PATTERNS OF DEMOCRACY

Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries

SECOND EDITION

AREND LIJPHART

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There are many ways in which, in principle, a democracy can be organized and run; in practice, too, modern democracies exhibit a variety of formal governmental institutions, like legislatures and courts, as well as political party and interest group systems. However, clear patterns and regularities appear when these institutions are examined from the perspective of how majoritarian or how consensual their rules and practices are. The majoritarianism-consensus contrast arises from the most basic and literal definition of democracy—government by the people or, in representative democracy, government by the representatives of the people—and from President Abraham Lincoln's famous further stipulation that democracy means government not only *by* but also *for* the people—that is, government in accordance with the people's prefererences.[1]

Defining democracy as "government by and for the people"

1. As Clifford D. May (1987) points out, credit for this definition should probably go to Daniel Webster instead of Lincoln. Webster gave an address in 1830—thirty-three years before Lincoln's Gettysburg address—in which he spoke of a "people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people."

raises a fundamental question: Who will do the governing and to whose interests should the government be responsive 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 majoritarian answer is simple and straightforward and has great appeal because government by the majority and in accordance with the majority's wishes obviously comes closer to the democratic ideal of "government by and for the people" than government by and responsive to a minority.

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. The majoritarian model concentrates political power in the hands of a bare majority—and often even merely a plurality instead of a majority, as Chapter 2 will show—whereas the consensus model tries to share, disperse, and limit power in a variety of ways. A closely related difference is that the majoritarian model of democracy is exclusive, competitive, and adversarial, whereas the consensus model is characterized by inclusiveness, bargaining, and compromise; for this reason, consensus democracy could also be termed "negotiation democracy" (Kaiser 1997, 434).

Ten differences with regard to the most important democratic institutions and rules can be deduced from the majoritarian and consensus principles. Because the majoritarian characteristics are derived from the same principle and hence are logically connected, one could also expect them to occur together in the real world; the same applies to the consensus characteristics. All ten variables could therefore be expected to be closely related. Previ-

ous research has largely confirmed these expectations—with one major exception: the variables cluster in two clearly separate dimensions (Lijphart 1984, 211–22). The first dimension groups five characteristics of the arrangement of executive power, the party and electoral systems, and interest groups. For brevity's sake, I shall refer to this first dimension as the *executives-parties dimension.* Since most of the five differences on the second dimension are commonly associated with the contrast between federalism and unitary government—a matter to which I shall return shortly—I shall call this second dimension the *federal-unitary dimension.*

The ten differences are formulated below in terms of dichotomous contrasts between the majoritarian and consensus models, but they are all variables on which particular countries may be at either end of the continuum or anywhere in between. The majoritarian characteristic is listed first in each case. The five differences on the executives-parties dimension are as follows:

1. Concentration of executive power in single-party majority cabinets versus executive power-sharing in broad multiparty coalitions.
2. Executive-legislative relationships in which the executive is dominant versus executive-legislative balance of power.
3. Two-party versus multiparty systems.
4. Majoritarian and disproportional electoral systems versus proportional representation.
5. Pluralist interest group systems with free-for-all competition among groups versus coordinated and "corporatist" interest group systems aimed at compromise and concertation.

The five differences on the federal-unitary dimension are the following:

1. Unitary and centralized government versus federal and decentralized government.
2. Concentration of legislative power in a unicameral legislature versus division of legislative power between two equally strong but differently constituted houses.

3. Flexible constitutions that can be amended by simple majorities versus rigid constitutions that can be changed only by extraordinary majorities.
4. Systems in which legislatures have the final word on the constitutionality of their own legislation versus systems in which laws are subject to a judicial review of their constitutionality by supreme or constitutional courts.
5. Central banks that are dependent on the executive versus independent central banks.

One plausible explanation of this two-dimensional pattern is suggested by the classical theorists of federalism—Ivo D. Duchacek (1970), Daniel J. Elazar (1968), Carl J. Friedrich (1950, 189–221), and K. C. Wheare (1946)—as well as by many contemporary theorists (Colomer 2011, 85–100; Hueglin and Fenna 2006; Stepan 2001, 315–61; Watts 2008). These scholars maintain that federalism has primary and secondary meanings. Its primary definition is: a guaranteed division of power between the central government and regional governments. The secondary characteristics are strong bicameralism, a rigid constitution, and strong judicial review. Their argument is that the guarantee of a federal division of power can work well only if (1) both the guarantee and the exact lines of the division of power are clearly stated in the constitution and this guarantee cannot be changed unilaterally at either the central or regional level—hence the need for a rigid constitution, (2) there is a neutral arbiter who can resolve conflicts concerning the division of power between the two levels of government—hence the need for judicial review, and (3) there is a federal chamber in the national legislature in which the regions have strong representation—hence the need for strong bicameralism; moreover, (4) the main purpose of federalism is to promote and protect a decentralized system of government. These federalist characteristics can be found in the first four variables of the second dimension. As stated earlier, this dimension is therefore called the federal-unitary dimension.

