voter registration. The minimum voting age in the vast majority of countries is eighteen. Voter registration varies from 42 per cent in Switzerland, 58 per cent in India and 66 per cent in the USA, to 91 per cent in Belgium, 92 per cent in Iceland and 96 per cent in Australia. It averages 75 per cent in established democracies.

Electoral systems translate the votes cast in an election into results – mandates/seats – won by parties and candidates. Electoral rules for a given office have six basic components: 1) determination of who is eligible to be on the ballot (e. g. parties only or also individual candidates), 2) internal party rules for determining who is to be a given as the party's candidates and/or for specifying candidate rankings within a party list, 3) specification of ballot type, 4) specification of constituencies (districts), 5) determination of election timing, and 6) rules for ballot aggregation (tallying rules). However, sometimes the term *electoral system* is used in a broader sense to include other aspects of elections and their regulation, such as rules for voter suffrage, campaign finance, campaign advertising, location of and times of access to polling stations, and so on (Grofman, 2011).

Following Rae (Rae D. W. 1971 *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* 2nd (ed.). Yale University Press, New Haven, CT), many scholars distinguish between three main elements of an electoral system: ballot structure, constituency structure, and the electoral for-

mula.

There are three main ways to distinguish the types of ballots: 1) ballot complexity, 2) number of rounds of balloting, and 3) types of alternatives.

Ballot complexity refers to the kind of information that voters are required to provide. The simplest ballot is one where voters mark an X for some prespecified number of alternatives, or for *up to* some prespecified number of alternatives—for example, *approval voting*, where every voter may indicate that up to M alternatives are ‘satisfactory,’ with the M alternatives receiving the most ‘approval’ votes being the ones that win; or *limited voting*, where each voter has a fixed number, k , of X ballots to cast, where k is less than the number of seats to be filled, M ; and the most common case where voters have but a single X to cast, for example, *plurality voting* in a single-seat district. Another important type of X ballot is pure *List PR*, where there is a list prepared by each party, and a certain number of the top candidates on each list are elected, with that number determined by the proportion of (viable) votes cast for that party. More complex ballots require voters to rank order alternatives (Grofman, 2011).

With respect to constituencies, a key distinction is between single-member districts (SMDs) and multi-member districts (MMDs). The specification of constituency boundaries, called *redistricting* in the United States and *boundary delimitation* in much of the rest of the English-speaking world, is an important topic from both a legal and a theoretical point of view. For example, rules about the degree of population equality required across constituencies can be instrumental in permitting or preventing malapportionment, which, whether deliberate or unintended, can have substantial consequences for the translation of votes into seats and the representation of groups that differ in their geographical locations and degree of geographic concentration, such as blocs of ethnic voters or party supporters (Grofman, 2011).

The third most important component is the electoral formula or seat allocation formula. No two countries have identical electoral systems, but there are three main ballot aggregation methods each with its own variations, i. e. plurality–majority, proportional repre-

sentation (PR), mixed or semi proportional (Table 5.3.).

Table 5.3. The electoral system families

<i>Plurality/majority</i>	<i>Proportional representation</i>	<i>Mixed electoral systems</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Past The Post (FPTP), • Block Vote (BV), • Party Block Vote(PBV), • Alternative Vote (AV), and • The Two-Round System (TRS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The list system (List PR) • The single transferable vote (STV) • The mixed-member proportional system (MMP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parallel system • Single non-transferable vote (SNTV)

The principle of plurality–majority systems is simple. After votes have been cast, those candidates or parties with the most votes are declared the winners. Five varieties of plurality–majority systems can be identified: first past the post (FPTP), block vote (BV), party block vote (PBV), alternative vote (AV) and the two-round system (TRS).

In first-past-the-post electoral system (also known as the *single-member plurality system*) the candidate securing most votes (not necessarily a majority) is elected on the first and only ballot within each single-member district. This method is mainly found in the United Kingdom and its former colonies, notably the United States, also in Argentina, Bolivia, Jamaica, Mauritius, the Philippines, and Thailand. Italy adopted a mainly plurality–majority system with single-member districts in 1994.

This method can lead to a victory in seats for a party coming second in votes and also discriminates against those minor parties whose support is evenly distributed across the country. Where strong national parties exist (as in the UK and the USA), the system can deliver a majority government by a single party even though no single party normally secures a majority of votes. Its advantage is simplicity and direct democratic accountability, because each district is represented by only one representative. This system is also likely to produce single-party governments with stable majorities, and this favours clear lines of political accountability. The disadvantage is disproportionality in election results. The FPTP system favours large parties and discriminates against small ones, to the extent that voting for one of them is often seen as a ‘wasted’ vote (Newton and van Deth, 2005: 203).

A variation on FPTP is the *block vote* which combines first-past-the-post counting with multi-member districts. Voters have as many votes as there are seats to be filled, and the highest-polling candidates

fill the positions regardless of the percentage of the vote they achieve. This system –with the change that voters vote for party lists instead of individual candidates– becomes the party block vote (Newton and van Deth, 2005: 203).

Majoritarian systems, such as the alternative vote and the two-round system, try to ensure that the winning candidate receives an absolute majority (i. e. over 50 per cent). The two-round system tries to avoid the disproportionality problem of FPTP systems by requiring the winning candidate to get an absolute majority of the votes (i. e. 50 per cent + 1) in the first round – or if not, a second run-off ballot is held between the two strongest candidates. The advantage is simplicity; the disadvantage is the need for a second ballot shortly after the first. France uses this system in presidential elections.

Alternative vote (AV) is a variation on simple plurality. Voters mark their first and subsequent preferences among the candidates for their own constituency. If no candidate receives an absolute majority of first-preference votes on the first count, the candidate with the smallest number of first-choice votes is eliminated, but their second-choice votes are redistributed among the remaining candidates. This process continues until one candidate has an absolute majority. The system is simple to understand, but its results are no more proportional than the FPTP system, and it can produce unpredictable results. It is used only in Australia (Newton and van Deth, 2005: 203).

Proportional representation (PR) allocates seats according to a formula that tries to ensure proportionality, or consciously reduce the disparity between a party's share of the national vote and its share of the parliamentary seats; if a major party wins 35 per cent of the votes, it should win approximately 35 per cent of the seats, and a minor party with 10 per cent of the votes should also gain 10 per cent of the legislative seats. Proportional representation requires the use of electoral districts with more than one member as it is not possible to divide a single seat elected on a single occasion proportionally.

There are two major types of PR system List PR and single transferable vote (STV). Some researchers, for example Newton and van Deth, classify the mixed-member proportional system as a form of the proportional representation. Proportionality is often seen as being best achieved by the use of party lists, where political parties pres-

ent lists of candidates to the voters on a national or regional basis, but preferential voting can work equally well as the single transferable vote, where voters rank-order candidates in multi-member districts.

List PR system *is* one of the simplest ways of ensuring proportionality and to distribute the seats on a *national basis* or else on a large regional one. Parties rank their candidates in order of preference, and they are elected in proportion to the number of votes for that party, starting from the top of the list. The advantage of this system is simplicity and the proportionality of the results. The disadvantage is that voters cast a preference for a party, though they may prefer to vote for an individual candidate. The system also gives power to party leaders, who decide the rank order of candidates on their lists. Because List PR voting requires multi-member districts it also breaks the direct and simple link between representatives and their districts. List PR is highly proportional and it can encourage very small parties and fragmentation of the party system (Newton and van Deth, 2005: 204).

An *electoral threshold* can overcome the fragmentation problem, but this increases disproportionality.

Box 5. 1. An electoral threshold.

A level of electoral support below which a party receives no seats, whatever its entitlement under other rules of the electoral system. Explicit thresholds are often introduced in *list systems* of party list proportional representation and are typically no more than four or five per cent. Operating at district or national level, thresholds help to protect the legislature from extremes. Thresholds can also be used as a tool by the main parties to keep small parties out of the assembly. Implicit thresholds can also operate, as in the *single-member plurality system* under which a party coming second in every district would win no seats. <http://www.palgrave.com/politics/hague/site/dictionary/search.asp#A>

Many democratic countries have adopted the List PR system, including Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica (compulsory voting), Cyprus (compulsory voting), Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic (compulsory voting), Estonia, Finland, Greece, Israel, Italy (before 1994), Latvia, The Netherlands (compulsory voting before 1970), Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and

Switzerland (compulsory voting) (Newton and van Deth, 2005: 204).

