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Principles of Comparative Politics

- UCLA Custom Edition

Compiled by Michael Thies
UCLA

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A Custom Book Compiled by
Michael Thies

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CHAPTER

1

INSTITUTIONAL VETO PLAYERS

**BY WILLIAM ROBERTS CLARK, MATT GOLDER AND SONA NADENICHECK
GOLDER**

Excerpted from William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, Sona Nadenichek Golder, PRINCIPLES OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS (Washington: DC, CQ Press, 2009), pp. 603-674.

Institutional Veto Players

The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.

James Madison, *Federalist*, no. 47

It is very dangerous to allow the nation as a whole to decide on matters which concern only a small section, whether that section be geographical or industrial or defined in any other way. The best cure for this evil, so far as can be seen at present, lies in allowing self-government to every important group within a nation in all matters that affect that group much more than they affect the rest of the community.

Bertrand Russell, *Proposed Roads To Freedom*, 1919

[In government] the constant aim is to divide and arrange the several offices in such a manner as that each may be a check on the other; that the private interest of every individual may be a sentinel over the public rights.

James Madison, *Federalist*, no. 51

- In this chapter, we examine the origins and consequences of federalism, bicameralism, and constitutionalism.
- A federal state is one in which sovereignty is constitutionally split between at least two territorial levels so that independent governmental units at each level have final authority in at least one policy realm. It is important to distinguish between “federalism in structure” and “federalism in practice.”

- A bicameral state is one in which legislative deliberations occur in two distinct assemblies. Although bicameral legislatures were originally designed to represent different social classes, they are now more closely associated with the representation of different territorial units.
- Constitutionalism refers to the commitment of governments to be governed by a set of authoritative rules and principles that are laid out in a constitution. Constitutionalism requires a codified constitution, a bill of rights, and constitutional review.
- Rather than view the world in terms of institutional dichotomies, comparative scholars are increasingly recognizing that institutions such as federalism, bicameralism, and constitutionalism are conceptually the same. In effect, all three of these institutions act as checks and balances, thereby influencing how easy it is to change the political status quo. This new approach to understanding political institutions is called veto player theory.

As we noted in Chapter 10, there are many, many different types of democracy in the world. In subsequent chapters, we looked at how political scientists sometimes distinguish between democracies in terms of the type of government that they have (Chapter 11), the type of electoral system that they employ (Chapter 12), and the type of party system that they have (Chapter 13). In this chapter, we focus on other institutional dimensions of democracy. Specifically, we examine federalism, bicameralism, and constitutionalism. All three of these institutions can be thought of as forms of checks and balances on the political system. In effect, they can all be conceptualized as “institutional veto players” that influence the ease with which the political status quo in a country can be changed. As such, their causes and consequences are closely related. It is for this reason that we consider these different institutions in a single chapter.

FEDERALISM

Political scientists sometimes distinguish between states according to whether they are federal or unitary. Unfortunately, there remains a great deal of uncertainty and confusion about exactly what it is that makes a state federal. At present, there are several rather vague definitions of federalism in the existing literature (Riker 1975; Elazar 1987; Wright 1988; Ostrom 1991; O’Toole 1993). This causes a problem in that scholars regularly come up with different lists of federal states. Although there is a widespread consensus that about a dozen countries, such as Argentina, Canada, Germany, and the United States, are federal, there is considerable disagreement over the federal-unitary status of many other countries. For example, countries like China, India, Italy, Russia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela are considered federal by some political scientists but not others.

To a large extent, the source of this confusion can be traced to whether one thinks that a country needs to be both federal *in structure* (*de jure*) and federal *in practice* (*de facto*) in order to be considered truly federal. For our part, we believe that it is useful to retain a conceptual distinction between *de jure* federalism and *de facto* federalism (Bednar, forthcoming). Only by making this distinction can political scientists examine why it is that some states that

are federal on paper actually *behave* federally but others do not. In what follows, we refer to de jure federalism (federalism in structure) as **federalism** and de facto federalism (federalism in practice) as **decentralization**.

Federalism: Federalism in Structure

To be classified as federal, a country must satisfy three structural criteria: (a) geopolitical division, (b) independence, and (c) direct governance (Bednar forthcoming). Typically we can determine whether a country satisfies these criteria simply by looking at its constitution.

1. *Geopolitical division:* The country must be divided into mutually exclusive regional governments that are constitutionally recognized and that cannot be unilaterally abolished by the national or central government.
2. *Independence:* The regional and national governments must have independent bases of authority. Typically, this independence is established constitutionally by having the regional and national governments elected independently of one another.
3. *Direct governance:* Authority must be shared between the regional governments and the national government; each governs its citizens directly, so that each citizen is governed by at least two authorities. In addition, each level of government must have the authority to act independently of the other in at least one policy realm; this policy sovereignty must be constitutionally declared.

The regional units in a federal polity go under different names, depending on the country concerned. For example, they are called states in Australia, the United States, and Venezuela; provinces in Canada; Länder in Germany and Austria; cantons in Switzerland; and regions in Belgium. Taken together, the three criteria outlined above indicate that a **federal state** is one in which sovereignty is constitutionally split between at least two territorial levels so that independent governmental units at each level have final authority in at least one policy realm.

Federalism has three structural components: (a) geopolitical division, (b) independence, and (c) direct governance. A **federal state** is one in which sovereignty is constitutionally split between at least two territorial levels so that independent governmental units at each level have final authority in at least one policy realm. States that are not federal are known as **unitary states**.

In Table 14.1, we list all twenty-four countries that could be considered federal at some point between 1990 and 2000.¹ We also list whether these countries are democratic or authoritarian based on their Polity IV scores (Marshall and Jaggers 2003). By definition, all countries that do not appear in Table 14.1 are **unitary states**. As the information in Table 14.1 indicates, federalism is relatively rare in the world. As of 2000, only about 10 percent of the world's independent countries were federal; slightly less than 20 percent of the world's population lived in a federal country. On the whole, those countries that are federal tend to be either relatively large countries, such as Australia, Brazil, the former Soviet Union, and the United States, or relatively heterogeneous and diverse countries, such as Belgium, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia.

1. The European Union also meets our criteria for a federal system. We do not include it in Table 14.1, however, because the European Union is not an independent state.

TABLE 14.1 **Federal Countries, 1990–2000**

	Country	Regime	Years
1	Argentina	Democracy	1990–2000
2	Australia	Democracy	1990–2000
3	Austria	Democracy	1990–2000
4	Belgium	Democracy	1994–2000
5	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Dictatorship	1990–2000
6	Brazil	Democracy	1990–2000
7	Canada	Democracy	1990–2000
8	Czechoslovakia	Democracy	1990–1992
9	Ethiopia	Dictatorship	1995–2000
10	Germany	Democracy	1990–2000
11	Malaysia	Dictatorship	1990–2000
12	Mexico	Dictatorship	1990–1995
		Democracy	1996–2000
13	Micronesia	Democracy	1990–2000
14	Nigeria	Democracy	1999–2000
15	Pakistan	Democracy	1990–1999
16	Russia	Democracy	1992–2000
17	South Africa	Democracy	1993–2000
18	Switzerland	Democracy	1990–2000
19	USSR	Dictatorship	1990–1991
20	United Arab Emirates	Dictatorship	1990–2000
21	United States of America	Democracy	1990–2000
22	Venezuela	Democracy	1990–2000
23	Yugoslavia	Dictatorship	1990–1991
24	Yugoslavia (Serbia & Montenegro)	Dictatorship	1992–2000

Source: Data are from Bednar (forthcoming); the coding for regime type is from the Polity IV dataset.

Note: All of these countries satisfy the criteria of (a) geopolitical division, (b) independence, and (c) direct governance.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is an example of a federal dictatorship. The UAE currently comprises seven emirates in the Middle East—Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ra's al-Khaimah, Sharjah, and Umm al-Qawain. See Map 14.1, which shows the seven emirates. Originally, the seven emirates were known as the Trucial States and they formed part of a British protectorate along with Bahrain and Qatar. Following Britain's stated decision to withdraw from the Gulf in 1968, the seven Trucial States, along with Bahrain and Qatar, began negotiations to form a federation of Arab Emirates. Bahrain and Qatar ultimately decided to go their separate ways, but six Trucial States went on to form the United Arab Emirates in

December 1971; the seventh Trucial State—Ra's al-Khaimah—joined in February 1972 (Peterson 1988). The provisional constitution of the UAE, which only became permanent in 1996, established a federal form of government (Peck 2001). This essentially involved constructing federal authorities above the preexisting local governments in each of the seven emirates. The federal nature of the UAE is guaranteed in Articles 116 and 122 of the constitution. These articles state that all powers that are not explicitly given to the federal authorities in the constitution belong to the individual emirates.² Not only is the UAE the only current example of a federal state in the Middle East, but it also represents the only successful attempt to form a political union among Arabs. Egypt and Syria had formed a United Arab Republic in 1958. This experiment with Arab political union proved short-lived, however, collapsing in 1961 when Syria began to believe that it was being treated like an Egyptian province. The

MAP 14.1**The Federal States of the United Arab Emirates**

2. Very few powers are explicitly given to the federal authorities. Articles 120 and 121 state that the federal authorities are in charge of foreign affairs, security, defense, nationality and immigration issues, education, public health, currency, and a few other areas; everything else is determined by the local governments in the individual emirates.

merger of North and South Yemen in 1990 was another attempt at Arab political union. This attempt essentially ended in failure when the South tried to secede militarily in 1994.