The federalist explanation is not entirely satisfactory, however, for two reasons. One problem is that, although it can explain the clustering of the four variables in one dimension, it does not explain why this dimension should be so clearly distinct from the other dimension. Second, it cannot explain why the variable of central bank independence is part of the federal-unitary dimension. A more persuasive explanation of the two-dimensional pattern is the distinction between "collective agency" and "shared responsibility" on one hand and divided agencies and responsibilities on the other suggested by Robert E. Goodin (1996, 331).[2] These are both forms of diffusion of power, but the first dimension of consensus democracy with its multiparty face-to-face interactions *within* cabinets, legislatures, legislative committees, and concertation meetings between governments and interest groups has a close fit with the collective-responsibility form. In contrast, both the four federalist characteristics and the role of central banks fit the format of diffusion by means of institutional separation: division of power between separate federal and state institutions, two separate chambers in the legislature, and separate and independent high courts and central banks. Viewed from this perspective, the first dimension could also be labeled the joint-responsibility or joint-power dimension and the second the divided-responsibility or divided-power dimension. However, although these labels would be more accurate and theoretically more meaningful, my original labels—"executives-parties" and "federal-unitary"—have the great advantage that they are easier to remember, and I shall therefore keep using them throughout this book.

The distinction between two basic types of democracy, majoritarian and consensus, is by no means a novel invention in political science. In fact, I borrowed these two terms from Robert G. Dixon, Jr. (1968, 10). Hans Hattenhauer and Werner Kaltefleiter

2. A similar distinction, made by George Tsebelis (2002), is that between "institutional veto players," located in different institutions, and "partisan veto players" such as the parties within a government coalition.

(1986) also contrast the "majority principle" with consensus, and Jürg Steiner (1971) juxtaposes "the principles of majority and proportionality." G. Bingham Powell, Jr. (1982), distinguishes between majoritarian and broadly "representational" forms of democracy and, in later work, between two "democratic visions": majoritarian and proportional (Powell 2000). Similar contrasts have been drawn by Robert A. Dahl (1956)—"populistic" versus "Madisonian" democracy; William H. Riker (1982)—"populism" versus "liberalism"; Jane Mansbridge (1980)—"adversary" versus "unitary" democracy; and S. E. Finer (1975)—"adversary politics" versus centrist and coalitional politics.

Nevertheless, there is a surprisingly strong and persistent tendency in political science to equate democracy solely with majoritarian democracy and to fail to recognize consensus democracy as an alternative and equally legitimate type. A particularly clear example can be found in Stephanie Lawson's (1993, 192–93) argument that a strong political opposition is "the *sine qua non* of contemporary democracy" and that its prime purpose is "to become the government." This view is based on the majoritarian assumption that democracy entails a two-party system (or possibly two opposing blocs of parties) that alternate in government; it fails to take into account that governments in more consensual multiparty systems tend to be coalitions and that a change in government in these systems usually means only a partial change in the party composition of the government—instead of the opposition "becoming" the government (Lundell 2011).

The frequent use of the "turnover" test in order to determine whether a democracy has become stable and consolidated betrays the same majoritarian assumption. Samuel P. Huntington (1991, 266–67) even proposes a "two-turnover test," according to which "a democracy may be viewed as consolidated if the party or group that takes power in the initial election at the time of transition [to democracy] loses a subsequent election and turns over power to those election winners, and if those election winners then peacefully turn over power to the winners of a later

election." Of the twenty countries with the longest democratic history analyzed in this book, all of which are undoubtedly stable and consolidated democratic systems, no fewer than three—Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Switzerland—fail even the one-turnover test during the more than sixty years from the late 1940s to 2010, that is, they experienced many cabinet changes but never a complete turnover, and six—the same three countries plus Belgium, Finland, and Germany—fail the two-turnover test.

This book will show that pure or almost pure majoritarian democracies are actually quite rare—limited to the United Kingdom, New Zealand (until 1996), and the former British colonies in the Caribbean (but only with regard to the executives-parties dimension). Most democracies have significant or even predominantly consensual traits. Moreover, as this book shows, consensus democracy may be considered more democratic than majoritarian democracy in most respects.

The ten contrasting characteristics of the two models of democracy, briefly listed above, are described in a preliminary fashion and exemplified by means of sketches of relatively pure cases of majoritarian democracy—the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Barbados—and of relatively pure cases of consensus democracy—Switzerland, Belgium, and the European Union—in Chapters 2 and 3. The thirty-six empirical cases of democracy, including the five just mentioned (but not the European Union), that were selected for the comparative analysis are systematically introduced in Chapter 4. The ten institutional variables are then analyzed in greater depth in the nine chapters that comprise the bulk of this book (Chapters 5 to 13). Chapter 14 summarizes the results and places the thirty-six democracies on a two-dimensional "conceptual map" of democracy; it also analyzes shifts on the map over time and shows that most countries occupy stable positions on the map. Chapters 15 and 16 ask the "so what?" question: Does the type of democracy make a difference, especially with regard to effective policy-making and the quality of democracy? These chapters show that consensus democracies score significantly higher

on a wide array of indicators of democratic quality and that they also have better records with regard to governing effectiveness, although the differences in this respect are not as large. Chapter 17 concludes with a look at the policy implications of the book's findings for democratizing and newly democratic countries.