Table 5. 4. Five electoral system options: advantages and disadvantages

	Advantages	Disadvantages
<i>List Proportional Representation (List PR)</i>	Proportionality Inclusiveness Minority representation Few wasted votes likely in presidential systems Easier for women representatives No (or less) need to draw boundaries No need to hold by-elections Facilitates absentee voting in legislature Restricts growth of single-party regions	Weak geographic representation Accountability issues Weaker legislative support for president more Coalition or minority governments more likely in to be elected parliamentary systems Much power given to political parties Can lead to inclusion of extremist parties Inability to throw a party out of power
<i>First Past The Post (FPTP)</i>	Strong geographic representation Makes accountability easier to enforce Is simple to understand Offers voters a clear choice Encourages a coherent opposition Excludes extremist parties Allows voters to choose between candidates Strong legislative support for president more likely in presidential systems Majority governments more likely in parliamentary systems	Excludes minority parties Excludes minorities Excludes women Many wasted votes Often need for by-elections Requires boundary delimitation May lead to gerrymandering Difficult to arrange absentee voting
<i>Two-Round System (TRS)</i>	Gives voters a second chance to make a choice Less vote-splitting than many other plurality/majority systems Simple to understand Strong geographic representation and declaration of results	Requires boundary delimitation Requires a costly and often administratively challenging second round Often need for by-elections Long time-period between election Disproportionality May fragment party systems May be destabilizing for deeply divided societies
<i>Parallel System</i>	Inclusiveness Representation of minorities Less party fragmentation than pure List PR May be easier to agree on than other alternatives Accountability Few wasted votes	Complicated system Requires boundary delimitation Often need for by-elections Can create two classes of representatives Strategic voting More difficult to arrange absentee voting than with List PR Does not guarantee overall proportionality
<i>Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)</i>	Proportionality Inclusiveness Geographic representation Accountability Few wasted votes May be easier to agree on than other alternatives	Complicated system Requires boundary delimitation Often need for by-elections Can create two classes of representatives Strategic voting More difficult to arrange absentee voting than with List PR

Source: Reynolds A. et al., 2008, p. 120–121.

In the single transferable vote (STV) system voters rank candidates according to their order of preference, and elected candidates must either get a specified number of first preferences or else the second preferences are taken into account. If no candidate has an absolute majority, the third preferences are counted, and so on until all seats are filled. STV must be used in conjunction with multi-member constituencies. The advantage of the system is its proportionality and the avoidance of ‘wasted’ votes. The disadvantage is the complexity of the STV formula (although this is now easily and quickly done by computer) and the fact that multi-member constituencies do not create a direct link between constituencies and a single representative. The system is used in only a few countries, in Australia, Estonia (1989–92) and Ireland (Newton and van Deth, 2005: 204).

The mixed-member proportional system, in which some candidates are elected for electoral districts while others are chosen through PR, runs two voting systems at the same time. Voters normally have two votes. Plurality–majority districts are used to keep the link between representatives and constituencies, but a List PR system is added for a certain number of seats (usually 50 per cent) in order to compensate for any disproportionality that arises from the plurality–majority system. In Germany, half the seats are allotted at district and half at national level, and citizens have two votes, one for their district and one for the national list. The second vote is used to compensate for disproportionality in the district vote. The mixed-member proportional (MMP) is also known as the mixed-member compensatory system. In the German case, parties that win more district seats than the total to which they are entitled under the party vote retain these excess mandates, causing the size of the Bundestag to expand. MMP is found in Germany, Hungary, New Zealand (since 1996) and Uruguay (Newton and van Deth, 2005: 204).

Mixed electoral or semi-proportional systems attempt to combine the positive attributes of the plurality–majority (or other) system and the PR electoral system. In a mixed system, there are two electoral systems using different formulae running alongside each other. The votes are cast by the same voters and contribute to the election of representatives under both systems. One of those systems is a plu-

rality–majority system, usually a single-member district system, and the other a List PR system. There are two forms of mixed system, i. e. parallel systems and the single non-transferable vote (SNTV). Parallel systems like the MMP systems use the plurality–majority system together with a PR system, but unlike MMP the PR system does not compensate for any disproportionality resulting from the plurality–majority system. It is used in Japan (from 1994), Lithuania and South Korea. The single non-transferable vote (SNTV) system combines multi-member constituencies with simple majority vote counting, and one vote for each elector. It is used in Japan (before 1994) and Taiwan (for 78 per cent of seats) (Newton and van Deth, 2005: 205).

Table 5. 5. Electoral system families: Number of countries and territories

<i>Plurality/majority</i>	<i>Proportional representation</i>	<i>Mixed electoral systems</i>	<i>Other</i>
91	72	30	6

Source: Reynolds A. et al., 2008, p. 32.

In 2004 about half (91, or 46 per cent of the total) of the 199 countries and territories of the world which have direct elections to the legislature use plurality–majority systems; another 72 (36 per cent) use PR-type systems; 30 (15 per cent) use mixed systems; and only six (3 per cent) use one of the other systems (Reynolds et al., 2008: 29).

In terms of the number of countries which use different electoral systems, List PR systems are the most popular, with 70 out of 199 countries and related territories, giving them 35 per cent of the total, followed by the 47 cases of FPTP systems (24 per cent of the 199 countries and territories). If we look at electoral systems in ‘established democracies’, then we find that PR systems are more numerous, with 21 (31 per cent) out of the 68 countries. There are a disproportionate number of MMP systems among established democracies – 6 per cent of the total, while worldwide MMP systems are found in only 4.5 per cent of all countries. Both the world’s examples of STV, the Republic of Ireland and Malta, fall into the category of established democracies. FPTP systems make up approximately 35 per cent of the total in Africa, the Americas and Oceania. The system is less common in

Table 5. 6. The distribution of electoral systems across national legislatures

	Africa Oceania	Americas	Asia	Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Oceania	Middle East	Total
<i>FPTP</i>	15	17	5	0	1	7	2	47
<i>BV</i>	1	3	2	0	3	2	4	15
<i>PBV</i>	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
<i>AV</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
<i>TRS</i>	8	3	6	1	1	1	2	22
<i>List PR</i>	16	19	3	13	15	0	4	70
<i>STV</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
<i>MMP</i>	1	3	0	2	2	1	0	9
<i>Parallel</i>	4	0	8	7	1	1	0	21
<i>SNTV</i>	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	4
<i>BC</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<i>LV</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	48	45	26	23	26	18	13	199

Source: Reynolds A. et al., 2008, p. 31.

Europe, Asia and the Middle East (Reynolds et al., 2008: 30, 32–33).

Questions

1. How did Aristotle interpret citizenship?
2. How is political participation defined in comparative politics?
3. What are the main modes of political participation?
4. How are electoral systems categorized?
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the five most popular electoral systems?

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6. Political Parties and Party Systems

- Understanding political parties
- Origins and organization of political parties
- Definition, structure and change of party systems

Political parties and multiparty systems are constituent elements of contemporary representative democracy. Political parties play an exclusive role as the intermediate structures between citizens and governmental institutions in the internal political environment of all contemporary democracies.

Understanding political parties

Political parties are the linkage making institutions between political leadership and voters, political elite and civil society, the rulers and the ruled in all representative democracies. Political parties are thought to perform numerous roles critical to the functioning of a democracy. They are said to aggregate interests, thereby translating ‘mass preferences into public policy’ (Key, 1964: 43) and serve as both tools of representation and ‘channels of expression’ (Kuenzi and Lambright, 2001: 437).

The word *party* refers to one of the oldest concepts used in political science. James Bryce in his *Modern Democracies* noted that ‘party organization is a natural and probably an inevitable incident of democratic government’ (Bryce, 1921: 23). Moreover, depending on the era chosen to determine the beginning of scientific analysis of political facts in the modern sense—for example, if one goes back to Arthur Bentley, James Bryce, Robert Lowell, or André Siegfried, that is, to the beginning of the 20th century the concept of party could be older than that of political science. Its use in historical, philosophical, or polemical vocabulary appeared in the 17th century with the memoirs of Cardinal de Retz in France, Viscount Bolingbroke in England, and above all, David Hume, who in the early 18th century initiated what was to become the analysis of parties. Even the etymology of the word *party* is telling: *parti* in French, *Partei* in German, *partido* in Spanish, and even *partia* in Russian and Polish and in many

other languages—derived from the verb *partir*, which in medieval French meant to split into parts or divide (Seiler, 2011: 1792).

The definitions of the concept of party are, therefore, older and more numerous than for the concept of social class: there are more than 100 of them, provided by authors from Edmund Burke to Alan Ware, including Leon Epstein, Joseph LaPalombara, and Myron Weiner. All definitions can be grouped into three broad categories, which are sometimes combined. First of all, following Burke, parties can be defined according to the ideas that they convey. Then, following Max Weber, Robert Michels, and Maurice Duverger, one can define parties as organizations. Finally, the trend since the end of the 20th century has been to use the criterion of elections and the existence of a representative, or at least democratic, regime. A remark attributed to Max Weber, 'parties are the children of democracy and universal suffrage', is put forward to support this thesis. Nevertheless, one should not forget the classical definition given during the reign of George III by Edmund Burke: 'A party is a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed.'