Whereas the United Arab Emirates is an example of a federal dictatorship, Brazil is an example of a federal democracy. Brazil has a long history with federalism dating back to the 1891 constitution of the Old Republic (1889–1930). The existing federal arrangements date to the 1988 constitution, which was written following the re-emergence of democracy from military dictatorship in 1985. Unlike most federal countries, which have two different levels of territorial units, Brazil has three—federal, state, and municipal. At the federal level, executive power is in the hands of the president. At the state level, there are twenty-six states based on historical borders that have developed over centuries and a “federal district” that comprises Brazil’s capital, Brasília. As Map 14.2 illustrates, the federal district is in the state of Goiás. Executive power at the state level is in the hands of governors. At the municipal level, there are 5,560 different municipalities with their own legislative council; executive power is in the hands of mayors. Each of the municipalities has its own “little constitution,” called an “organic law.”

MAP 14.2

Brazil's States and Federal District

The federal nature of Brazil's government is guaranteed in Article 1 of the constitution, which states that Brazil is formed by "the indissoluble union of the states and municipalities and of the federal district." Political authority is constitutionally shared among all three levels of government. In effect, state governments are allowed to pass legislation in any area that is not explicitly prohibited to them in the constitution (Article 25). Similarly, municipal governments are permitted to pass laws on any matter that does not contradict either the state or national constitutions (Article 30). Brazil is one of four federal states in Latin America, the others being Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela.

Box 14.1**DEVOLUTION VERSUS FEDERALISM**

Although only twenty-four countries satisfied all three structural criteria for federalism at some point during the 1990s, several other countries, such as Comoros, India, Italy, Spain, Sudan, St. Kitts and Nevis, Tanzania, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom, satisfied two of them (Bednar, forthcoming). On the whole, the criterion that most of these unitary countries failed to meet was that of geopolitical division. Recall that this criterion requires that a country be divided into mutually exclusive regional governments that are constitutionally recognized and that cannot be unilaterally abolished by the national or central government. Many of the aforementioned countries, like India, Spain, and the United Kingdom, have transferred quite a considerable amount of power from the central government to regional governments. In all of these countries, however, the central government retains the right to unilaterally recall or reshape the powers given to the regional governments. Ultimately, political power resides in the central government of these countries and nowhere else; regional governments do not have a constitutional right to any of their powers. This type of situation is known as **devolution** and not federalism. To further illustrate this point, consider the United Kingdom and India.

Devolution occurs when a unitary state grants powers to sub-national governments but retains the right to unilaterally recall or reshape those powers.

Although the United Kingdom has historically had a very powerful central government, things have recently begun to change. Following successful referenda on the establishment of regional parliaments in 1997, elections were held for a Scottish parliament and a Welsh Senate in 1999. In accordance with the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, a provincial assembly was also established in Northern Ireland in 1999. These regional governments have had the legal right to act independently of the central government in London in numerous policy areas. As a result of these developments, the United Kingdom has come to satisfy two of the criteria for a federal state: independence and direct governance. The United Kingdom is not a federal state, however, because it fails to satisfy the criterion of geopolitical division; the UK central government retains the unilateral right to recall or reshape the powers that it has delegated or devolved to the regional governments. Indeed, the history of the Northern Ireland Assembly clearly illustrates this point. On four separate occasions since the establishment of the Assembly in 1999, the central government in London has suspended it; the fourth suspension lasted for over four years, from October 14, 2002, to May 7, 2007.

India also has many characteristics of a federal state. For example, it has two different levels of government—national and state. At present, twenty-eight states have their own local governments. There are also seven union territories, which differ from states in that they do not have their own local governments and are, instead, governed directly by the national government. Map 14.3 shows the states and union territories of India. Article 246 of the Indian constitution divides political authority between policy areas that are the exclusive concern of the national government (Union List) and policy areas that are the exclusive concern of the state governments. India clearly satisfies two of the criteria for a federal state: independence and direct governance. Like the United Kingdom, however, India is not a federal state, because it fails to satisfy the criterion of geopolitical division.

MAP 14.3

India's States and Union Territories



Two articles in the Indian constitution are of particular relevance here. The first is Article 3, which states that the national legislature has the power to change the boundaries of individual states and to create new states by separating territories from existing ones. The second is Article 356, which allows for the imposition of emergency presidential rule in a state that cannot be governed "in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution." In effect, this article, commonly known as "President's Rule," allows India's president to take over a state's executive and rule directly through his appointed state governor. The state's legislature may be dismissed or simply put in suspended animation during this period of emergency rule. President's Rule can last anywhere from six months to three years. It can last even longer than this if a constitutional amendment is passed, as has happened in the state of Punjab and the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Although Article 356 was originally designed to allow the central government to take over when a state was unable to end civil unrest, such as riots, it has taken on obvious political significance, with Indian presidents frequently using the power to dissolve state governments ruled by political opponents. Since the adoption of the Indian constitution in 1950, Article 356 has been invoked more than one hundred times to impose direct rule. President's Rule was first used in 1959 to dismiss the democratically elected Communist government in the state of Kerala. It was most recently used on November 20, 2007, in the south Indian state of Karnataka to help resolve difficulties in the state government formation process (Thaindian News online).

Despite sharing some of the features of a federal state, both the United Kingdom and India remain unitary states in structure even though they have devolved power to the regions.

Although all of the states shown in Table 14.1 can be considered federal, there is a great deal of variation in the precise form that federalism takes in these countries. When it comes to distinguishing between different forms of federalism, political scientists frequently focus on whether a federal system is (a) congruent or incongruent and (b) symmetric or asymmetric (Lijphart 1999).

Congruent federalism exists when the territorial units of a federal state share a similar demographic (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, and so on) makeup. In a perfectly congruent federal state, each of the territorial units would be a precise miniature reflection of the country as a whole. Examples of a congruent federal state include the United States and Brazil. In both of these countries, the demographic composition of the territorial units does not vary significantly along ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or religious lines. In contrast, **incongruent federalism** exists when the demographic makeup of the territorial units differs among the units and the country as a whole. Examples of an incongruent federal state include Switzerland and Belgium. In both of these countries, the territorial units differ from one another along linguistic lines.

Congruent federalism exists when the territorial units of a federal state share a similar demographic makeup with one another and the country as a whole. **Incongruent federalism** exists when the demographic makeup of territorial units differs among the units and the country as a whole.

One way to think about congruent and incongruent federalism is in regard to whether the political boundaries of the territorial units line up with the geographic boundaries of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or religious groups in a country. In an incongruent federal state, political boundaries tend to be aligned with the geographic boundaries of these social groups, whereas they tend to cut across them in congruent federal systems (Lijphart 1999, 196). One of the purported advantages of incongruent federalism is that it can transform highly diverse and heterogeneous countries that have geographically concentrated social groups into a federation of relatively homogeneous territorial units. As an example, consider Switzerland. Although Switzerland has four official language groups—German, French, Italian, and Romansch—the way that the territorial boundaries are drawn in the Swiss system of incongruent federalism means that twenty-two of the twenty-six cantons officially have only one language; three cantons—Bern, Fribourg, and Valais—are bilingual, and only one—Graubünden—is trilingual (McRae 1983, 172–179). In effect, Switzerland comprises a collection of homogeneous cantons within a relatively diverse country.

Symmetric federalism exists when the territorial units of a federal state possess equal powers relative to the central government. **Asymmetric federalism** exists when some territorial units enjoy more extensive powers than others relative to the central government.

Symmetric federalism exists when the territorial units of a federal state possess equal powers relative to the central government. This is the case in the United States: the Constitution gives each state equal standing and power vis-à-vis the central government. In contrast,

asymmetric federalism exists when some territorial units of a federal state enjoy more extensive powers than others relative to the central government. On the whole, asymmetries in the division of power are designed to satisfy the different needs and demands that arise from ethnic, linguistic, demographic, or cultural differences between the separate subnational units. Examples of asymmetric federal states include Belgium, Canada, Malaysia, Russia, and Switzerland.³ In Canada, the French-speaking province of Quebec enjoys significantly more autonomy in relation to the central government than the other nine English-speaking provinces. In addition to having special powers to promote and protect its French-Canadian culture, Quebec has considerable authority over employment and immigration issues within its borders; it is also the only Canadian province to have its own pension plan.

Decentralization: Federalism in Practice

Decentralization refers to the extent to which actual policy-making power lies with the central or regional governments in a country. Most political scientists see decentralization as a revenue issue: the greater the share of all tax revenues going to the central government, the less decentralized the state.