CHAPTER 2

THE WESTMINSTER MODEL OF DEMOCRACY

In this book I use the term *Westminster model* interchangeably with *majoritarian model* to refer to a general model of democracy. It may also be used more narrowly to denote the main characteristics of *British* parliamentary and governmental institutions (G. Wilson 1994; Mahler 1997)—the Parliament of the United Kingdom meets in the Palace of Westminster in London. The British version of the Westminster model is both the original and the best-known example of this model. It is also widely admired. Richard Rose (1974, 131) points out that, "with confidence born of continental isolation, Americans have come to assume that their institutions—the Presidency, Congress and the Supreme Court—are the prototype of what should be adopted elsewhere." But American political scientists, especially those in the field of comparative politics, have tended to hold the British system of government in at least equally high esteem (Kavanagh 1974).

One famous political scientist who fervently admired the Westminster model was President Woodrow Wilson. In his early writings he went so far as to urge the abolition of presidential government and the adoption of British-style parliamentary government

banks should have less autonomy in majoritarian democracies where executives are stronger and more durable than in consensus democracies. However, the correlation between executive dominance and central bank independence is an insignificant –0.06.

A third suggestion of an institutional connection—between central bank independence and federalism—is much more fruitful (Banaian, Laney, and Willett 1986). The correlation between our indexes of federalism and decentralization on one hand and central bank independence on the other is a strong 0.60 (significant at the 1 percent level). Further hypotheses are that, because of the internationalization of central banks, there should be little or no such relationship from 1995 on and that it should be weaker in the entire 1945–2010 period. Indeed, the correlation for the 1995–2010 period is a completely insignificant 0.20; for the 1945–2010 period it is still a relatively high 0.52 (and still significant at the 1 percent level)—mainly on the strength of the stronger correlation of 0.60 in the pre-1994 years.

The shape of the relationship between the index of central bank independence (1945–94) and the federalism-decentralization index is shown in Figure 13.1.The five central banks with the greatest independence in the 1945–94 period all operated in federal systems: Germany, Switzerland, the United States, Austria, and Canada. In the rank order of Table 13.1, Australia is in ninth and Argentina is in fourteenth place—still in the top half of the table—and India is just below the midpoint. The ninth federal system, Belgium, had one of the lowest indexes of bank independence, but Belgium did not become federal until 1993, and as discussed in Chapter 3, it made its central bank much more independent at about the same time. As shown in the next chapter, central bank independence is also strongly correlated with the other three variables of the federal-unitary dimension.

CHAPTER 14

THE TWO-DIMENSIONAL CONCEPTUAL MAP OF DEMOCRACY

In this brief chapter I summarize the main findings of Chapters 5 through 13, which have dealt with each of the ten basic majoritarian versus consensus variables. I focus on two aspects of the "grand picture": the two-dimensional pattern formed by the relationships among the ten variables and the positions of each of the thirty-six democracies in this two-dimensional pattern. In addition, I explore the changes in these positions from the pre-1980 to the post-1981 period of twenty-seven of the thirty-six democracies for which a sufficiently long time span is available in the first period.

THE TWO DIMENSIONS

In Chapter 1, I previewed one of the most important general findings of this book: the clustering of the ten institutional variables along two clearly separate dimensions, which I have called the executives-parties and federal-unitary dimensions—although, as I explained in Chapter 1, it might be more accurate and theoretically more meaningful to call the two dimensions the joint-power and divided-power dimensions. In Chapters 5 through 13, too, I have repeatedly called attention to the close links among some of

the variables within each cluster. Table 14.1 now presents the overall pattern by means of the correlation matrix for all ten variables. It shows strong relationships within each cluster and only weak connections between variables belonging to different clusters. All of the correlations within the two clusters are statistically significant: fifteen of the twenty at the 1 percent level and the remaining five at the 5 percent level; the correlation coefficients are shown in the two highlighted triangles in Table 14.1. In sharp contrast, only one of the twenty-five correlations between variables in the different clusters, shown in the bottom left of the table, is large enough to be statistically significant, and only at the 5 percent level.

The first cluster of variables has somewhat stronger interconnections than the second cluster: the averages of the absolute values of the correlation coefficients are 0.66 and 0.47, respectively. Within the first cluster, the percentage of minimal winning one-party cabinets is a particularly strong element: it has the highest correlations with the other variables. This finding is of great theoretical interest because, as argued earlier (in the beginning of Chapter 5), this variable can be seen as conceptually close to the essence of the distinction between concentration of power and the joint exercise of power. The effective number of parliamentary parties is a second key component in this cluster. In the second cluster, the federalism and decentralization variable emerges as the strongest element. This finding is theoretically significant, too, because this variable can be seen as conceptually at the heart of the federal-unitary dimension.