Recently Daniel-Louis Seiler defined a political party in the following way:

A party is an organization of individuals engaged in collective action, in order to mobilize as many individuals as possible against other equally mobilized individuals in order to accede, either alone or in coalition, to the exercise of government functions. This engagement and this claim for power are justified by a particular conception of the national interest (2011: 1793).

This definition has four major elements:

1. Parties are the product of a collective organized action that is permanent and continuous in time. Parties are in the category of association-type organizations that is, based on voluntary membership and the choice of the actors: members, militants, elected representatives, and leaders. If membership is automatically granted on the basis of birth, family, or clan, it is not a party.

2. Any organization is structured according to an objective, which, in the case of a party, is to accede to the different functions of gov-

ernment: national, regional, and local. A political organization that does not strive for power but merely for influence is not a party.

3. Claiming power is not an end in itself; it is justified for the sake of the national interest that the party intends to defend or promote depending on the particular conception of the actors involved. Claiming power in the name of a particular conception of the national interest constitutes the *raison d'être* of a party and a condition *sine qua non* for a political organization to be a party.

4. The way to reach the objective of the party to which its organization is rationally conditioned is the mobilization of as many individuals as possible. The most frequently used means is electoral mobilization, and most parties were born with the establishment of more or less competitive representative political systems. Partisan mobilization is carried out *against* individuals who are also organized with a view to acceding to government in the name of a different, often opposite, conception of national interest. As we have seen, *party* means 'part' (division) and therefore implies conflict. Jean Blondel (1978) sees behind every party 'a protracted social conflict' (Seiler, 2011: 1794).

Political parties are often described as institutionalized mediators between civil society and those who decide and implement decisions. By this, they enable their members' and supporters' demands to be represented in parliament and in government. Political parties perform key tasks in a democratic society, such as:

1. Aggregating and articulating needs and problems as identified by members and supporters;
2. Socializing and educating voters and citizens in the functioning of the political and electoral system and the generation of general political values;
3. Balancing opposing demands and converting them into general policies
4. Activating and mobilizing citizens into participating in political decisions and transforming their opinions into viable policy options;
5. Channelling public opinion from citizens to government;
6. Recruiting and training candidates for public office (Roles and Definition...).

Origins and organization of political parties

The origin of political parties and their existence before a representative regime depends on the definition. If we retain the three proposed criteria—a particular conception of the national interest, free organization, and mobilization, the Guelphs (13th century) were a party, even if their means of action were different from those of modern parties. Their fight against the Ghibellines, however, degenerated into a struggle between factions. The Cavaliers and the Roundheads, the Whigs and the Tories were also parties. With the extension of the electoral franchise and civil rights, they were studied as *organizations*: James Bryce, Robert Michels, Moisey Ostrogorsky, and Max Weber laid down the foundations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Finally, the study of parties as the mobilizational *actors* began in the 20th century with Siegfried on electoral geography and Duverger on circles of participation in partisan activity (Seiler 2011).

Lipset and Rokkan described four thresholds in the evolution of a party: legitimization, incorporation, representation, and majority power. Lipset in *Political Man* sees in parties the expression of social classes of which, for him, there are three: 1) the upper class, supported by the Church, which is expressed in conservative parties; 2) the secular middle class, expressed in liberal parties; and 3) the working class, expressed in labour, socialist, and social-democratic parties.

Most contemporary parties originated from the radical socio-economic and political changes between the mid-nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) distinguish two aspects of this transformation: 1) the *Industrial Revolution* refers to changes produced by industrialization and urbanization; 2) the *National Revolution* refers to the formation of nation-states (culturally homogeneous and centralized political units), and liberal democracy (parliamentarism, individual civil and voting rights, rule of law, and secular institutions) (Caramani, 2011: 238).

In the transformation of the nineteenth century, socioeconomic and cultural conflicts emerged simultaneously with democratic reforms, i. e. the creation of modern parliaments, free competitive elections, and the extension of civil and political rights. Conflicts of that time were expressed in organizations that were typical of this new

Table 6. 1. Stein Rokkan's cleavages and their partisan expression

<i>Revolu- tion</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Cleavage</i>	<i>Divisive issue(s)</i>	<i>Party families</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>National</i>	Early 19th century (restricted electorates)	Centre-periphery	Liberals and conservatives face resistance to state/administrative centralization and cultural standardization (language/religion).	Regionalists, ethnic parties, linguistic parties, minorities.	Scottish National Party, Bloc Québécois, Partido Nacionalista Vasco.
		State- Church	Conflict between liberal and secularized state against clerical and aristocratic privilege, and over religious education, influence of church in politics, democratic institutions.	Conservative and religious parties (Catholic mainly), Christian democracy.	Austrian People's Party, Christian-Democratic Union, Swiss Catholic Party, Partido Popular.
<i>Industrial</i>	Late 19th century (suffrage extension)	Rural-urban	Conflict between industrial and agricultural sectors of the economy on trade policies: agrarian protectionism vs. industrial liberalism (free trade vs. tariffs).	Agrarian and peasant parties.	Finnish Centre Party, Australian Country Party, Polish Peasant People's Party.
		Workers-employers	Employers vs. the rising working class on job security, pensions, social protection, degree of state intervention in economy.	Workers' parties, socialists and social democrats, labour parties.	British Labour Party, Argentinean Socialist Party, Swedish Social Democratic Workers' Party, Spanish PSOE.
<i>International</i>	Early 20th century (mass electorates)	Communists socialists	Division within the 'left' (workers' movement) over centrality of the Soviet Union Communist Party and its international leadership, and over reformism vs. revolution.	Communists	Partito Comunista Italiano, Izquierda Unida, Parti Communiste Français, Japan's Communist Party.
		Materialist postmaterialist values	Generational cleavage over policy priorities: new values of civic rights, pacifism, feminism, environment.	Green and ecologist parties.	Die Grünen, Austrian Grünen/Grüne Alternative, Democrats '66, Women's Party.
<i>Post-industrial</i>	Late 20th century (demobilized electorates)	Open-closed societies	Globalization of the economy, opening up of labour markets, competition from cheap Asian labour, fiscal and monetary integration in Europe, and anti-Americanization of culture.	Protest parties, nationalist parties, extreme rightwing parties, neopopulist parties.	FPO, Front National, Danish Progress Party, Fifth Republic Movement (Hugo Chavez), Movement for Socialism (Evo Morales).

Source: Caramani 2011: 239

regime. Political parties are the product of the parliamentary and electoral game, and party systems reflect the social oppositions that characterize society when parties first appear. The fundamental features of today's party systems were set during the early phases of the mobilization of, at first, restricted electorates (only very few people had the right to vote when the liberals and conservatives dominated in the nineteenth century) and later, of 'massifying' electorates when socialist parties mobilized the vast working class that emerged from the Industrial Revolution (Caramani, 2011: 240).

Political parties are *formal organizations, or a group of people formally constituted and endowed with an official mission, a hierarchy (more or less elaborated), as well as a structure of internal coordination, boundaries (more or less open), and some kind of task specialization (more or less developed)* (Panebianco, 2011: 1818).

From a historical-institutionalist perspective, understanding party organization requires an analytical reconstruction of each political party's origin and specific institutionalization. The features of parties' organizations depend on past history: how the organizations originated and how they consolidated. Path dependency rules explain why every organization, including political parties, bears the mark of its origin and consolidation (institutionalization) even several decades later. Reconstructing the *genetic model* (Panebianco, 1988) of political parties means considering three elements:

1. *The organizational development*: The birth of a party can be due to territorial penetration or territorial diffusion, or their combination. Penetration means that a 'center' organizes, controls, and directs the development of a territorial 'periphery.' Diffusion means that party organization is the product of the aggregation/federation of previous local groups and elites. In the first case, the party will probably become a strong, centralized organization controlled by a unified central oligarchy. In the second case, the party will be a decentralized organization with many diversified and competing groups: a stratarchy, as described by Samuel Eldersveld in 1964, in which every subgroup fights for power, making precarious and unstable compromises with other subgroups.

2. *The presence or absence of an external sponsor of an institution (a church, trade unions, the Comintern) as actual founder of the party*:

If an external sponsor exists, the party is its 'political weapon.' The external sponsor is the main center of loyalties and identifications for party followers and members as well as the source of legitimation for party leaders. Therefore, externally legitimated parties (confessional parties, labor parties, communist parties) and internally legitimated parties can be distinguished. This circumstance will influence all aspects of the future organizational developments.