As we noted earlier, it is possible to make a conceptual distinction between federalism in structure (federalism) and federalism in practice (decentralization). As we have just seen, whether a state is federal or unitary is ultimately a consti-

3. In a similar manner to federal states, unitary states can also devolve power in an asymmetric manner. For example, the Navarra and Basque communities have significantly more extensive tax and expenditure powers than the other “autonomous communities” in Spain; Galicia and Catalonia enjoy special authority in the areas of education, language, and culture (Congleton 2006). In the United Kingdom the Scottish Parliament enjoys significantly more power, particularly in the area of taxation, than the Welsh senate.

tutional issue. It depends on whether a country has certain structural characteristics written into its constitution. Note, though, that whether a country is federal or unitary says very little about exactly *where* policy is made in practice. Recall that our definition of federalism simply states that each level of government has the authority to act independently of the other in *at least one policy realm*. Not only does this definition not specify a particular ratio of policy realms between the central and regional governments, it also does not specify whether the regional governments have the necessary resources to actually implement the policy decisions they might make.⁴ In other words, simply knowing that a state is federal does not immediately imply that significant policymaking power is in the hands of regional governments at the subnational level. Similarly, knowing that a state is unitary does not necessarily mean that all policymaking power is in the hands of the central government. The degree to which actual policymaking power lies with the central or regional governments in both federal and unitary states determines the extent to which political scientists view these states as centralized or decentralized.

Determining the extent to which a state is centralized or decentralized can be quite difficult. You might think that we need only look at what a state's constitution has to say about the division of power between different levels of government. This, however, can be problematic for several reasons. Consider unitary states. In almost all unitary states, policymaking authority constitutionally resides with the central government. Still, as indicated in Box 14.1, significant amounts of policymaking power can be devolved to regional governments in unitary countries. In other words, subnational governments can play an important policymaking role even when they derive no explicit authority to do so from the constitution.

Now consider federal states. Oftentimes, the constitution of a federal country will delineate the specific policy realms in which the central or regional governments can act. Although this is somewhat informative, it is important to remember that having the *authority to act* in a policy realm can be very different from having the practical *ability to act* in that area. Consider, for example, a country in which the regional governments have the authority to make health or education policy. Unless these regional governments also have the ability to raise their own tax revenue, they may find themselves significantly constrained when it comes to actually making and implementing policy in these areas. Put another way, regional governments in a federal state may have a much weaker role in the policymaking process than a reading of the state's constitution might suggest, because they do not have the financial wherewithal to implement their policy choices. The bottom line is that looking at a constitution, whether in a federal or unitary country, can be misleading if one wants to know the extent to which that country is centralized or decentralized in practice.

In recognition of these difficulties, political scientists frequently use the percentage of all tax revenue that is collected by the central government as a measure of state centralization.⁵

4. We should note that this is not specific to our particular definition of federalism. For example, both Elazar and Riker allow for a wide range of actual power exercised by the different levels of government. As Lijphart (1999, 187) notes, "Riker (1975, 101) states that each level [of government] 'has some activities on which it makes final decisions.' . . . Likewise, Elazar (1997, 239) states that 'the powers assigned to each [of the] multiple centers' in federalism may be large or small."

5. For a good discussion of various measures of federalism and decentralization, see Rodden (2004).

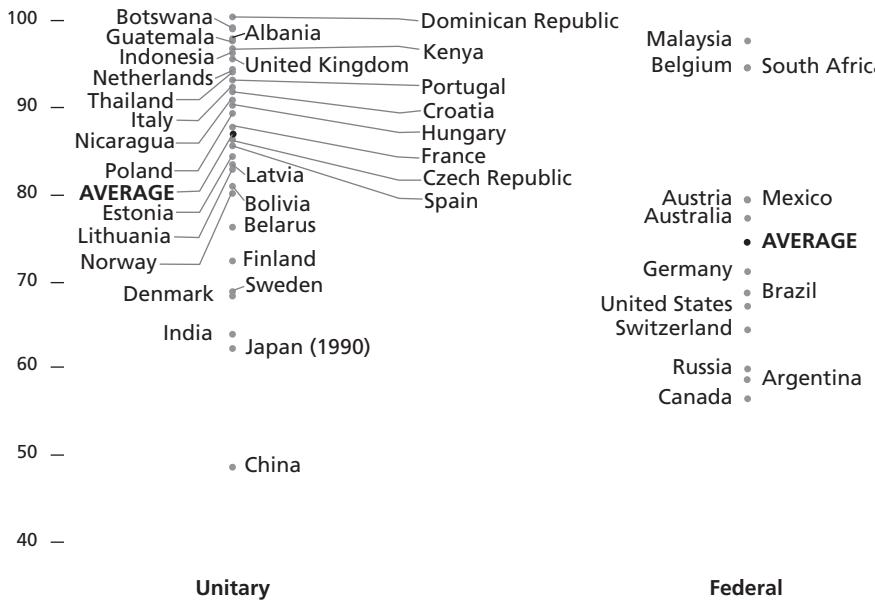
This is often referred to as “fiscal (de)centralization.” The basic assumption underlying this measure is that governments need tax revenue in order to implement policies. Thus, the scope of policymaking activities at any one level of government will ultimately depend on the share of tax revenues that it collects. The higher the share of all tax revenues collected by the central government, the more centralized the state. The lower the share of all tax revenues collected by the central government, the more decentralized the state. In sum, although political scientists tend to see federalism as a constitutional issue, they tend to see decentralization as a budgetary one.

In Figure 14.1, we illustrate the share of tax revenue collected by the central government out of the total tax revenue collected by all levels of government for fifty-three countries in 1997. Of these fifty-three countries, thirteen are federal and forty are unitary. In some countries, particularly federal ones, a proportion of the tax revenue collected by the central government is automatically transferred to regional governments through a legally mandated “revenue-sharing” scheme.⁶ For example, roughly 28 percent of all the revenue collected by the central government in Argentina was automatically transferred to regional governments in 1997 (Diaz-Cayeros 2006, 184). Although this tax revenue was originally collected by the central government, the data in Figure 14.1 treat it as if it were collected by regional governments because they are its legal recipients.⁷ With this in mind, what does the information in Figure 14.1 tell us about the relationship between federalism and decentralization?

On the whole, it is clear that the average degree of revenue centralization is lower in federal states (74.6 percent) than in unitary ones (87.95 percent). In other words, federalism and decentralization tend to go together, as one would expect. It should be noted, however, that there is a substantial amount of variation in revenue centralization in both unitary and federal countries (Arzaghi and Henderson 2005). For example, some unitary states (China, Denmark, Finland, India, Japan, Sweden) are more decentralized than the average federal state. Indeed, China, where the central government collects only 48.6 percent of the country’s tax revenue, is the most decentralized state in the whole sample. Similarly, some federal states (Belgium, Malaysia, South Africa) are much more centralized than the average unitary state. Fully 97.6 percent of the tax revenue collected in federal Malaysia is collected by the central government.

6. Although mandated revenue-sharing schemes legally require central governments to transfer a certain percentage of their tax revenue to regional governments, central governments do not always fully comply with them. In a study of Latin America’s four federal states—Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, and Brazil—Diaz-Cayeros (2006) finds that central governments come much closer to transferring the mandated amount of tax revenue to regional governments when they are democratic rather than autocratic. To the extent that central governments do not abide by revenue-sharing schemes, the data in Figure 14.1 overstate the degree of decentralization in some, mainly federal, states.

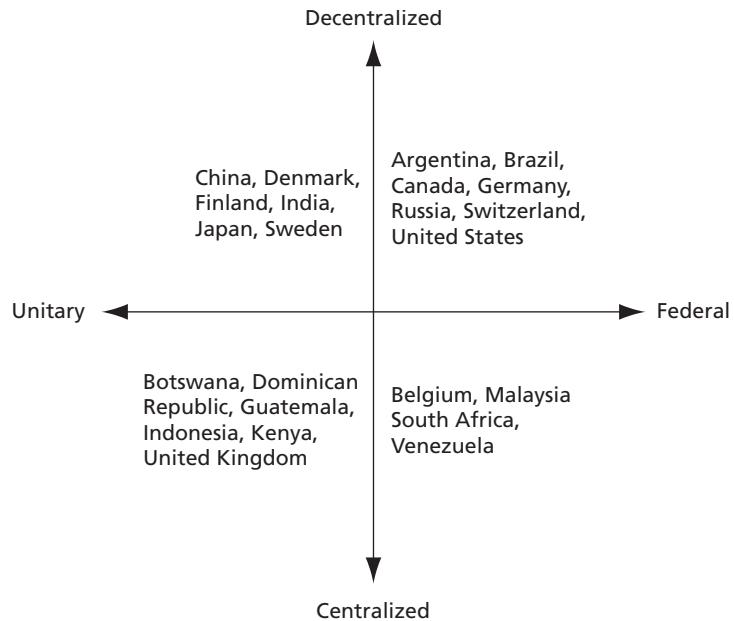
7. In addition to these mandatory tax transfers, some countries also have nonmandatory transfers. On the whole, these nonmandatory transfers do not typically increase the power of regional governments vis-à-vis the central government (Lijphart 1999, 192). One reason for this is that many of them are conditional in the sense that they must be spent on things specified by the central government. As a result, these nonmandatory tax transfers are treated as belonging to the central government in Figure 14.1; only mandatory transfers are treated as belonging to regional governments.

FIGURE 14.1**Revenue Centralization: Central Government's Share of Tax Revenue**

Source: Data are from World Bank (2000, 216–217).

Note: With the exception of Japan, all data points are for 1997; Japan's data point is for 1990. Tax revenue that is legally mandated to be transferred to regional governments through a revenue-sharing scheme is treated as belonging to the regional governments even if it is first collected by the central government. The names of some unitary countries have been omitted simply for visual clarity.