An even better and more succinct summary of the relationships among the ten variables can be achieved by means of factor analysis. The general purpose of factor analysis is to detect whether there are one or more common underlying dimensions among several variables. The factors that are found can then be seen as "averages" of the closely related variables. Table 14.2 presents the results of the factor analysis of our ten basic variables. The values that are shown for each variable are the factor loadings, which

TABLE 14.1

Correlation matrix of the ten variables distinguishing majoritarian from consensus democracy in thirty-six democracies, 1945–2010

Variable 1: Effective number of parliamentary parties
Variable 2: Minimal winning one-party cabinets
Variable 3: Executive dominance
Variable 4: Electoral disproportionality
Variable 5: Interest group pluralism
Variable 6: Federalism-decentralization
Variable 7: Bicameralism
Variable 8: Constitutional rigidity
Variable 9: Judicial review
Variable 10: Central bank independence

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
[1]	1.00				
[2]	−0.85**	1.00			
[3]	−0.79**	0.78**	1.00		
[4]	−0.57**	0.58**	0.55**	1.00	
[5]	−0.61**	0.71**	0.51**	0.61**	1.00
[6]	0.26	−0.26	−0.08	−0.15	−0.23
[7]	0.09	−0.03	0.10	0.09	0.07
[8]	−0.08	0.00	0.11	0.17	0.01
[9]	−0.24	0.17	0.18	0.36*	0.26
[10]	−0.04	−0.15	−0.02	−0.12	−0.10

	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]
[1]					
[2]					
[3]					
[4]					
[5]					
[6]	1.00				
[7]	0.70**	1.00			
[8]	0.56**	0.39*	1.00		
[9]	0.47**	0.41*	0.46**	1.00	
[10]	0.60**	0.38*	0.38*	0.34*	1.00

*Statistically significant at the 5 percent level (one-tailed test)

**Statistically significant at the 1 percent level (one-tailed test)

TABLE 14.2

Varimax orthogonal rotated matrix of the ten variables distinguishing majoritarian from consensus democracy in 36 democracies, 1945–2010

Variable	Factor I	Factor II
Effective number of parliamentary parties	−0.91	0.09
Minimal winning one-party cabinets	0.92	−0.09
Executive dominance	0.84	0.08
Electoral disproportionality	0.66	−0.03
Interest group pluralism	0.72	−0.10
Federalism-decentralization	−0.19	0.98
Bicameralism	0.03	0.72
Constitutional rigidity	0.10	0.60
Judicial review	0.28	0.53
Central bank independence	−0.03	0.61

Note: The factor analysis is a principal components analysis with eigenvalues over 1.0 extracted

may be interpreted as the correlation coefficients between the variable and the first and second factors detected by the factor analysis. The same two clusters emerge prominently from this analysis; they are also clearly separate clusters, because the factor analysis used an orthogonal rotation, which guarantees that the two factors are completely uncorrelated.

The factor loadings are very high within each of the two clusters and much lower—lower than 0.10 in seven of the ten cases—outside the clusters. The percentage of minimal winning one-party cabinets again turns out to be the strongest variable in the first dimension: its factor loading of 0.92 means that it almost coincides with the factor. The effective number of parties is an almost equally strong element with a factor loading of −0.91. And the federalism variable emerges once more as the strongest element

in the second dimension with an extremely high factor loading of 0.98. The remaining factor loadings within the two clusters are lower but still strong: the lowest is still an impressive 0.53.

THE CONCEPTUAL MAP OF DEMOCRACY

The two-dimensional pattern formed by the ten basic variables allows us to summarize where the thirty-six individual countries are situated between majoritarian and consensus democracy. Their characteristics on each of the two sets of five variables can be averaged so as to form just two summary characteristics, and these can be used to place each of the democracies on the two-dimensional map of democracy shown in Figure 14.1.[1] The horizontal axis represents the executives-parties and the vertical axis the federal-unitary dimension. Each unit on these axes represents one standard deviation: high values indicate majoritarianism and low values consensus. On the executives-parties dimension, all countries are within two standard deviations from the middle; on the federal-unitary dimension, two countries—Germany and the United States—are at the greater distance of almost two and a half standard deviations below the middle. The exact scores of each of the thirty-six countries on the two dimensions can be found in the Appendix.[2]

1. In order for the five variables in each of the two clusters to be averaged, they first had to be standardized (so as to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1), because they were originally measured on quite different scales. Moreover, their signs had to be adjusted so that high values on each variable represented either majoritarianism or consensus and low values the opposite characteristic; for the purpose of constructing the conceptual map, I arbitrarily gave the high values to majoritarianism (which entailed reversing the signs of the effective number of parties and of all five variables in the federal-unitary dimension). After averaging these standardized variables, the final step was to standardize the averages so that each unit on the two axes represents one standard deviation.