3. *The presence or absence of a charismatic leader as founder of parties:* Charismatic parties have very special features. The leader holds the full control of the party's dominant coalition. He or she is the de facto owner of the party (Panebianco, 2011: 1818–1823).

The characteristics of the genetic model influence the manner of institutionalization and the process of structural consolidation of parties. Institutionalization is the process by which an organization incorporates its founder's values and aims, by which it becomes an institution, develops boundaries, an internal career system, a consolidated hierarchy, and a professionalized leadership. Two ideal types can be distinguished: strong institutionalization and weak institutionalization. Strong institutionalization means high autonomy from the environment and high interdependencies and coherence among its internal components. Weak institutionalization means low external autonomy and a low degree of internal interdependence. In the first case, the party will be a centralized, bureaucratic, organization led by a strong central oligarchy. It will hold the control of many external organizations (unions, interest groups, etc.), and it will adopt an aggressive, expansionist policy toward the external environment.

In the second case, the party will be a decentralized organization, controlled by external groups (external organizations) and/or local notables, with a poorly developed internal administration system.

The official mission comprises the ideological goals, the organizational constitution, and the power structure, which are the three (related) aspects that define the physiognomy of party organizations (Panebianco, 2011: 1820).

The official mission of the party, its manifest ideological goals, influences both its organizational structure and its culture. Many formal and informal rules depend on the features of the official mission.

But the official mission is also too vague an indicator of the characteristics of party organizations. Moreover, the original official mission is usually transformed during the process of institutionalization and also after. Party members need to believe in those goals, and the capability of mobilization of followers by party leaders depends on their capacity to demonstrate themselves as defenders of the ideological goals. But the role of the official mission will vary. For example, when parties are in power, there is less need of mobilizing members and followers and the official mission becomes less important. On the contrary, when parties are in opposition, there is a greater urgency to mobilize people. In this case, the official mission, the ideological goals, will be emphatically affirmed organizations (Panebianco, 2011:1820).

The second aspect is the organizational constitution. The constitution defines the rules of the game: the distribution of formal authority in the party, the ways of coordination among the official party roles, the type of task specialization, and the organizational boundaries or who is a member and who is not.

The third aspect regards the power structure. In every party there is a dominant coalition, a group of leaders who control the organization. The physiognomy of the dominant coalition is an essential defining feature of party organizations. In the case of the internally legitimated party the dominant coalition comprises only party members. In the case of externally legitimated parties, it includes the leaders of the external sponsor organizations: for example, the top officials of the British trade unions were, for a long time, members of the Labour Party's dominant coalition. Furthermore, dominant coalitions can be *oligarchies* (cohesive and stable, without a single prominent leader), *monocracies* (a single leader, usually of the charismatic type, controlling the dominant coalition and, as a result, the party), or *poliarchies* (divided and unstable, usually a collection of factions) (Panebianco, 2011: 1821).

The concept most commonly used to classify partisan organization is the opposition between mass parties and cadre parties. In his classic *Political Parties* (1951), Maurice Duverger proposed a famous classification of party organizations. In the Western historical experience, he identified four fundamental types: 1) the cadre party, 2) the mass party, 3) the cell party, and 4) the militia party. The first two types were the most important and diffuse. But Duverger's analysis was not

original. It followed the classical works of Moisey Ostrogorski, Robert Michels, Max Weber, and James Bryce (Panebianco, 2011: 1818–1823).

Duverger's great contribution was to distinguish between parties of inside creation and parties of outside creation, depending on whether the founders were in parliament – a typical example is that of the Whigs and Tories who were outsiders that had no access to power, not even to parliament. The groups that could exist before the organization of a party are labour unions, associations, Masonic lodges, or leagues, including terrorist ones. The cadre parties are therefore parliamentary parties resulting from the widening of the electorate, aimed at inciting new voters to enrol on the electoral register and support the party and the electoral committees of the candidates. Mass parties are created outside the spheres of power, and their only means of access is to have the largest possible number of voluntary activists and regular financial contributors (Seiler, 2011: 1792–1804).

The cadre party is the traditional bourgeois party: a loose electoral organization, without party discipline, financed by notables and controlled by the parliamentary elite. Some of these parties have kept an archaic organization: a federation of electoral committees composed of local personalities, headed by a much more undisciplined parliamentary party and with a weak leadership. These less developed cadre parties are to be found in countries such as France, Spain, Portugal, and, to a lesser degree, Italy. Jean Charlot suggests calling them *partis de notables* (Seiler, 2011: 1792–1804).

The mass party is a very strong organization. It is a membership party. Its organizational 'inventions' are the territorial section, the membership card, the party bureaucracy, and the periodical congresses in which the leaders are officially selected and the political strategy is approved. An 'inner circle' (the general secretary, the party headquarters) controls the mass party. Usually, the parliamentarians are dependent on the inner circle. The mass party is the organization that is able to proselytize among the popular classes of the society: manual workers, peasants, and artisans. During the 100 years from 1860 to 1960, technical development favoured mass parties that in certain cases – Catholic Zentrum and the social democrats in Germany; the Catholic and socialist parties in Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands; French and Italian Communists – managed, in

the words of Siegmund Neumann, to 'take charge of voters from the cradle to the grave' (Seiler, 2011: 1798).

According to Duverger's views, the mass party would become the dominant type of party in the mature Western democracies. Like Michels 40 years earlier, Duverger was influenced by the history of the European socialist parties. Sixteen years later, Otto Kirchheimer (1966) reversed the perspective. A new form of party was emerging: the catch-all party. The catch-all party was different from the mass party of the past. Its communicative style was pragmatic, not ideological, and its linkages with the traditional *classegardée* (the manual workers and the religious voters) were declining. The transformation of the mass party into a catch-all party was an effect of the social and political transformations of European societies: the economic development, the rise of mass education levels, the new role of the mass media, and so on (Panebianco, 2011: 1822–1823).

Party organizations were changed too. New types of professional figures slowly took over the old mass party bureaucracy: mass media experts, marketing and fund-raising specialists, among others. The traditional role of the membership, so important in the old mass party, was declining. From an organizational viewpoint, the passage from the mass party to the catch-all party has been synthesized as the transformation of the bureaucratic party into the professional electoral party (Panebianco, 2011: 1823).

After Duverger and Kirchheimer, there have been many attempts to identify transformations of Western parties. The cartel party model (Katz, Mair 1995) is one of these attempts. In this perspective, the most important change is with regard to the 'etatization' of parties, their new relationship with state agencies and its impact on the traditional party organization. Some empirical analyses confirm that cartelization is one of the possible transformations of Western political parties (Detterbeck 2005).

In K. Carty's interpretation, Western political parties are becoming franchise systems in which a central organization provides ideological arguments and material services to a lot of autonomous sub-party organizations. The franchise model implies the end of the traditional internal party hierarchy, where stratarchies are everywhere replacing the traditional oligarchies (Carty 2004).

Since the seminal contribution of Key, scholars have analysed American parties as tripartite structures: 1) the party in the electorate, 2) the party organization, and 3) the party in government. The party in the electorate refers to the loyalty and identification of the voters, whereas the party in government refers to public office holders from the president to local councillors; the party organization is structured, in a manner defined by Sam Eldersveld (1982), as a stratarchy which ‘is an organization with layers, or strata of control, rather than centralized leadership from the top down’ (1982: 106).

However, it is inaccurate to imagine that some type of party organization is becoming the dominant type and that all the existing parties will imitate that type. A plurality of very different party organizations always coexists in democracies. Parties are influenced by their original missions, by the personality and roles of their founding leaders, and by the crucial organizational decisions that accompanied their birth and institutionalization (Panebianco 2011: 1818-1823).

Definition, structure and change of party systems

The party system is conceived of as a set of patterned relationships between political parties competing for power in a given political system. Such a notion assumes the existence of rules, norms, and regularities in party interactions, concerning mainly coalition-building efforts and electoral competition. This implies also that a party system is composed, as any other system, of distinguishable parts and the empirically testable quality of its ‘systemness’ (Markowski, 2011: 1825).

Box 6. 1. What are party systems?

- Party systems are sets of parties that compete and cooperate with the aim of increasing their power in controlling government.
- What determine interactions are (1) which parties exist, (2) how many parties compose a system and how large they are, and (3) the way in which they maximize votes.
- It is appropriate to speak of a party system only in democratic contexts in which several parties compete for votes in open and plural elections.