To summarize, federalism can be distinguished along two dimensions: federalism in structure (federal versus unitary) and federalism in practice (decentralized versus centralized). Whereas federalism in structure is a dichotomy—a country is either federal or unitary—decentralization is best thought of as a continuum, with some states being more decentralized than others. In Figure 14.2, we simplify the world somewhat and plot the names of various countries in a two-by-two matrix. Those countries in the top right quadrant, such as Brazil, Canada, and Germany, are federal, both in structure and in practice. Those countries in the bottom left quadrant, such as Botswana, the Dominican Republic, and Kenya, are unitary, both in structure and practice. Those countries in the top left quadrant, such as China, India, and Sweden, are unitary in structure but federal in practice. Finally, those countries in the bottom right quadrant, such as Belgium, Malaysia, and Venezuela, are federal in structure but unitary in practice.

FIGURE 14.2**Two Dimensions of Federalism****Why Federalism?**

Why do some states adopt federal arrangements?⁸ To a large extent, political scientists distinguish between “coming-together” and “holding-together” federalism to explain the origins of federalism in various countries around the world (Stepan 1999, 21–22). **Coming-together federalism** results from a bottom-up bargaining process in which previously sovereign polities come together and voluntarily agree to give up part of their sovereignty in order to pool together their resources so as to improve their collective security and achieve other, typically economic, goals, such as a common currency and freer trade (Riker 1964). Australia, Switzerland, and the United States are examples of coming-together federal states.

Coming-together federalism is the result of a bargaining process in which previously sovereign polities voluntarily agree to give up part of their sovereignty in order to pool together their resources and improve their collective security or achieve other, economic goals. **Holding-together federalism** is the result of a process in which the central government of a polity chooses to decentralize its power to subnational governments in order to diffuse secessionist pressures.

Although there is some variation, coming-together federations are typically characterized by a symmetric form of federalism.

other, typically economic, goals, such as a common currency and freer trade (Riker 1964). Australia, Switzerland, and the United States are examples of coming-together federal states. Although there is some variation, coming-together federations are typically characterized by a symmetric form of federalism.

8. In this section, we use the term *federalism* quite broadly to capture both dimensions of federalism—“federalism in structure” and “federalism in practice.”

In contrast, **holding-together federalism** is the result of a top-down process in which the central government of a polity chooses to decentralize its power to subnational governments. This process typically occurs in multiethnic states in which the central government fears that the continued existence of the state is somehow threatened by one or more territorially based “ethnic” groups that wish to secede. In order to appease these secessionist groups and keep the country together, the central government decentralizes power to subnational units in which the aggrieved ethnic group dominates, thereby making the group more content to live within a unified state. For example, Belgium adopted federal arrangements in the 1990s to placate the demands of its different linguistic groups. Although they remain unitary states in their constitutional structure, India, Spain, and the United Kingdom are also examples of states that have engaged in “holding-together federalism”—they have all devolved significant policymaking power to regional governments in an attempt to diffuse secessionist pressures. In general, holding-together federations are characterized by both incongruent and asymmetric federalism. These federations are incongruent because their whole *raison d'être* is to decentralize power to territorially based ethnic groups; they tend to be asymmetric because they are trying to satisfy the different needs and preferences of the various ethnic groups in the country.

Over the years, supporters of federalism have sought to highlight its advantages over other forms of government. For example, some scholars have argued that decentralized forms of government are best for satisfying popular preferences in democratic countries in which individuals hold heterogeneous preferences (Tiebout 1956; Buchanan and Tullock 1962; Tullock 1969; Alesina and Spolaore 1997). On the whole, it seems reasonable to expect that fewer citizens will be dissatisfied with public policy in a federal state than in a unitary one. Consider the following example. Suppose that sixty citizens in a unitary state prefer policy A and forty citizens prefer policy B. In this situation, policy A will be adopted and forty citizens will be unhappy. Suppose now that we have a federal state with two regions. Imagine that fifty citizens prefer policy A and ten prefer policy B in the first region, whereas thirty citizens prefer policy B and ten prefer policy A in the second region. In this scenario, policy A will be adopted in one region and policy B will be adopted in another. Only twenty citizens will now be dissatisfied with government policy in our federal state. Obviously, if citizens are free to move from one region to another, then even greater citizen satisfaction can be achieved—citizens can simply “sort” themselves by moving to the region that best satisfies their policy preferences. As this example suggests, government policy is more likely to match citizen preferences in a federal state than in a unitary one. This is particularly the case in large countries in which individuals hold diverse policy preferences.

Another purported advantage of federalism is that it brings the “government” closer to the people. Some have claimed that this leads to an increase in the amount of information that is available to both citizens and governments (Hayek [1939] 1948; Oates 1972). By being closer to the people, subnational governments in federal systems should have better information about exactly what it is that their citizens want. This means that they will be able to tailor policies to the specific needs of their citizens. By being closer to the government, citi-

zens in federal systems should have better information about exactly what it is that their government is doing. This means that they will be better placed to hold their government accountable. As a result, federalism is frequently linked to increased government accountability and responsiveness to citizen preferences (Lijphart 1999). By bringing the government closer to the people and, thereby, making it more relevant to their daily lives, federalism is also thought to encourage political participation and enhance perceived levels of legitimacy in the democratic process. As Alexander Hamilton put it in 1787 when discussing the United States, people will maintain stronger “affection, esteem, and reverence” toward their subnational government because of its public visibility in the day-to-day “administration of criminal and civil justice” (*Federalist*, no. 17).

If federal arrangements are combined with the ability of citizens and investors to move from one region to another, it has been argued, subnational governments will also have strong incentives to perform well in office, because poor performance will cause citizens and investors to move to better performing regions, taking their tax dollars and assets with them. This is sometimes referred to as “voting with one’s feet” (Tiebout 1956), and it is a quite literal example of the benefits of having an exit option, discussed in Chapters 3 and 6. The competition between subnational governments for investment and citizens that is engendered by federalism is often expected to result in smaller, more efficient, and less corrupt government (Buchanan 1995). This competition is also at the heart of arguments suggesting that federalism enhances market economies and produces higher economic growth (Montinola, Qian, and Weingast 1994; Weingast 1995; Cao, Qian, and Weingast 1999).

Advocates of federalism also point to its ability to encourage policy experimentation and innovation. For example, subnational governments in federal systems have the opportunity to experiment with, and evaluate, different policies for tackling social, economic, and political problems. As U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis put it in 1932, subnational governments in federal systems are “laboratories” for democracy and innovative government action. The ability to experiment with different policies is important because it means that policymakers can learn more quickly about which policies work and which ones do not. In effect, federalism allows subnational governments to quickly learn from the experimentation of others without putting the whole country at risk of a single failed policy. In the United States, welfare reform during the 1990s is perhaps the most famous example of what some consider a successful policy that grew out of experimentation at the regional level.

Ever since Montesquieu, numerous individuals have also promoted federalism as a bulwark against tyranny. For instance, many of the founding fathers in the United States believed that the interlocking arrangements of federalism reduced the risk of tyranny because the subnational governments could, and would, check each other. As James Madison put it, “A rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any improper or wicked project, will be less likely to pervade the whole body of the Union than a particular member of it” (*Federalist*, no. 10). Alexander Hamilton also believed that the interlocking nature of federalism protected individual rights against abuse by authorities both at the national and subnational levels (*Federalist*, no. 9). Others have argued

that federalism also has the ability to protect territorially based groups whose preferences diverge from those of the majority population from being subject to majority decisions that run counter to their preferences (Horowitz 1985). As such, federalism can be thought to minimize citizen coercion.

Although federalism has many supporters, several scholars have recently begun to question its purported benefits (Rose-Ackerman 2000). Rather than leading to a more efficient form of government as the proponents of federalism maintain, critics claim that the different layers of federalism can lead to the unnecessary duplication of government and the inefficient overlapping of potentially contradictory policies. Critics also argue that federalism exacerbates collective action problems in the formulation and implementation of economic and other politics, particularly in developing countries. For example, Rodden and Wibbels (2002, 500) argue that “[f]ederalism empowers regional politicians who face incentives to undermine macroeconomic management, market reforms, and other policies that have characteristics of national public goods. Self-interested regional elites do this either through autonomous policies made at the local level or through their [ability to block] the policy-making process at the center.” Because provincial politicians ultimately care about their own political success, they face only weak incentives to make economic and other decisions in the interests of the federal system as a whole. For example, regional governments often block attempts at fiscal reform by the central government, particularly if these reforms are expected to be painful for their constituents. Regional governments also have incentives to spend beyond their means if there is an expectation that the central government will come to their rescue and bail them out. Evidence in support of this line of reasoning comes from several scholars who have found that federal systems are more prone to economic mismanagement and crises than unitary systems (Treisman 2000; Wibbels 2000; Rodden 2002).

Although supporters of federalism regularly point to the benefits that accrue from having competition between different subnational governments, critics point to the possible deleterious consequences that such competition can have. For example, in attempting to attract investment and retain their citizens, competition between subnational governments may lead to “downward harmonization” or a “race-to-the-bottom” in which levels of regulation, welfare, taxes, and trade barriers are continuously lowered (Hallerberg 1996). One consequence of downward harmonization is that it becomes difficult to implement local redistributive tax systems because the wealthy simply move to those regions with the lowest tax rates. Another potential consequence is increased poverty, with the poor migrating to those regions that still maintain some form of welfare protection; these regions will, in turn, be forced to lower their welfare protection as a result of the added fiscal strain of dealing with the arrival of poor immigrants from other regions.