2. Note, however, that in the Appendix all values on the two dimensions are expressed in terms of degrees of consensus democracy; these can be converted easily into degrees of majoritarian democracy by reversing the signs.

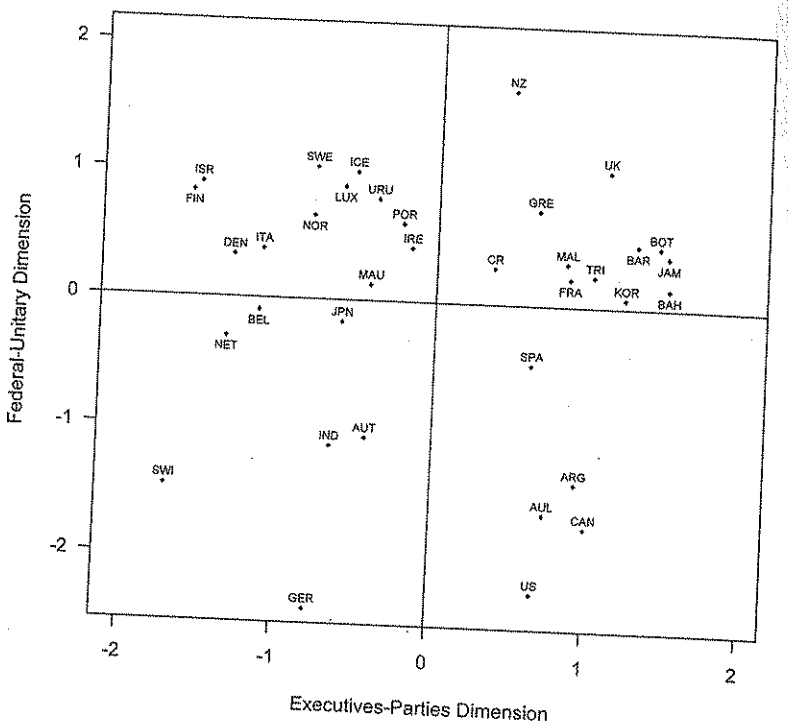

FIG. 14.1 The two-dimensional conceptual map of democracy

Most of the prototypical cases of majoritarian and consensus democracy discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 are in the expected positions on the map. The United Kingdom and New Zealand are in the top right corner. The United Kingdom is considerably more majoritarian on the executives-parties dimension, mainly because New Zealand, after a long period of being roughly equal in this respect, became considerably less majoritarian after its first PR election in 1996. But New Zealand is a great deal more majoritarian—that is, unitary—on the federal-unitary dimension. Until 1996, therefore, New Zealand's position was more extreme than that of the United Kingdom—in line with the proposition that it was the purer example of the Westminster model. Chapter 2 used Barbados as an exemplar of majoritarian democracy on the

executives-parties dimension only and not as typically majoritarian on the federal-unitary dimension; its location below the United Kingdom and New Zealand but also somewhat farther to the right fits this description well. Switzerland is, as expected, in the bottom left corner but not quite as far down as several other federal democracies, mainly due to its one nonconsensual characteristic—the absence of judicial review. It is still the clearest consensual prototype, however, because it is more than one and a half standard deviations away from the center on both dimensions, whereas Germany—which the map suggests could also have served as the prototype—is located farther down but less than one standard deviation left of the center. Belgium is the one exemplar case not to be in an extreme position, but this is not unexpected either because it only became fully federal in 1993; it does, however, have a strong consensual position on the executives-parties dimension.

The two-dimensional map also reveals prototypes of the two combinations of consensus and majoritarian characteristics. In the top left corner, Israel represents the combination of consensus democracy on the executives-parties dimension (in particular, frequent oversized coalition cabinets, multipartism, highly proportional PR elections, and interest group corporatism) but, albeit somewhat less strongly, majoritarianism on the federal-unitary dimension (an unwritten constitution and a unicameral parliament, moderated, however, by intermediate characteristics with regard to federalism and central bank independence). In the bottom right-hand corner, Canada is the strongest candidate for the opposite prototype of majoritarianism on the executives-parties and consensus on the federal-unitary dimension: on one hand, dominant one-party cabinets, a roughly two-and-a-half party system, plurality elections, and interest group pluralism, but on the other hand, strong federalism and judicial review, a rigid constitution, an independent central bank, and bicameralism, albeit of only medium strength (Studlar and Christensen 2006). The United States is located in the same corner and is stronger on the

federal-unitary dimension—but not exceptionally majoritarian on the executives-parties dimension, especially due to its lower degree of executive dominance in comparison with Canada.