Descriptions of party systems rely on their widely accepted, numerous attributes. One finds a rich array of proposals concerning these attributes and their relevance and importance for party systems, depicting at the same time both the essence and the dynamics of a given party system. The most popular describe a party system with reference to the number and the size of parties considered relevant (Markowski, 2011: 1827), or two main elements of the morphology of party systems are: 1) the *number* of competing units, that is, parties, and 2) the *size* of these units. How many players are there and how strong are they? The number and strength of actors can be observed at two levels: the *votes* parties get in elections and the *seats* in parliament. Two types of party systems do not fulfil the democratic conditions of party competition: a) single-party systems in which one party only is legal: these are the totalitarian and authoritarian experiences of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union and the National Socialist Party in Germany in the 1930s; b) hegemonic-party systems in which other parties are legal but are satellites, under the strict control of the hegemonic party with whom they cannot compete to control government: these are the totalitarian or authoritarian systems existing in Algeria today and in Egypt until very recently, and also in many former communist regimes before 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe. There are four party system types in democratic countries: 1) dominant-party system, 2) two-party system, 3) multi-party system, and 4) bipolar system (Caramani, 2011: 244).

Dominant-party systems are characterized by one very large party that dominates all others with a large majority (well above the absolute majority of 50 per cent of parliamentary seats) over protracted periods of time (several decades). In these systems all parties are legal and allowed to compete in free elections with universal suffrage to challenge the dominant party. However, no other party receives enough votes to come close to 50 per cent. Electors vote massively for the dominant party (Caramani 2011: 244). Dominant one-party systems are found in India (the Congress Party), Japan (the Liberal Democratic Party), South Africa (the African National Congress, ANC) and Sweden (The Social Democratic Workers' Party).

A fundamental distinction was made in the mid-20th century between two-party and multiparty systems in respect of their causes,

Table 6. 2. Typology of party systems

<i>Type of party system</i>	<i>Features</i>	<i>Cases</i>
Single-party	One party only is legal. No alternation. Single-party government.	Communist Party in the Soviet Union, the National Socialist Party in Germany in the 1930s.
Hegemonic-party	One party with several satellite' parties. No alternation.	National Liberation Front in Algeria
Dominant-Party	One large party with more than absolute majority of votes and seats. No other party approaching 50%. No alternation. One-party government.	India until 1975, Japan between 1955 and 1993, Mexico until 2000, South Africa since 1994.
Two-party	Two large parties sharing together around 80% of votes and seats. Balanced (35–45% each) with one of the two reaching 50% of seats. Alternation between parties. One-party government.	Austria, Britain, Costa Rica, Malta, New Zealand until 1998, Spain, South Africa until 1989, US.
Multiparty	Several or many parties, no one approaching 50% of votes and seats. Parties of different sizes. Parties run for elections individually and form coalitions after elections. Alternation through coalition changes. Coalition government.	Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany until 1989, Hungary, Italy before 1994, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey.
Bipolar	Two large coalitions composed of several parties sharing together around 80% of votes and seats. Coalitions are balanced (40–50% each). Coalitions are stable over time and run elections as electoral alliances. Alternation between coalitions. Coalition government.	France in the Fifth Republic, Germany since 1990, Italy since 1994, Portugal.

Source: adapted from Caramani, 2011: 246

and consequences. The major cause was seen in the respective electoral laws: simple plurality rules (first-past-the-post) applied in single-member districts tend to produce two-party systems, while two-round majoritarian and proportional rules favour the creation of multiparty constellations. The consequences, it was assumed, were essential as well: a two-party system was believed to create a stable political system, with moderate centripetal competition, based on clarity of responsibility and accurate attribution of accountability

(Markowski, 2011: 1825–31). The main examples of two-party systems are Canada, New Zealand (until constitutional reform in 1966), the UK (Labour and Conservatives) and the USA (Democrats and Republicans).

Multiparty systems, by contrast, were believed to enhance extremism, centrifugal competition, limited alternation of governing parties, unclear accountability due to complex coalition formation procedures, and vague responsibility for the policies implemented (Markowski, 2011: 1825-1831). Multiparty systems are the most frequent type of party system. These are also the most complex types. In a multiparty system the number of parties ranges from three to double-digit figures. Three to five parties exist in Canada, Ireland, Lithuania, Estonia, Japan, and Norway. Party systems in which the number of parties approaches ten (or even more) are Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. None of the parties in a multiparty system is majoritarian (with 50 per cent of the votes or seats). Furthermore, the parties that compose a multiparty system are of different sizes: some are large (say, 30 per cent of the votes) some small (less than 5 per cent) (Caramani, 2011: 245).

This numerical criterion used in distinguishing party systems faces many problems, the crucial one being how parties should be counted. It is, and always has been, obvious that parties cannot be treated equally, mainly because of their divergent electoral support, legislative strength, and potential for entering coalitions, and the peculiarities of their social following. Scholars dealing with this problem are aware of the difficulty in finding adequate criteria by which to include or exclude parties or, alternatively, assign them a proper 'weight.' In the mid-1970s, a solution seemed to be found. Giovanni Sartori offered the criterion of the *relevance* of parties. To be relevant, a party had to disclose its *coalition* and/or *blackmail* potential. The first feature, the coalition potential, depends on whether a party is attractive enough, because of its size or a unique, pivotal position in the space of political competition, to effectively join governmental coalitions and share executive responsibility. The second, party blackmail potential is less obvious as it refers to a specific factor that depends on interpretations: a party exerts blackmail potential if it can influence the behaviour of other systemic and relevant parties,

despite the fact that it cannot itself participate in a coalition government. This applies to systems in which sizeable parties are excluded from mainstream politics by the other parties because of alleged antisystemic features or traits pointing to their radicalism and destabilizing potential. Good examples of such parties are the former Italian Communists or the contemporary Czech/Moravian Communist Party (Markowski, 2011: 1825–1831).

Irrespective of how important the relevance criterion is, Sartori's proposal still focuses on the number of parties and their respective ideological and programmatic distance as the main features of a party system. Combining these two criteria the proposal allows us to distinguish between what he calls, *moderate (limited) pluralism* and *polarized (extreme) pluralism*. In the first instance, a party system usually consists of three to five parties and reveals relatively little ideological distance between them. In the second case (of polarized pluralism), the party system is usually composed of six or more parties and manifests significant ideological distance between the parties. The clear virtue of this proposal is its dynamic nature. The variables used interact with each other, allowing one to predict more or less accurately the development of a system in practice. For instance, moderate pluralism not only reveals a smaller number of relevant parties and lesser ideological distance, but it is also very likely to develop a centripetal direction of systemic competition between two clearly distinguishable blocs, whereas polarized pluralism is most likely to develop centrifugal competition with various opposition parties, leading to their irresponsible behaviour, poor accountability mechanisms, and destabilizing effects (Markowski, 2011: 1825–1831).

Given the impact of party system fragmentation on government stability, accountability, and responsiveness, as well as on the type of consensus vs. majoritarian decision-making, a large amount of comparative politics has been concerned with establishing the causes for the varying numbers of parties and their size. Two sets of causes have been identified: 1) the electoral system and 2) the number of cleavages in the society (Caramani, 2011: 248).

Among 73 liberal democracies in the 1990s, 36 had PR electoral systems and 37 non-PR systems. Of the 36 PR countries, 81 per cent

were multiparty and the remaining 19 per cent were two- or dominant one-party systems. Of the 37 non-PR countries, 13 per cent were multiparty and 50 per cent were two- or dominant one-party systems.

Box 6. 2. The influence of electoral systems on party systems?

Duverger's 'laws' (1954):

First Law 'The majority [plurality] single-ballot system tends to party dualism.'

Second Law

'The second ballot [majority] system or proportional representation tend to multipartyism.'

Mechanical effects

Electoral systems with high thresholds of representation (first-past-the-post) exclude small parties from parliament whereas PR allows small parties to win seats.

Psychological effects

Under plurality systems voters vote strategically avoiding small parties; parties have an incentive to merge to pass high thresholds of representation; under PR voters vote sincerely for small parties which are not penalized and have no incentive to merge.

Rae/Riker's 'proposition' (1971, 1982):

'Plurality formulae are always associated with two-party competition except where strong local minority parties exist.'

Sartori's 'tendency laws' (1986):

Law 1 'Given systemic structuring and cross-constituency dispersal (as joint necessary conditions), plurality systems cause (are a sufficient condition of) a two-party format.'

Law 2 'PR formulas facilitate multipartyism and are, conversely, hardly conducive to two-partyism.'