Competition, particularly in asymmetric federations in which some regions enjoy more power and discretion than others, may also lead to the amplification of preexisting inequalities in population, wealth, and political power (Peterson 1995; Congleton 2006). If favored regional governments can take advantage of their additional authority to attract residents and enlarge their tax base, then they will likely prosper relative to other regional govern-

ments. The expectation of greater regional inequality is, in turn, likely to create conflict and political instability, with advantaged communities demanding increased autonomy and disadvantaged communities attempting to reverse asymmetries in the regional distribution of power.

Far from enhancing government accountability, as its supporters claim, critics argue that federalism is just as likely to undermine it. By adding layers of government and expanding areas of shared responsibility, federalism facilitates blame shifting and credit claiming (Rodden 2004, 494). This is because federalism can make it difficult for citizens to know which level of government is responsible for policy successes and which is to blame for policy failures. For example, if the regional economy performs poorly, is this the result of policies adopted by the subnational government or those implemented by the national government? In this type of situation, neither the subnational nor the national government will want to take responsibility for the poor economic performance and will likely try to blame the other. If federalism does lower government accountability, as critics maintain, it may actually increase, rather than reduce, levels of corruption (Rose-Ackerman 1978; Schleifer and Vishny 1993). Indeed, this is precisely what Treisman (2002) finds in a study examining the effect of decentralization on the quality of government. He concludes that countries with higher levels of decentralization have higher levels of corruption and lower levels of public goods provision.

BICAMERALISM

In addition to distinguishing states according to whether they are federal or unitary, political scientists sometimes distinguish between them by whether they have unicameral or bicameral

A **unicameral legislature** is one in which legislative deliberation occurs in a single assembly. A **bicameral legislature** is one in which legislative deliberation occurs in two distinct assemblies.

legislatures.⁹ A **unicameral legislature** is one in which legislative deliberations occur in a single assembly. In contrast, a **bicameral legislature** is one in which legislative deliberations occur in two distinct assemblies (Tsebelis and Money

1997, 15). Information from 2007 about whether a country has a unicameral or bicameral legislature is shown in Box 14.6 at the end of this chapter.¹⁰ According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 76 (39.8 percent) of the 191 independent states listed in the box have a bicameral legislature (<http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>).

We should note from the beginning that whether a country has a unicameral or bicameral legislature does not affect the relationship between the legislature and the executive. Recall

9. Surprisingly little has been written on the causes and consequences of unicameral versus bicameral legislatures. Much of the information in this section comes from Tsebelis and Money (1997) and Lijphart (1999).

10. On the whole, it is relatively easy to divide countries into unicameral or bicameral systems. However, one or two odd cases do not fit neatly into either category (Lijphart 1999, 201–202). For example, Norwegian legislators are elected as one body. After the election, though, they divide themselves into two chambers by selecting a quarter of their members to form a second chamber. Any disagreements that emerge between the two chambers are resolved in a joint session of both chambers. It is because of this that we code Norway as having a unicameral legislature in the appendix to this chapter.

from Chapter 11 that a presidential democracy is one in which the government does not depend on a legislative majority to exist, that a parliamentary democracy is one in which the government depends only on a legislative majority to exist, and that a mixed democracy is one in which the government depends on both a legislative majority and an independently elected president to exist. In almost every country, legislative responsibility refers exclusively to having a legislative majority in the popularly elected lower house.¹¹ As a result, there is no inherent conflict between bicameralism and the parliamentary form of government. The existence of a second legislative chamber does not influence the relationship between the legislature and the executive and, hence, whether a democracy is presidential, parliamentary, or mixed.

As we will see, though, having a second assembly can have a significant effect on a country's legislative process. This is fairly obvious in those countries in which the upper chamber is quite powerful, as in the United States. In the United States the House of Representatives and the Senate are equal partners in the legislative process—the agreement of both chambers is required for the passage of legislation. As a result, both chambers have the power to veto bills and amendments proposed by the other chamber. The equal power of the two chambers in the United States opens up all sorts of strategic possibilities that are not always available to legislators in unicameral systems. For example, U.S. legislators in one chamber can sometimes get away with voting for a politically popular, but ideologically unpalatable (for them), version of a bill if they know that the other chamber is going to reject it. This type of position-taking or credit-claiming behavior is frequently not possible in a unicameral legislature; whenever legislators vote in a unicameral legislature, they are more often than not legislating.¹²

The existence of a second chamber can still have a significant effect on the legislative process even in countries in which the upper house is relatively weak, such as the United Kingdom. Ever since the Parliament Acts of 1911 and 1949, the power to make legislative decisions in the United Kingdom has been firmly placed in the lower house, the House of Commons. The only real power that the upper house, the House of Lords, has in the legislative process is the ability to delay the passage of nonfinancial legislation for two parliamentary sessions or one calendar year.¹³ Although this might not seem like much, this ability to delay legislation takes on a whole new light in the year before an election, when delaying a bill may, in effect, mean killing it. As Tsebelis and Money (1997, 2) point out, this ability to

11. The two most notable exceptions to this are Germany and Italy. Article 81 of the German constitution allows a government that has lost a vote of confidence in the lower house (Bundestag) to retain power for six months if it continues to enjoy the support of a majority in the upper house (Bundesrat). In Italy, two governments, one led by Andreotti in 1979 and the other led by Prodi in 2008, resigned after losing votes of confidence in the Italian upper house, the Senate.

12. Credit claiming or position taking is possible in unicameral democracies in which a president has the power to veto legislation. In effect, legislators in these systems can also vote for politically popular, but ideologically unpalatable, bills if they know that the president will veto them.

13. The House of Lords can delay "money bills"—those bills that, in the view of the Speaker of the House of Commons, are solely about national taxation or public funds—only for up to one month. The power of the House of Lords is further restricted by a constitutional convention, known as the Salisbury Convention, which rules out opposing legislation promised in the government's election manifesto.

delay legislation in the year prior to an election has enabled the House of Lords to abort significant pieces of legislation proposed by both Conservative and Labour governments. For example, Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher was forced to postpone her project to dissolve the Greater London Council in 1984 when the House of Lords rejected her legislation. This type of outcome—the reversal of a floor vote—is obviously impossible in unicameral legislatures. As this example illustrates, the existence of an upper chamber, even one widely considered to be weak, like the British House of Lords, can significantly influence the legislative process.

Types of Bicameralism

Although seventy-six states had a bicameral legislature in 2007, there is a great deal of variation in the precise form that bicameralism takes in these countries. When it comes to distinguishing between different forms of bicameralism, political scientists frequently focus on whether a bicameral system is (a) congruent or incongruent and (b) symmetric or asymmetric (Lijphart 1999). Congruence and incongruence refer to the membership of the two chambers and the categories of citizens represented, whereas symmetry and asymmetry refer to the relative power of the two chambers.

Congruent and Incongruent Bicameralism

Congruent bicameralism occurs when the two legislative chambers have a similar political composition. **Incongruent bicameralism** occurs when the two legislative chambers differ in their political composition. The level of congruence depends on how the membership of the two chambers is selected and whom that membership is supposed to represent.

Congruent bicameralism occurs when the two chambers have a similar political composition; **incongruent bicameralism** occurs when they differ in their political composition. Whether bicameralism is congruent or incongruent typically depends on *how* the membership of the two chambers is elected and *whom*

that membership is supposed to represent. If the same methods are used to elect the members of each legislative chamber and both chambers represent the same set of citizens, then the political composition of each chamber is likely to be congruent. When this is the case, it is often assumed that the policy preferences of the two chambers will be identical or, at least, very similar.

When it comes to electing bicameral legislatures, it is almost always the case that the members of the lower chamber are directly elected through systems in which all eligible voters are given equal weight. This is not necessarily the case with members of the upper chamber, though. On the whole, four common methods are used to select members of upper chambers around the world: heredity, appointment, indirect elections, and direct elections (Tsebelis and Money 1997, 46). Historically, it was quite common for monarchs to grant seats in the upper chamber to members of the aristocracy, which would be passed down from generation to generation. Since the 1999 House of Lords Act in the United Kingdom (see Box 14.2), however, there are no longer any contemporary bicameral systems that use heredity as the predominant means for selecting members of the upper chamber.

Box 14.2**HEREDITARY PEERS IN THE BRITISH HOUSE OF LORDS**

The United Kingdom employs a bicameral system in which the lower chamber is called the House of Commons and the upper chamber is called the House of Lords. As of 2008, the House of Commons had 646 members and the House of Lords 738 members. Historically, members of the House of Lords have comprised a section of the nobility known as hereditary peers. The peerage is the system of titles of nobility granted by the monarch in the United Kingdom. Hereditary peers are individuals that have been given a title of nobility—duke, marquess, earl, viscount, baron—that can be passed on from one generation to the next. Peerages are passed on to the next holder on the death of the previous holder and disappear only when all the possible heirs have died out.

The House of Lords was originally quite small and rather exclusive. For example, there were only 29 hereditary peers during the fifteenth century under Henry VII (reigned 1457–1509). Although some subsequent monarchs were reluctant to create additional peerages, others did so quite freely. In many cases, peerages were specifically created to ensure that there was a majority in the House of Lords that supported the policies of the monarch. Indeed, Queen Anne (reigned 1702–1714) created twelve peerages in a single day with this particular goal in mind. The nineteenth century, starting with George III (reigned 1760–1820), probably witnessed the most prolific expansion in the number of hereditary peers. By 1999 there were 759 hereditary peers in the United Kingdom; a breakdown of these hereditary peers is shown in Table 14.2.