EXPLANATIONS

Are any general patterns revealed by the distribution of the thirty-six democracies on the map? Is there, for instance, any correspondence between the conceptual and geographical maps? There does appear to be such a relationship as far as the consensus side of the executives-parties dimension is concerned: most continental European countries are located on the left side of the map, including the five Nordic countries, which have been called "the consensual democracies" with a "distinctively Scandinavian culture of consensus and . . . structures for conciliation and arbitration" (Elder, Thomas, and Arter 1988, 221). On the right-hand side, the four Caribbean countries are close together, but most of the other countries are geographically distant from one another. The striking feature that many countries on the right-hand side of the conceptual map do have in common is that they are former British colonies. In fact, it is the presence or absence of a British political heritage that appears to explain the distribution on the left and right side of the executives-parties dimension better than any geographical factor. Dag Anckar (2008) finds the same strong influence of the British model in his comparative study of democratic "microstates" with populations below one million—including five of our democracies with populations over a quarter of a million as well as twenty-four smaller countries.

There are several obvious exceptions to this twofold division based on the influence of a British heritage. Two of the Latin American democracies—Argentina and Costa Rica—form one exception. Other notable exceptions are Greece, Spain, and, farther to the right, Korea and France. France is an especially interesting exceptional case: in view of French president de Gaulle's deeply felt and frequently expressed antagonism toward *les anglo-saxons*, it is ironic that the republic he created is the most Anglo-Saxon

of any of the continental European democracies. There are exceptions on the left side of this dimension, too: Ireland, India, Israel, and Mauritius all emerged from British colonial rule. Ireland is only slightly to the left of the dividing line, and what unites the other three countries is that they are plural societies—suggesting that the degree of pluralism is what explains why countries are consensual rather than majoritarian on the executives-parties dimension. Of the seventeen plural and semiplural societies listed in Table 4.3, eleven are located on the left side of the map.

Regression analysis confirms that both explanations are important but also that British political heritage is the stronger influence. The correlation between British heritage—a dummy variable with a value of one for Britain itself and for the fourteen countries it formerly ruled, and zero for the other twenty-one countries—and majoritarian democracy on the executives-parties dimension has a coefficient of 0.50 (significant at the 1 percent level); the correlation with degree of plural society—plural versus semiplural versus nonplural—is −0.30 (significant at the 5 percent level). When both of the independent variables are entered into the regression equation, the multiple correlation coefficient is 0.60 (significant at the same levels). Finally, in a stepwise regression analysis, British heritage explains 23 percent of the variance in majoritarian democracy, and the degree of pluralism adds another 9 percent for a total of 32 percent of the variance explained (measured in terms of the adjusted R-squared).[3]

3. It can be argued that three additional countries—Austria, Germany, and Japan—should also be coded as having had a strong degree of British, or rather Anglo-American, influence on their political systems. The postwar Japanese constitution was drafted by General Douglas MacArthur's staff and was largely inspired by the British model. American and British occupation authorities also oversaw the reestablishment of democracy in Germany and Austria, and they had an especially strong and direct hand in the shaping of the postwar German democratic system (Muravchik 1991, 91–114). However, assigning these three countries a code of 1 on the British heritage variable weakens all of the correlations; for instance, the total variance explained goes down from 32 to 21 percent.

The degree to which countries are plural societies also appears to explain the location of the thirty-six democracies on the federal-unitary dimension. Of the twelve countries situated below the middle, nine are plural or semiplural societies. An additional explanation suggested by the map is population size. The four largest countries—India, the United States, Japan, and Germany—are all located in the bottom part of the map, and of the sixteen countries with populations greater than ten million, ten are in the bottom part. This potential explanation is bolstered by Robert A. Dahl and Edward R. Tufte's (1973, 37) finding that size is related to federalism and decentralization, the key variable in the federal-unitary dimension: "the larger the country, the more decentralized its government, whether federal or not."

Regression analysis again confirms both of these impressions. The correlation coefficients are −0.53 for population size (logged) and −0.38 for degree of pluralism (significant at the 1 and 5 percent level, respectively). In the multiple regression, both remain significant explanatory variables (although pluralism only at the 10 percent level), and the multiple correlation coefficient is 0.58. Population size by itself explains 26 percent of the variance, and pluralism adds another 4 percent for a total of 30 percent explained variance. The degree of pluralism is again the weaker variable, but it can be regarded as the strongest overall explanation because it can explain a significant portion of the variation in the locations of the thirty-six democracies on both dimensions.[4] Although the joint-power and divided-power aspects of consensus democracy are conceptually and empirically distinct dimensions, they represent complementary institutional mechanisms for the accommodation of deep societal divisions. This finding strengthens Sir Arthur Lewis's recommendation, stated in Chapter 3, that

4. British political heritage is not related to the second dimension. Neither is population size related to the first dimension—contradicting Dahl and Tufte's (1973, 91) argument that "the small system, being more homogeneous, is . . . likely to be more consensual [and that] the larger system, being more heterogeneous, is . . . likely to be more conflictual."

both dimensions of consensus democracy—in particular, Lewis advocates power-sharing cabinets and federalism—are needed in plural societies.