Source: adapted from Caramani, 2011: 250

Large numbers of parties are also the result of social and cultural pluralism. The presence of few social and cultural cleavages leads to less parties. Several measures are available to determine varying degrees of party system fragmentation, but the most popular is the Laakso-Taagepera index of the effective number of parties:

$$N = 1/\sum p_i^2$$

In this formula N stands for the effective number of parties and p_i denotes the fraction of the seats held by each party i in the assembly. All parties are accorded some weight, but the index weights the largest parties most. Theoretically, if there are 2 parties of exactly the same size, the effective number of parties is 2.0. The dynamics of electoral systems go a long way toward explaining why some countries have fragmented party systems while others do not. Single-member plurality (SMP) systems effectively reduce the number of parties that gain representation, while proportional (PR) list systems are conducive to fragmentation, especially when electoral districts are large. Among democratic countries with SMP systems, the mean effective number of parties since 1960 is 2.1, while the corresponding figure for democracies with PR list systems is 3.9 (Karvonen, 2011:1823–1825).

Many scholars define the party system not only by referring to the number of parties and their patterned relationship but also by indicating their belonging to a particular *party family*. The latter, in turn, is defined as a group of parties in different countries that have similar ideologies and party programmes. Each country has a unique party system: a unique combination of parties, ideological and programmatic profiles, size of electoral support, and coalitions. The most important party families are as follows: Socialists, Christian Democrats, Agrarian, Liberal, Conservative, Regional and Ethnic as well as new parties.

Last but not the least is the question of party system dynamics or change. Party system change may take a variety of forms, from marginal change to the alternation of its essential features. A change of party system might be manifested in four ways: 1) incidental swings, 2) limited change, 3) general change, and 4) alternation of the system. Incidental swings are usually temporary distortions in the patterned way a party system operates and it might be related with the establishment of some new small parties. Limited change is prolonged or even permanent, but this change is restricted either to one area or confined to the emergence of a party that replaces another one. General change is more serious and relates to several aspects, that is, the fact that changes are multifaceted and prolonged and that they concern salient features of the system. The alternation of the system signifies a dramatic change in most of its aspects, i. e.

Table 6. 3. Party families

Family	Country	Example
Socialist	Canada Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Lithuania, Sweden Australia, Ireland, Mauritius, New Zealand, Norway, UK Argentina, Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Japan, Portugal, Spain Costa Rica Dominican Republic Jamaica Peru South Africa	Social Democratic Party Labour Party Socialist Party National Liberation Party Dominican Revolutionary Party People's National Party Peruvian Aprista Party African National Congress
Christian Democrat	Australia, Chile, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland Romania Denmark, Norway Belgium	Christian Democratic Party National, Peasant or Christian Democratic Party Christian People's Flemish Christians, French Christians
Agrarian	Estonia, Finland, Norway, Sweden Latvia Australia Poland	Centre Party Farmers Party Country, National Party Peasants' Party
Liberal	Canada Sweden Finland, Japan, Taiwan UK France Germany USA Philippines South Africa EU	Liberal, Social Credit Party People's Party Progressive Party Liberal Democratic Party Left Radical Party Free Democrats Democratic Party Liberal Party Democratic Alliance European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party
Conservative	Canada, Denmark, Norway, UK Japan New Zealand Sweden Finland France Austria USA	Conservative Party Democratic Liberal Party National Party Moderate Party National Coalition Gaullist Party Freedom Party Republican Party

Political Parties and Party Systems

Family	Country	Example
Regional, Ethnic parties	Finland	Swedish People's Party
	Belgium	Flemish, Flemish Nationalist Party
	Spain	Basque Nationalist Party, Catalan Nationalist Party
	UK	Irish Nationalist (Unionist, Social Democratic and Labour Party), Scottish, Welsh
	Italy	Northern League
	Canada	Quebec Nationalist Party
New parties	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Israel, Japan, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland New Zealand	Green Party, Values, Greens and Alliance Parties

Source: adapted from Newton, van Deth 2010: 226–227

the party composition, its strength, alliances, and leadership. Party systems also change their format due to long-term social and economic developments. The processes of dealignment or realignment of party affiliations result from structural demographic changes, accompanied by culture shifts (Markowski, 2011: 1825–1831).

Questions

1. What are political parties?
2. What does 'effective number of parties' mean?
3. What are Stein Rokkan's four main social cleavages and which party families emerged from them?
4. How are party systems categorized?
5. How should the number of parties in a system be counted?

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7. Public Policy

- Historical changes in the policy agenda of the Western state
- Conceptual models of policy-making
- The cycle of policy-making

Public policies are the main outputs of political systems from a structural-functionalist perspective. The preceding chapters mostly dealt with the structures and institutions that ultimately produce public policies, but the making, content and outcomes of such policies is the central focus of a relatively distinct subfield of comparative politics, known as *comparative policy analysis*, or policy studies. In the words of Rod Hague and Martin Harrop (2004: 309), '[w]hereas orthodox political science examines the organization of the political factory, policy analysis examines the products emerging from it.' Needless to say that

[a]lmost everything we do is affected by public policies, sometimes in many trivial ways, but also in many crucial ones. They determine which side of the road we drive on, <...> whether we receive a free university education, have to pay for health care, pay a lot or a little tax and, in the extreme, whether we are sentenced to death if we are found guilty of murder. <...> Because public policies are so important, they are the focus of fierce and constant political battles. <...> A public policy is the 'end product' of the battle between [different] political forces. Consequently, public policies and political decision-making tell us a lot about how political systems actually work, and about who is powerful (Newton and Van Deth, 2010: 316).

In conceptual terms, a policy is more than a government decision, although it necessarily involves the latter. Kenneth Newton and Jan van Deth (2010: 315) define **public policy** as '*series of activities, decisions and actions carried out by officials of government in their attempts to solve problems that are thought to lie in the public or collective arena.*' In this regard it means that public policies are always designed to achieve particular goals, employ particular instruments and have a specific area of application. *Regulatory* policies (e. g. environmental protection, migration policy, consumer protection) set the conditions, standards and prohibitions on the behaviour of indi-

viduals and collectives. *Redistributive* policies (e. g. progressive taxation, land reform, national insurance) are based on transferring the resources from one societal group to another. *Distributive* policies (e. g. agriculture subsidies, public works) distribute state resources (although in the long term all policies of public provision are essentially redistributive). Finally, *constituent* policies (e. g. constitutional reform, electoral legislation) aim at establishing new or modifying the old state institutions (Knill and Tosun, 2011: 374). Some policies do not fit neatly into either of these broad categories, but nevertheless, correspond to the definitive elements (goal, instruments, and scope) and general stages of making to be called public policies.

This chapter first reviews ‘the major shifts in the policy agenda of Western states <...> which reflect evolving conceptions of the state itself yet which, like other aspects of policy analysis, remain understated in descriptions of government institutions’ (Hague and Harrop, 2004: 315). Then the theoretical models of policy-making and policy feedback are presented that serve as the principal framework in public policy analysis.

Historical changes in the policy agenda of the Western state

According to Hague and Harrop (2004: 315), ‘broadly, we can divide the history of public policy in what are now established democracies into three phases: 1) the *night-watchman* or liberal state of the 19th century and earlier, 2) the *welfare* state of the later 20th century, and 3) the emerging *regulatory* state of the 21st century’ (see Table 7. 1.). Al-

Table 7. 1. Changing agenda of the Western state

<i>Type of State</i>	<i>Domestic Agenda</i>	<i>Historical Period</i>
<i>Night-watchman state</i>	Maintains law and order and protects private property	19th century and earlier
<i>Welfare state</i>	Provides minimum welfare to all citizens	Second half of the 20th century (particularly in Western Europe)
<i>Regulatory state</i>	Sets rules and standards	Final decades of the 20th century and later

Source: Hague and Harrop, 2004: 315

though these descriptive categories fit the experience of North-Western Europe rather accurately, the US, for example, never developed a welfare regime, yet was one of the first to introduce independent regulatory agencies.

The Night-watchman / Liberal state. The metaphor of the state as a night-watchman originated in the liberal philosophy of the 17th century, notably in the writings of the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704). Up to the 19th century the governments of the Western world maintained a very limited state apparatus basically responsible only for the upholding of law and order, conducting foreign policy and external defence. According to the liberal doctrine, no other sphere of public life was in need of government regulation, the economy least of all (the *laissez faire* policy). In the words of Walter Opello and Stephen Rosow (1999: 97; quoted in Hague and Harrop, 2004: 316),

[t]he liberal state, then, is in one respect a minimal state; that is, it is deliberately structured not to be itself a threat to the ‘natural right’ of property ownership, which is the ultimate justification for the dominant position of the bourgeoisie within the state.