The predominantly hereditary nature of the House of Lords began to change in 1958 when the Life Peerages Act authorized the unlimited creation of life baronies. Life peers are members of the House of Lords who are appointed for life-long terms; their membership in the House of Lords cannot be passed on to their heirs when they die. Although life baronies are formally created by the monarch just like hereditary peers, in practice all are granted after being proposed by the prime minister. As a result, the 1958 Life Peerages Act greatly increased the ability of the prime minister to change the composition of the House of Lords and weaken the influence of hereditary peers. It also allowed for the creation of female peers. Information about the number of life peers created since 1958 is shown in Table 14.3.

TABLE 14.2**Hereditary Peers in the United Kingdom, 1999**

Type	Male	Female	Total
Prince	1	0	1
Duke	28	0	28
Marquess	34	0	34
Earl	170	5	175
Viscount	102	0	102
Baron/Lord	407	12	419
Total	742	17	759

TABLE 14.3**Life Peers in the United Kingdom, 1958–2007**

Prime minister	Party	Tenure	Peers
Harold Macmillan	Conservative	1957–1963	48
Alec Douglas-Home	Conservative	1963–1964	14
Harold Wilson	Labour	1964–1970	123
Edward Heath	Conservative	1970–1974	56
Harold Wilson	Labour	1974–1976	80
James Callaghan	Labour	1976–1979	57
Margaret Thatcher	Conservative	1979–1990	200
John Major	Conservative	1990–1997	141
Tony Blair	Labour	1997–2007	357
Total			1,076

As a working-class party, the British Labour Party has historically had a commitment either to abolish the House of Lords or, at least, to eliminate its hereditary element. After several failed attempts to reform the House of Lords in the 1960s and 1970s, the election of Tony Blair as prime minister in 1997 appeared to signal the end of the traditional House of Lords. In its 1997 election manifesto, the Labour Party committed itself to removing all hereditary peers from the House of Lords. Despite introducing legislation to do precisely this, the Labour Party ultimately agreed to a compromise—the 1999 House of Lords Act—in which ninety-two hereditary peers would remain in the House of Lords on an interim basis until all other reforms were completed. This means that, as of now, the British House of Lords is predominantly appointed; just ninety-two of its members are hereditary peers.

Attempts to further reform the House of Lords have stalled, with various proposals failing to win legislative support. The Wakeham Commission, which was set up to examine how best to reform the House of Lords, proposed in 2000 that roughly 20 percent of the House of Lords should be elected and the rest appointed by an independent Honours and Appointments Commission. This proposal was quickly rejected. Another committee, established in 2001 to look at reforms in the House of Lords, came up with several different proposals: fully appointed, 20 percent elected, 40 percent elected, 50 percent elected, 60 percent elected, 80 percent elected, or fully elected. All of these proposals were rejected in a series of legislative votes in 2003. Senior members of Parliament from all the leading parties then proposed that 70 percent of the House of Lords be elected and the remainder appointed by a commission with the goal of ensuring a mix of “skills, knowledge, and experience” in 2005. This proposal was also rejected. In a series of votes in early 2007, a majority of the House of Commons finally supported proposals in which 80 percent or 100 percent of the House of Lords would be elected. These proposals, however, were rejected by the House of Lords, whose members preferred a fully appointed second chamber. What ultimately will be decided about the composition of the House of Lords still remains up in the air. What is clear is that the membership of the British House of Lords will no longer be based predominantly on hereditary lines.

A second method of selecting members to the upper chamber is appointment. For example, a whole host of countries, such as Belize, Germany, Ireland, Jordan, Madagascar, Russia, and Thailand, have fully or partially appointed upper chambers. Although in a handful of countries appointments to the upper chamber are made by the monarch (Jordan, Malaysia, Thailand), it is much more common for these appointments to be made by an elected government of some kind. Germany is somewhat unusual in that the members of the upper chamber are appointed by regional governments. In almost every other case, it is the national government that appoints individuals to serve in the upper chamber. One of the rationales behind appointing, rather than electing, members of the upper chamber is that it facilitates the selection of individuals who have particular skills, knowledge, or experience that might come in useful when debating particular pieces of legislation.

Like hereditary methods, though, appointing individuals to an upper chamber is often perceived as undemocratic. As a result, many countries allow their citizens to *indirectly* or *directly* elect the members of the upper chamber. Austria, France, India, Madagascar, Mauritania, the Netherlands, and Swaziland, for example, all employ indirect elections. In most of these countries, citizens directly elect the members of local or regional governments, and it is these local or regional representatives who then elect the members of the upper chamber. Although indirect elections like this are somewhat common, it is much more often the case that citizens get to directly elect individuals to the upper chamber. This is the case in a wide range of countries, such as Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Romania, the United States, and Venezuela. Some countries, such as Spain, employ a mix of both indirect and direct elections. For example, the Spanish Senate comprises 264 members, of whom 208 are directly elected by popular vote and 56 are appointed by regional legislatures.

Whether a bicameral legislature is congruent or not depends not only on whether the members of the two chambers are selected in the same way but also on whether they represent the same set of citizens. In almost all countries, the members of the lower legislative chamber are supposed to represent all citizens equally under the general principle of “one person, one vote.” In a few countries, such as Italy and Japan, this is also the case for members of the upper chamber. In these countries, the political composition of the upper house tends to mimic that of the lower house. On the whole, though, this type of situation is quite rare. In the vast majority of bicameral systems, the upper chamber is not designed to represent the entire population equally. For example, representation in the Irish Senate is based largely on certain professional occupations—most Irish senators are elected by five vocational panels representing culture and education, labor, industry and commerce, agriculture, and administration. In other countries, the upper chamber is supposed to ensure that minorities (Venezuela) or linguistic communities (Belgium) are represented.

By far the most common role for the upper chamber in a bicameral system is to represent the citizens of subnational geographic units. Although this is always the case in federal systems, such as Austria, Germany, Mexico, Switzerland, and the United States, it is also the case in some unitary countries, such as Bolivia, the Netherlands, and Spain. The frequently unequal distribution of citizens across the different subnational geographic units in a country—some

Malapportionment occurs when the distribution of political representation between constituencies is not based on the size of each constituency's population. In a malapportioned system, the votes of some citizens weigh more than the votes of others.

regions have many people and others have few—often leads to **malapportionment** in the upper legislative chamber, with some citizens receiving greater representation than others (Monroe 1994; Samuels and Snyder 2001). In

other words, the unequal geographic distribution of citizens frequently leads to the violation of the “one person, one vote” principle in territorially based upper chambers. This is clearly the case in such countries as Australia, Switzerland, Venezuela, and the United States, where the different geographic units all receive the same level of representation irrespective of how many residents they have. For example, each of the fifty U.S. states is represented by two senators. This means that California, with its approximately 36 million residents, receives the same level of representation in the U.S. Senate as Wyoming, with its half-million residents. Other countries, such as Canada and Germany, do not give equal representation to each of their subnational regions but still tend to overrepresent less populous regions and underrepresent more populous ones. Austria is unusual in that the allocation of upper chamber representatives to each subnational unit is roughly proportional to the size of each unit's population.

To get a better idea of the level of malapportionment found in upper chambers that are designed to represent subnational geographic units, consider Table 14.4. Here we illustrate the percentage of seats in the upper chamber going to the most favorably represented citizens in nine countries in 1996 (Lijphart 1999, 208). To see where these numbers come from, imagine that all of the subnational units in a country are lined up from left to right based on the size of their populations, with smaller units to the left and larger units to the right. Starting with the smallest unit and working our way to the right, we identify those units that together comprise 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent, and 50 percent of the country's overall population. We then determine the percentage of upper chamber seats that are allocated to these regions. These are the percentages shown in Table 14.4. As an example, consider the case of the United States. Table 14.4 indicates that the smallest states that together comprise 10 percent of the national population control 39.7 percent of the seats in the U.S. Senate. In other words, they receive almost four times the amount of representation in the Senate as their population would imply they should. The smallest states, which together comprise 20 percent of the overall U.S. population, control 55 percent of the Senate seats—an overall majority. The other percentages in Table 14.4 can be interpreted in a similar way. As you can see, there is a great deal of variation in the level of malapportionment seen in upper chambers around the world. Countries like the United States and Switzerland exhibit high levels of malapportionment, whereas countries like Austria and Belgium exhibit low levels.

In sum, the degree of congruence in a bicameral system depends on whether the two legislative chambers employ similar methods for selecting their members and on whether the two chambers represent the same set of citizens. On the whole, congruent bicameralism is relatively rare. Lijphart (1999, 212) identifies the following countries as being characterized by congruent bicameralism at the end of the 1990s: Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, and Trinidad.

TABLE 14.4**Malapportionment in Upper Chambers, 1996**

	Seats held by the percentages of the most favorably represented citizens (percent)			
	10	20	30	50
United States	39.7	55.0	67.7	83.8
Switzerland	38.4	53.2	64.7	80.6
Venezuela	31.6	47.2	60.0	77.5
Australia	28.7	47.8	58.7	74.0
Canada	33.4	46.3	55.6	71.3
Germany	24.0	41.7	54.3	72.6
India	15.4	26.9	37.4	56.8
Austria	11.9	22.5	32.8	52.9
Belgium	10.8	20.9	31.0	50.9

Source: Data are from Lijphart (1999, 208).