SHIFTS ON THE CONCEPTUAL MAP

The locations of the thirty-six democracies on the conceptual map are *average* locations over a long period: more than sixty years for the twenty older democracies and a minimum of twenty-two years for the three newest democracies (see Table 4.1). These averages conceal any large or small changes that may have taken place. Obviously, political systems can and do change; for instance, in previous chapters I called attention to changes in the party, electoral, and interest group systems of the thirty-six democracies as well as in their degrees of decentralization, the cameral structure of their legislatures, and the activism of their judicial review. To what extent have these changes added up to shifts in the direction of greater majoritarianism or greater consensus on either of both of the dimensions?

To explore this question, I divided the period 1945–2010 in two roughly equal parts: the period until the end of 1980 and the period from 1981 to the middle of 2010. For countries with a sufficiently long time span in the first period, scores on both of the dimensions were calculated for each period. This could be done for the twenty countries covered since the middle or late 1940s and for seven additional countries: Barbados, Botswana, Costa Rica, France, Jamaica, Malta, and Trinidad.[5] The other nine democracies were not included in this part of the analysis. Figure 14.2 shows the shifts that took place in the twenty-seven longer-term democracies from the pre-1980 to the post-1981 period. The

5. These countries are covered starting with the years indicated in Table 4.1. The six countries that became independent and democratic or redemocratized in the 1970s were not included in this analysis because the time span from the beginning of their coverage until 1980 was much too short; the remaining three countries redemocratized after 1981 (see Table 4.1).

arrows point to the positions in the later period. It should be emphasized that these shifts are all relative changes—that is, each country's change is relative to the changes in all of the other countries. The reason is that the scores on each of the dimensions in each period are standardized and add up to zero; therefore, the shifts from left to right as well as up or down have to sum to zero, too. A good example is the slightly upward shift of the United States in Figure 14.2, which appears to indicate a somewhat less extreme position on the federal-unitary dimension. In fact, however, the absolute position of the United States did not change at all: its scores on all five of the variables in this dimension are exactly the same before 1980 and after 1981. The apparent shift is therefore caused by the sum total of movements in the other twenty-six countries toward a lower position on the federal-unitary dimension. Hence Table 14.2 cannot provide an answer to the question of whether there was any overall tendency toward more majoritarianism or more consensus in the 1945–2010 period. There is, however, a different way to answer this question, which I shall discuss below.

The general picture in Figure 14.2 is one of great stability. It shows many relatively small shifts but no radical transformations: not a single country changed from a clearly majoritarian democracy to a clearly consensual democracy or vice versa. There are more shifts from left to right or vice versa than from higher to lower locations or vice versa—a pattern that reflects the greater stability of the institutional characteristics of the federal-unitary dimension because these are more often anchored in constitutional provisions. Nevertheless, four downward movements stand out. The largest of these reflects Belgium's introduction of judicial review in 1984 and full federalism in 1993. The main explanation in the French and Italian cases is the combination of decentralization and stronger judicial review in the second period. The somewhat smaller but still pronounced downward shift in Costa Rica's position is entirely due to the major change from weak to very strong judicial review in 1989. The still smaller downward

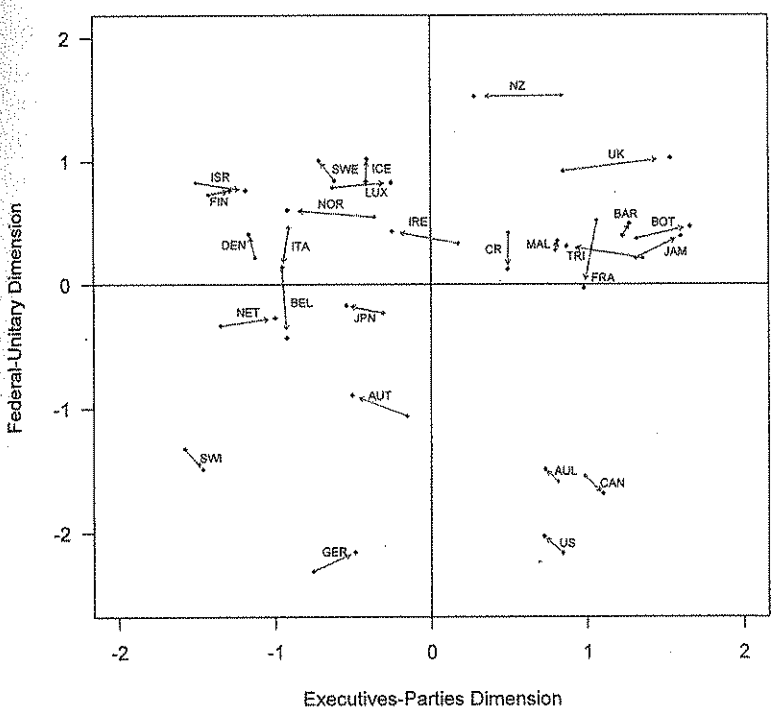

FIG. 14.2 Shifts on the two-dimensional map by twenty-seven democracies from the period before 1981 to the period 1981–2010

movements of Switzerland and Israel are due to the strengthening of their central bank independence. The slight upward movements of many countries do not indicate significant changes because, as in the case of the United States mentioned above, they mainly "compensate" for the significant downward shifts of Belgium, France, Italy, and Costa Rica. However, the adoption of unicameralism in Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland does represent real change and accounts for part of their still relatively small shifts to higher positions in Figure 14.2.