The Welfare state. Compared to the night-watchman state, ‘[t]he welfare state, which reached its zenith in Western and especially Northern Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, was clearly based on a more expansive and positive view of the state’s role’ (Hague and Harrop, 2004: 316). In terms of public policy, establishment of the welfare regimes first required setting boundaries on the *laissez faire*. Regular inspections of the working conditions at factories and limits on working hours had been sanctioned by most Western governments by the end of the 19th century, but the state-sponsored provision of collective welfare did not occur on a major scale until the interwar period of the 20th century. Germany was the pioneer of most social insurance schemes in Europe (see Table 7.2), but was later surpassed by Scandinavian countries. According to Kees van Kersbergen and Philip Manow (2011: 390), a ‘welfare state is first and foremost a democratic state that in addition to civil and political rights guarantees *social protection as a right attached to citizenship*’. Therefore, some countries (e. g. France) even embedded welfare rights in their constitutions.

Table 7. 2. Introduction of social insurance to some Western countries

	Industrial accident	Health	Pensions	Unemployment benefit	Family allowances
Australia	1902	1945	1909	1945	1941
Austria	1887	1888	1927	1920	1921
Canada	1930	1971	1927	1940	1944
Denmark	1898	1892	1891	1907	1952
Finland	1895	1963	1937	1917	1948
France	1898	1898	1895	1905	1932
Germany	1871	1883	1889	1927	1954
Netherlands	1901	1929	1913	1916	1940
New Zealand	1900	1938	1898	1938	1926
Norway	1894	1909	1936	1906	1946
Sweden	1901	1891	1913	1934	1947

Source: Hague and Harrop, 2004: 316

The immediate post-WW II decades were the ‘Golden Age’ of the welfare policies. However, as Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1996: 4) notes, ‘the harmonious coexistence of full employment and income equalization that defined the postwar epoch appears no longer possible. <...> Western Europe, with its <...> comprehensive industrial relations systems, welfare states, and also powerful trade unions, has maintained equality and avoided growing poverty, but at the price of heavy <...> long-term unemployment, and swelling armies of welfare dependants, <...> [that] overburden social security finances.’ Countries with substantial job security guarantees and high wages are becoming less competitive in the global economy. At the same time a change in the family structure (e. g. the rise of single-parent households), demographic trends (an ageing population) and the post-industrial occupational structure (less demand for unqualified low-wage labour) has added up to the crises of the Western welfare regimes at the end of the 20th century (Esping-Andersen, 1996: 4–9).

The Regulatory state. According to Hague and Harrop (2004: 318),

[a]lthough the crisis of the welfare state may have been overplayed, the final decades of the 20th century did witness a fundamental shift in the agenda and focus of public policy in many established democracies, especially in Europe. In social welfare, service delivery was increasingly contracted out to private agencies; in the economy, public industries were privatized. <...> The key point, though, was that creating private monopolies – as with telephones, gas and electricity – required the creation of new offices of regulation, at least until competition became established.

The best example of the ‘retreat of the state’ from direct provision is the massive scale privatization policy of the UK Government under Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. However, selling off government assets in major industries was not the only policy course characteristic to governments of the late 20th century. As Colin Scott (2006: 651) suggests,

[p]olicies of privatization <...> were accompanied by processes of public management reform within bureaucracies. These reform processes have, in many countries, liberalized some aspects of central public management, while at the same time being accompanied by the creation of new layers of regulation over public sector activities, frequently in new or remodeled freestanding agencies.

Thus, not only newly privatized industries were regulated, but also such previously self-regulating public institutions as universities and financial markets were subjected to governmental supervision. According to Scott (2006: 652), ‘the central concern of the public policy literature in understanding this transformation in governance has been with the emergence of the *regulatory state*’, although the term itself has not yet been as well defined as, for example, ‘the welfare state’.

Conceptual models of policy-making

In addition to comparing and categorizing public policies according to their content, policy analysts investigate the process of policy-making in an attempt to build theoretical models of how particular policies actually come to being. The main models found in the pub-

lic policy literature are 1) the rational, 2) the incremental, and 3) the process model. As Christoph Knill and Jale Tosun (2011: 375) suggest, ‘these models are not competitive but rather complementary as they focus on different aspects of political life, and hence concentrate on separate characteristics of policies. The main implication of these models is that they make different assumptions about the importance of the actors involved <...> and their rationality’. The first two models are briefly presented in this section, whereas the different stages of the policy-making process are the focus of the last section.

Rational model. The rational model of decision-making originated in economics and is often associated with the name of Herbert Simon. The main assumption underlying the model is that actors are rational, i. e. they always try to achieve their goal with minimum cost. To apply the model in explaining real-world policy decisions, one must know what the goal and the options are. If the decision-maker has more than one goal, in the words of Simon himself (1995: 48),

A decision is only rational if it <...> achieves the best possible outcome in terms of *all* the goals. Appealing to all the goals requires that there be a way of adjudicating among them, and that means some sort of weighting function. Economists postulate such a function which they call the utility function. And which they require to be consistent. In particular if A is preferred to B, and B is preferred to C, then A must be preferred to C. Beyond requiring that the utility function be consistent, no specific content is specified for it.

Policy analysts usually infer that governments not only seek to solve particular problems in the public realm but also want to get re-elected (or maximize power); however, to deduce the adequate utility function of policy-makers may be an overwhelming methodological puzzle. In terms of policy options, ‘the theory assumes that all the options are given [or] <...> the alternatives may be searched for, at a cost. Then the problem for the rational actor is to stop searching exactly when the marginal cost of continuing would just equal the expected marginal increase in the value of the best option discovered to date’ (Simon, 1995: 48). Although the rational model can be significantly upgraded by taking into account social learning (from the consequences of policy decisions in the past and in other countries)

in reality policy-makers never possess perfect information about the costs and benefits of different policy options. The grounding assumption about the perfect information has been the central point of criticism against the rational model. Yet ‘despite this <...>criticism, the rational model remains important for analytical purposes as it helps to contrast ideal policy decisions with actual ones’ (Knill and Tosun, 2011: 374).

Box 7. 1. Rational and incremental models of policy-making

<i>Rational model</i>	<i>Incremental model</i>
Goals are set before means are considered	Goals and means are considered together
A good policy is the one most appropriate to achieve explicit goals	A good policy is one on which all main actors can agree
Analysis is comprehensive; all effects of all options are addressed	Analysis is selective; the object is acceptable policy, not the best policy
Theory is heavily used	Comparison with similar problems is heavily used

Source: Hague and Harrop, 2004: 311

Incremental model. The incremental model is a response to the rational model (see Box 7.1). The purpose of the incremental model is a realistic rather than ideal description of decision-making. It is founded on the basis of ‘bounded rationality’ and takes into account ‘the limitations of both knowledge and cognitive capacities of decision-makers’ (Knill and Tosun, 2011: 376). Another important concept in the incremental model is ‘bounded learning’. According to Weyland (2006; quoted in Knill and Tosun, 2011: 376), ‘governments likewise engage in information-gathering activity but do not scan all available experience. Instead, they use analytical shortcuts and cognitive heuristics to process the information.’ The most common example would be the adoption of successful policies from other countries.

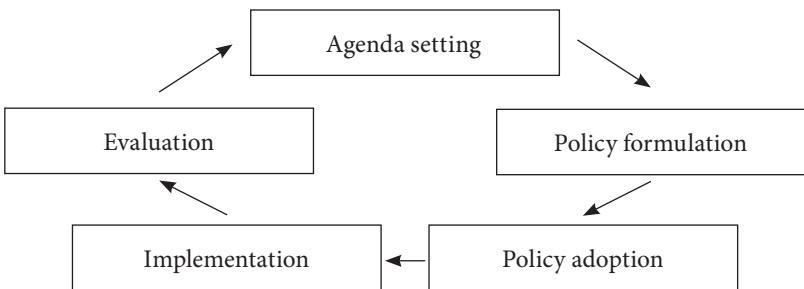
[I]ncremental model sees policy as resulting from a compromise between actors who have goals which are ill-defined or even contradictory. Put differently, where the rational model seeks the best policy in theory, incremental framework seeks out a practical policy acceptable to all the interests involved (Hague and Harrop, 2004: 311)

The main shortcoming of the incremental model is that, ‘it does not explain how decision-makers arrive at these incremental adjustments’ (Knill and Tosun 2011: 376). More so, as Lindblom (1977, 1990; quoted in Hague and Harrop 2004: 312) notes, ‘incremental policy formulation deals with existing problems rather than with avoiding future ones. It is politically safe but unadventurous; public policy becomes remedial rather than innovative’. Generally, incremental decisions have only limited ability to change existing policies. However, according to Hague and Harrop (2004: 312), ‘this approach may not lead to achieving grand objectives but, by taking one step at a time it does at least avoid making huge mistakes.’