Symmetric and Asymmetric Bicameralism

Symmetric bicameralism occurs when the two legislative chambers have equal or near equal constitutional power (Lijphart 1999, 206). Total symmetry exists when the agreement of both chambers is necessary to enact a law. In practice, symmetric bicameralism is extremely rare. Countries in which the upper chamber has formally equal powers with the lower chamber include Colombia, Italy, Switzerland, and the United States.¹⁴ Countries in which the two chambers enjoy similar, but not quite equal, power include Australia, Germany, Japan, and the Netherlands. **Asymmetric bicameralism** is much more common and occurs when the two legislative chambers have unequal constitutional power. Total asymmetry exists when one chamber is granted ultimate decision-making power. In all cases of asymmetric bicameralism, it is the lower house that has more power. To a large extent, the degree of symmetry in the powers of the two chambers is related to how the members of the upper chamber are selected. Upper chambers are much more likely to have co-equal power with the lower house when citizens play a direct role in electing upper chamber representatives (Mastias and Grangé 1987). This is likely due to the increased democratic legitimacy that these upper chambers are perceived to have from being

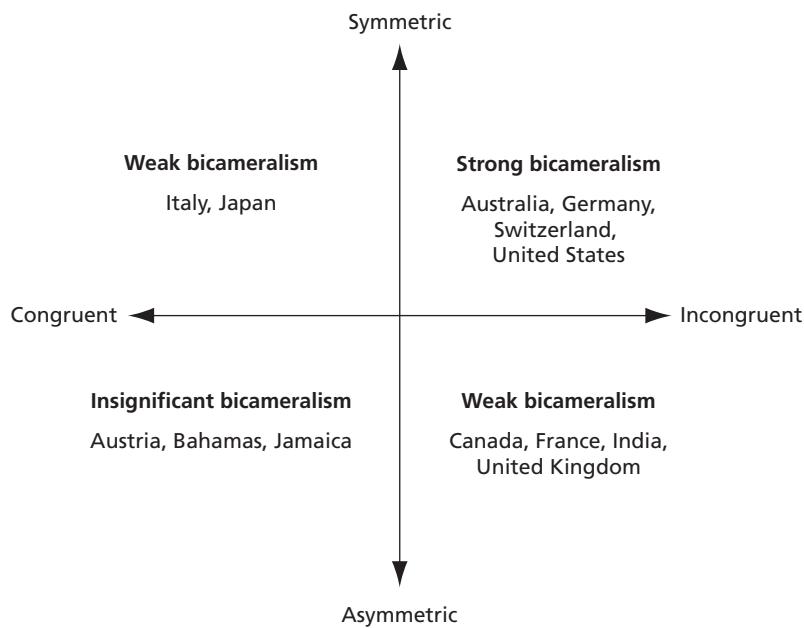
Symmetric bicameralism occurs when the two legislative chambers have equal or near equal constitutional power.

Asymmetric bicameralism occurs when the two legislative chambers have unequal constitutional powers.

14. Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden are three other countries that used to have symmetric bicameral legislatures. Denmark and Sweden both abolished their second chambers in 1953 and 1970, respectively. The power of the Belgian senate was significantly reduced in 1994 following the introduction of a federal form of government.

directly (or indirectly) elected as opposed to appointed. Of the four countries we just mentioned in which the upper chamber enjoys formally equal power with the lower chamber, Colombia, Italy, and the United States all have directly elected upper chambers; most of the members of the Swiss upper chamber are also popularly elected.

To summarize, it is possible to distinguish bicameral systems based on their level of congruence and symmetry. In Figure 14.3, we simplify the world somewhat and plot the names of various countries along these two dimensions of bicameralism. Countries such as those in the upper right quadrant—Australia, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States—exhibit a strong form of bicameralism. In a strong bicameral system, the upper house is likely to be an important political actor because it enjoys similar constitutional powers to the lower house and because the different political composition of the upper chamber tends to mean that it has different policy preferences to the lower chamber. Countries such as those in the lower left quadrant—Austria, the Bahamas, and Jamaica—exhibit what might be thought of as an insignificant form of bicameralism. In an insignificant bicameral system, the upper chamber is unlikely to be an important political actor because its constitutional powers are extremely weak and because its political composition tends to mirror that of the lower chamber.

FIGURE 14.3**Two Dimensions of Bicameralism**

Source: Based on information in Lijphart (1999, 212).

Countries in the upper left and lower right quadrants exhibit a weak form of bicameralism. In weak bicameral systems, the upper chamber is likely to be a weak political actor. Although such countries as those in the upper left quadrant—Italy and Japan—have a powerful upper chamber (symmetry), the upper chamber is not expected to significantly affect the policymaking process given its political makeup, which is like that in the lower chamber (congruence). Similarly, although such countries as those in the lower right quadrant—Canada, France, India, and the United Kingdom—have an upper chamber that is likely to conflict with the lower chamber as a result of its differing political composition (incongruence), the upper chamber is not expected to play a significant role in the policymaking process because its constitutional powers are weak (asymmetry).

Box 14.3**CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN BICAMERAL SYSTEMS**

What happens when there are disagreements between the upper and lower legislative chambers in a country? Bicameral systems have many different ways for resolving intercameral conflict: the *navette*, the conference committee, the joint session, the ultimate decision by one chamber, and new elections (Tsebelis and Money 1997, 54–69).

Almost all bicameral systems use the *navette*, or shuttle, system to help resolve policy differences between the two legislative chambers. Essentially, the chamber that first passes a bill sends it to the second chamber for consideration. If the second chamber accepts the bill, then the legislation is accepted and promulgated. If the second chamber disagrees with the bill, it can make amendments and send it back to the first chamber. In this way, legislation “shuttles” back and forth between the two chambers until an agreement is reached. But what happens if no agreement can be reached? In some countries, such as France, Madagascar, and Mauritania, the shuttling back and forth simply continues indefinitely unless the government steps in to end the process. In other countries, such as Italy, Liberia, and the Philippines, legislation that continuously fails to reach agreement in both chambers is simply aborted after a certain amount of time.

Most countries, though, have adopted additional institutional mechanisms to resolve intercameral conflict when the *navette* system breaks down. Typically, there are rules about how many times a bill needs to have shuttled back and forth without success before political actors can turn to these additional institutional mechanisms for resolving conflict. For example, a bill needs to shuttle between the two chambers in Belgium for two readings before an alternative conflict resolution mechanism is employed. South Africa and Pakistan represent the unusual case in which disagreement by the second chamber in the very first round automatically triggers a joint session of the lower and upper legislative chambers.

A variety of different mechanisms can be employed to resolve intercameral conflict when the *navette* system breaks down. One possibility is a conference committee. Typically, a conference committee involves the two chambers, each appointing an equal number of delegates to meet jointly and hammer out a compromise. In most cases, a conference committee can be thought of as a mini-legislature that reaches agreement by majority rule. Once an agreement

is reached, the committee's compromise proposal is put to the parent legislative chambers for an up or down vote; this proposal cannot be amended at this point. Conference committees are employed in a wide range of countries, including Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Madagascar, Romania, South Africa, and the United States.

An alternative dispute resolution mechanism is for the two legislative chambers to meet in a joint session to vote on the legislation. Because the lower chamber (nearly) always has more members than the upper chamber, joint sessions tend to favor the position of the lower chamber. Joint legislative sessions are employed by many countries, including Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, India, Jordan, Norway, Pakistan, Romania, Swaziland, and Venezuela. In some countries, one chamber has the ultimate decision-making power when intercameral agreement cannot be reached. In France, the government can intervene following the breakdown of the navette system and ask the lower chamber to decide the outcome. In most cases, though, ultimate decision-making power automatically reverts to one of the chambers. For example, the lower chamber is decisive in such countries as Austria, Belize, Croatia, Ireland, Japan, Mauritania, Poland, Spain, Swaziland, and the United Kingdom. In a few countries, the chamber that initiated the piece of legislation or the one that is reviewing it is decisive. This is the case in, for example, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico. Although extremely rare, some countries, such as Australia, call legislative elections in the hope that they will resolve any intercameral dispute.

Why Bicameralism?

The ideas on which contemporary bicameralism are based have their origins in the political institutions of ancient Greece (Tsebelis and Money 1997, 17). Greek philosophers, like Aristotle and Plato, frequently evaluated the merits of political institutions in terms of whether they produced “mixed government.” In contrast to “simple government,” where the interests of only one social class—the one (monarchy), the few (aristocracy), or the many (people)—would be represented, the Greek notion of “mixed government” called for the representation of all social classes. Many governments in both ancient Greece and early Rome developed this type of mixed structure, with dual advisory-legislative councils that had overlapping functions and that represented different classes. For example, Sparta, Crete, and Carthage all had separate assemblies to represent various social classes. These assemblies deliberated on the same issues in a way similar to bicameral legislatures today.¹⁵

Many Greek philosophers admired aspects of aristocratic government, such as having the educated and wise rule, but they recognized, as we noted in Chapter 5, the danger that aristocracy might degenerate into oligarchy. For many, a mixed form of government was an anti-

15. It is because the executive, legislative, and judicial functions of these assemblies were not clearly delineated that they cannot be viewed as bicameral legislatures in the modern sense (Tsebelis and Money 1997, 17).

dote that could prevent this sort of degeneration from occurring. By representing the interests of different social classes, mixed government essentially created a system of checks and balances that would prevent the degeneration of the political system into oligarchy. In effect, mixed government was thought to combine the benefits of having the aristocracy play a role in government with the benefits of having a balance of power in which no single class could gain control of the state for itself. In this way, mixed government was thought to be both an efficient and stable form of government.