The two big shifts along horizontal lines that stand out in Figure 14.2 are those of our two majoritarian prototypes, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. New Zealand's shift to a less majoritar-

ian position is the result of its adoption in 1996 of PR, which resulted in less electoral disproportionality, more multipartism, a major increase in coalition and minority cabinets, and lower executive dominance, as discussed in Chapter 2. The leftward shift would obviously be even more pronounced had the comparison been between the periods before and after 1996 instead of before and after 1981. The big move to the right by the United Kingdom occurred in spite of a slight increase in the effective number of parties (from 2.10 to 2.27 parties), which was more than counterbalanced, however, by a big increase in disproportionality (from 8.97 to 16.0 percent) and a higher degree of executive dominance. These changes demonstrate that by 2010 the United Kingdom had definitely replaced New Zealand as the closest approximation of the Westminster model. The next two notable shifts are those of Norway and Ireland. Norway moved to more consensual characteristics on four of the five variables in the executives-parties dimension and maintained its high degree of corporatism at the same level. Ireland crossed over from majoritarian into consensual territory in spite of slightly less proportional election results, but increases in multipartism, coalition government, and corporatism, as well as a decrease in executive dominance (Bulsara and Kissane 2009). The other movements from right to left and vice versa are all smaller and reflect a variety of changes in the five variables underlying the executives-parties dimension without any one of these variables standing out as the most influential.

In order to discover whether there was any general trend toward more majoritarianism or consensus on the two dimensions, we need to look at the average *unstandardized* scores on each of the ten basic variables. These averages are presented in Table 14.3. The table also shows the differences between the second-period and first-period scores and whether these differences indicate more majoritarianism or more consensus. On eight of the variables, the trend is toward greater consensus, but only three of these show sizable differences: more multipartism (by about an extra one-third of a party), more than 10 percent fewer minimal

TABLE 14.3

Average values on the ten variables distinguishing majoritarian from consensus democracy in twenty-seven democracies, 1945–80 and 1981–2010, the differences between the second and first periods, and the majoritarian (M) or consensual (C) direction of these differences

	1945–80	1981–2010	Difference
Executives-parties dimension			
Effective number of parliamentary parties	3.06	3.44	+0.38 (C)
Minimal winning one-party cabinets	60.7	54.3	−6.40 (C)
Executive dominance	4.99	4.95	−0.04 (C)
Electoral disproportionality	6.88	7.96	+1.08 (M)
Interest group pluralism	1.92	1.83	−0.09 (C)
Federal-unitary dimension			
Federalism-decentralization	2.28	2.39	+0.11 (C)
Bicameralism	2.29	2.19	−0.10 (M)
Constitutional rigidity	2.59	2.65	+0.06 (C)
Judicial review	1.90	2.13	+0.23 (C)
Central bank independence	0.38	0.39	+0.01 (C)

winning one-party cabinets, and stronger judicial review. Of the two variables that show the opposite trend, only the increase in electoral disproportionality—by more than one percentage point—is an impressive change. The overall trend is toward more consensus democracy, but it is obviously not a very strong trend.

The second-period (1981–2010) scores on the two dimensions are used again in the next two chapters. These scores will differ slightly from those of the twenty-seven democracies used to dis-

cover shifts on the conceptual map in the last part of the current chapter, because they will be based on the ten standardized variables and two dimensions for both these twenty-seven countries and the nine countries that could not be included for this purpose. The next two chapters analyze the consequences that type of democracy may have for the effectiveness, democratic character, and general policy orientation of governments. Reliable data on these variables are generally available only for recent decades; moreover, focusing on the more recent period enables us to include as many of the thirty-six democracies as possible in the analysis. It therefore also makes sense to measure the degrees of consensus or majoritarianism of the twenty-seven longer-term democracies in terms of their characteristics in the second period.

CHAPTER 15

EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLICY-MAKING: DOES CONSENSUS DEMOCRACY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

In this chapter and the next I deal with the "so what?" question: Does the difference between majoritarian and consensus democracy make a difference for the operation of democracy, especially for how well democracy works? The conventional wisdom—which is often stated in terms of the relative advantages of PR versus plurality and majority elections but which can be extended to the broader contrast between consensus and majoritarian democracy along the executives-parties dimension—is that there is a trade-off between the quality and the effectiveness of democratic government. On one hand, the conventional wisdom concedes that PR and consensus democracy may provide more accurate representation and, in particular, better minority representation and protection of minority interests, as well as broader participation in decision-making. On the other hand, the conventional wisdom maintains that the one-party majority governments typically produced by plurality elections are more decisive and hence more effective policy-makers. This view is reflected in the well-known adage that "representative government must not only represent, it must also govern" (Beer 1998, 25)—