The cycle of policy-making

The model of the policy-making cycle (or the process model) is a simplification. However, according to Knill and Tosun (2011: 377), it ‘provides a useful heuristic for breaking policy-making into different units to illustrate how policies are actually made’. Several characteristics of policy-making can be noted. First of all there are *multiple constraints* surrounding the policy-making process, such as public opinion, limited time or resources, etc. Secondly, since governments consist of various departments, which may overlap or even compete with each other, policy-making involves *various policy processes*. Thirdly, the policy-making process is *an infinite cycle of decisions and policies*, since all current decisions are more or less dependent

Figure 7. 1. The Policy Cycle



Source: Knill & Tosun, 2011:377

on the decisions made in the past, and will affect decisions made in the future (Knill and Tosun 2011: 377).

Bearing in mind these characteristics – five main stages of the policy-making cycle can be distinguished: 1) agenda setting, 2) policy formulation, 3) policy adoption, 4) implementation, and 5) evaluation (see Figure 7. 1.). All five stages will be briefly presented in this section.

Agenda setting. This is the first stage of policy-making. As Knill and Tosun (2011: 377) put it, ‘there are many societal problems, but only a small number will be given official attention by legislators and executives. Those that are chosen by the decision-makers constitute the policy agenda’. In other words, agenda setting is an identification of problems that require the intervention of the state. This may be an important source of political power ‘as it is policy consequential, i. e. legislative institutions grant an advantage to the first movers as compared to the second movers’ (Knill and Tosun, 2011: 377). For this reason ‘an important part of the political struggle is the attempt by different groups and interests to put their issues at the top of the agenda, or at least to push them up the agenda so they have a better chance of being considered’ (Newton and van Deth , 2010: 319). On the other hand, Bachrach and Baratz (1962) note that the opposite process – exclusion of societal problems from the policy agenda – is also a significant source of political power. However, according to Hague and Harrop (2004: 309), agenda setting cannot be controlled by one group (at least within democracies), ‘in most cases, the policy agenda is set by four types of actors: 1) public officials, 2) bureaucracy, 3) mass media, and 4) interest groups’ (Knill and Tosun, 2011: 377).

Policy formulation. The second stage of the policy-making cycle is policy formation. According to Newton and van Deth (2010:322),

Having decided upon the priorities of the political agenda, decisions must then be taken about them. A major decision is usually the end product of a series of decisions leading up to it, each preceding decision being made by different individuals and bodies that feed into the process. In democracies, major policy decisions should be taken by publicly accountable bodies, normally the elected executive or legislature, or both. Nonetheless, many other public and private organizations and officials may have an impact on a particular decision, and they, in their turn, will have to make many decisions in order to exercise influence.

The main shortcoming of the incremental model is that, 'it does Policy formulation is a more complex process than agenda setting, and requires more political craft, in such that it takes place within the broader political and technical context. According to Thomas R. Dye (2005: 42; quoted in Knill and Tosun, 2011: 378), 'policy formulation occurs in government bureaucracies; interest group offices; legislative committee rooms; meetings of special commissions; and policy-planning organizations otherwise known as 'think tanks'. The details of policy proposals are usually formulated by staff members rather than their bosses, but staffs are guided by what they know their leaders want.'

Policy adoption. This is the third stage of the policy-making cycle. This stage is usually determined by government institutions and, according to Knill and Tosun (2011: 379), predominantly dependent on two sets of factors – the necessity to build majorities for policy approval and the competences between the actors involved in policy-making.

With respect to building majorities, several criteria, which are important to the decision-making process, must be taken into account. First of all, party loyalty, as Knill and Tosun (2011: 379) note, 'party affiliation is a central predictor for the likelihood of a member of parliament to approve a policy draft'. Second, the costs and benefits of a policy proposal, 'a member of parliament is expected to adopt a policy option if the benefits for the constituency prevail, although considerations about re-election might lead to suboptimal policy projects' (Weingast, 1981; quoted in Knill and Tosun, 2011: 379). Third, public opinion also may have an effect on the policy-making process. Decision-makers also might try to affect public opinion. As Newton and van Deth (2010: 323) note 'some governments carry out intensive and expensive publicity campaigns to persuade people.'

According to Knill and Tosun (2011: 379), 'the second set of factors refers to the allocation of competencies between the actors involved in policy-making. Cross-national research concludes that the type of state organization, whether federal or unitary, affects the success, speed and nature of governmental policy-making.'

Implementation. Implementation is the conversion of policies into practice. It is only natural that when a policy is set it must be put into effect.

Without proper implementation, policy has neither substance nor significance. Thus policy success depends on how well bureaucratic structures implement government decisions. At the first glance, implementation appears as an automatic continuation of the policy-making process. Yet there often exists a substantial gap between the passage of new legislation and its application' (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; quoted in Knill and Tosun, 2011: 379)

The main shortcoming of the incremental model is that, 'it does According to Newton and van Deth (2010: 323), 'policy making is supposed to be the responsibility of elected and accountable politicians, whereas implementation is mainly a matter for state bureaucracies'. Such a situation is contradictory. As Knill and Tosun (2011: 380) put it, '[o]n the one hand, bureaucracies are essential for making policies work. On the other hand, senior bureaucrats are often more experienced and better trained than their political masters, which paves the way for 'bureaucratic drift'. In other words, in the process of implementation the policy might change (and according to Newton and van Deth, often does) from the originally intended form.

Scholars distinguish three main models of policy implementation – top-down, bottom-up, and hybrid (see Box 7.2).

Box 7. 2. Theoretical models of policy implementation

<i>Top-down</i>	Primarily emphasize the ability of policy-makers to produce unequivocal policy objectives and control the implementation process.
<i>Bottom-up</i>	Regard local bureaucracies as the central actors in policy delivery and view implementation as negotiation processes within networks.
<i>Hybrid</i>	Integrate elements of both previously mentioned models and other theoretical models.

Source: Knill and Tosun, 2011: 380

Evaluation. The final stage of the policy-making cycle is evaluation. To put it simply: 'the job of the policy evaluation is to work out whether a policy has achieved its goals' (Hague and Harrop 2004: 313). According to Knill and Tosun (2011: 381), 'evaluation is often a formal component of policy-making and is commonly carried out by experts who have some knowledge about the processes and objectives pertaining to the issue undergoing review'. It can be imple-

mented in several different ways (see Box 7.3), but it does face numerous challenges:

Citizens and governments alike tend to interpret the actual effects of a policy so as to serve their own intentions. Often governments avoid the precise definition of policy objectives because otherwise politicians would risk taking the blame for obvious failure. Further, policy decisions cannot be limited to intended effects only. An additional problem stems from the time horizon: program circumstances and activities may change during the course of an evaluation design, and the wide diversity of perspectives and approaches in the evaluation field provide little firm guidance about how best to proceed with an evaluation (Knill and Tosun, 2011: 381).

Nevertheless, Hague and Harrop (2004: 314) stress that evaluation is vital to the policy-making cycle, ‘without some evaluation of policy, governments will fail to learn the lessons of experience’.

Box 7. 3. Different ways of policy evaluation

<i>Formal</i>	Monitoring routine tasks
<i>Client satisfaction</i>	Performance of primary functions
<i>Outcome</i>	Satisfaction of a list of measurable intended outcomes
<i>Cost-benefit</i>	Comparison of costs and impacts of a policy
<i>Long-term consequences</i>	Impact on the core societal problem, rather than symptoms alone.

Source: Knill and Tosun, 2011: 380

* * *

This chapter presented a short overview of public policy process, in historical as well as theoretical terms. Comparative policy studies are a challenging field of inquiry; policy analysts have come up with several conceptual models to understand public policy, none of which, however, can fully explain the complexity of the policy-making process.

Policy analysts agree that there have been at least three historical shifts in the policy agenda of the Western state which changed the notional role of the state itself. The most recent change has arguably involved the rise of regulatory policies that surpassed the importance of (re)distributive policies, a definitive element of the welfare regimes of the 20th century. Not all governments worldwide

have progressed from extensive welfare policies towards regulatory regimes, and some of those that did, have not yet reached the evaluation stage of their long-term policies. As Newton and van Deth (2010: 325) note, 'no policy works quite as well as it is supposed to, but many of them work nonetheless and, for the most part, they manage to avoid the worst disasters'.

Questions

1. What public policies do you know and how can you categorize them?
2. What main ideas (or ideology) helped to maintain the night-watchman state of the 19th century?
3. What factors caused the crises of the Welfare state at the end of the 20th century?
4. How is a regulatory regime essentially different from a welfare regime?
5. What are the main assumptions of the rational model of policy-making?
6. What are the advantages and shortcomings of the incremental model?
7. How can you explain the difference between policy formulation and policy adoption?
8. Why is the role of bureaucracy important but controversial in the policy implementation process?
9. What challenges does the evaluation of policy involve?

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The Project on Scientific Knowledge and Public Policy:

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