The first bicameral legislature in a modern sense appeared in fourteenth-century England. In many ways, it mirrored the notion of mixed government that had been advocated centuries earlier by Greek philosophers. For example, Tsebelis and Money (1997, 23) write that “the lower house represented the democratic element of society; the upper house, the aristocratic element; and the king’s veto power, the monarchic element.” Over the next few centuries, political philosophers continued to adapt the notion of mixed government in such a way that it essentially became synonymous with bicameralism. For example, consider the ideas of Montesquieu. Like the Greek philosophers before him, Montesquieu worried that the reins of government might be captured by a single social class and that it would then use its control against the rest of society. As he wrote in his *Spirit of the Laws* ([1752] 1914, 11:6), “There would be an end of everything, were the same man or the same body, whether of the nobles or of the people, to exercise those three powers, that of enacting laws, that of executing the public resolutions, and of trying the causes of individuals.” Although Montesquieu believed that “executive power ought to be in the hands of a monarch, because this branch of government, having need of dispatch, is better administered by one than by many,” he thought that legislative power should be in the hands of the aristocracy and the people because legislative power “is oftentimes better regulated by many than by a single person.” Rather than placing the aristocracy and the people in a single legislative body, though, Montesquieu recommended separate and equal chambers for these two social groups. He wanted separate chambers because he believed that the aristocracy would always be outvoted by the common people in a single legislative body as a result of its smaller size. As Montesquieu ([1752] 1914, 11:6) put it,

In . . . a state there are always persons distinguished by their birth, riches, or honors: but were they to be confounded with the common people, and to have only the weight of a single vote like the rest, the common liberty would be their slavery, and they would have not interest in supporting it, as most of the popular resolutions would be against them. The share they have, therefore, in the legislature ought to be proportioned to their other advantages in the state; which happens only when they form a body that has a right to check the licentiousness of the people, as the people have a right to oppose any encroachment of theirs.

The legislative power is therefore committed to the body of the nobles, and to that which represents the people, each having their assemblies and deliberations apart, each their separate views and interests.

Greek principles of mixed government, particularly the emphasis on checks and balances, also influenced John Adams's support for bicameralism in the American colonies during the eighteenth century. For example, Adams wrote that in a bicameral system, "[t]he three natural orders in society, the monarchical, the aristocratical and the democratical are . . . constitutionally placed to watch and control each other. . . . Thereby, also, each will balance the other two" (quoted in Walsh 1915, 80–81). Given that Adams was writing at a time when the American colonies were trying to gain their independence from the British monarchy, we need to recognize that he was using terms like "monarchy" and "aristocracy" in an unusual way. For Adams, "monarchy" was equivalent to an elected executive, and "aristocracy" meant a natural (not hereditary) aristocracy that had achieved superiority in wealth and education over the common people.

As these examples from Montesquieu and Adams illustrate, most political theorists by the eighteenth century had come to interpret the Greek notion of mixed government as a bicameral legislature in which the aristocracy would deliberate in one chamber and the common people in another. These two legislative chambers, along with a monarch (either a hereditary or elected ruler) as executive, would create a system of checks and balances to ensure the stability of the political system. Moreover, the aristocracy, with its supposed characteristics of knowledge, age, wisdom, and training, would be able to use its position in the upper chamber to improve upon the legislation coming from the common people in the lower chamber. For roughly two thousand years, then, bicameralism essentially meant the separate representation of social classes in different legislative bodies.

This view of bicameralism was eventually challenged at the end of the eighteenth century by the rise of republicanism and its emphasis on the representation of the people as a whole rather than as a set of competing social classes. In this new environment, bicameralism came to be viewed and justified in a completely different way. Specifically, the existence of bicameral legislatures was increasingly justified not as an institutional means to represent different social classes but as one that federal states could use to represent their constituent territorial units. For example, the "Great Compromise" reached during the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 saw the establishment in the United States of the House of Representatives, elected on the basis of a state's population, and the Senate, which granted equal representation to each state. This compromise, particularly the creation of an upper chamber in which each state received equal representation, was specifically designed to protect the interests of the small states against the power of the large states and, thereby, encourage them to sign on to the new Constitution. Essentially, the lower house was to represent the popular dimension of the people's will and the upper house was to represent its territorial dimension.

This form of "incongruent bicameralism" established in the United States was justified on the grounds that different states were likely to have specific and distinct needs from the population as a whole (*Federalist*, no. 62). In effect, the U.S. Senate was to be a forum in which these different needs could be addressed and protected. To fully protect the specific needs of the constituent territorial units and, indeed, the federal system as a whole, the founding fathers realized that the upper house needed sufficient power to prevent the lower house from overriding it. As a result, they promoted a symmetric form of bicameralism in which

the agreement of both legislative chambers was needed to change the status quo. This type of incongruent and symmetric bicameral system established in the United States was subsequently adopted by other federal countries, such as Australia, Germany, and Switzerland.

Class-based upper chambers increasingly came to be repudiated over time, but territorial-based upper chambers like the U.S. Senate were able to retain their legitimacy and power. In effect, territory came to provide a competing legitimacy for powerful upper chambers that social class now lacked (Tsebelis and Money 1997, 33). It is perhaps no surprise then that all of the examples of “strong”—symmetric and incongruent—bicameral systems illustrated in Figure 14.3 are in federal countries.

Strong bicameral systems like the ones that emerged in the United States and Switzerland were harder to justify in unitary states with no constituent territorial units to explicitly represent. Some unitary countries with bicameral systems responded to the growing adoption of democratic values and the spread of universal suffrage by significantly curtailing the power of the upper chamber to block or reverse the policies of the popularly elected lower house. For example, this occurred in the United Kingdom with the passage of the 1911 and 1949 Parliament Acts. The 1911 Parliament Act asserted the legislative supremacy of the House of Commons by limiting the ability of the House of Lords to block legislation. The 1949 Parliament Act further weakened the House of Lords by reducing the maximum amount of time that the upper chamber could delay legislation to one year.¹⁶ Although co-equal in power with the National Assembly during the Third Republic (1870–1940), the French Senate has also seen its power drastically reduced over time. For instance, the constitution of the Fourth Republic (1946–1958) limited the role of the French Senate to delaying legislation. The constitution of the Fifth Republic (1958–) further weakened the French Senate by allowing the government to grant the National Assembly the right to make final decisions on pieces of legislation.

To a large extent, the argument for keeping these weak upper chambers rather than just getting rid of them rests on the belief, going back to ancient Greece, that the members of the upper chamber have characteristics of value—typically things like wisdom, age, knowledge, and training—that members of the popularly elected lower chamber do not have. It also rests on the belief that upper chambers can play an important role in delaying the legislative process, thereby reducing the likelihood that “bad” laws will be made in haste. In effect, the argument for keeping weak upper chambers in unitary countries ultimately rests on the belief that they improve the overall quality of legislation. This line of reasoning obviously requires that the political composition of the upper and lower chambers be different; that is, incongruent. In many countries, this incongruence is achieved by having appointed upper chambers in which members are selected on the basis of some special skill, expertise, or experience.

16. In practice, the Parliament Acts have been used to pass legislation against the wishes of the House of Lords on only seven occasions since 1911. This does not mean, however, that these acts were not important. For example, it is generally recognized that the mere threat of using the Parliament Acts has forced the House of Lords to accept legislation that it wanted to block on several other occasions.

Whereas many unitary countries historically responded to the spread of democratic values by establishing asymmetric, but still incongruent, forms of bicameralism, a few, like Denmark and Sweden, responded by trying to “democratize” the selection procedures used in the upper chamber. This typically involved adopting a similar selection procedure for the upper chamber to the one employed in the popularly elected lower chamber. The result, as one would expect, was that the political composition of the upper chamber in these countries came to increasingly match that of the lower chamber. In many places, this congruence between the upper and lower chambers raised questions as to the actual purpose of the upper chamber. As Tsebelis and Money (1997) point out, the general thrust of these questions is best summed up in the famous words of the seventeenth-century philosopher, Abbé Sieyès: “If the second chamber agrees with the first, it is useless, and if not, it is bad.” Like several other countries that initially decided to establish congruent upper chambers, Denmark (in 1953) and Sweden (in 1959) essentially resolved the debate over the value of the upper chamber by abolishing it and establishing a unicameral legislature.

Contemporary debates over bicameralism largely mirror those that have driven the evolution and justification of bicameral systems in the past. In effect, there are two basic arguments in favor of bicameralism. In federal countries, bicameralism is primarily defended as an institutional means for protecting the federal system and promoting the distinct preferences of different territorial units. In unitary countries, bicameralism is primarily defended as an institutional means for improving the quality of legislation.

CONSTITUTIONALISM

Another way in which political scientists distinguish between states is by the extent to which they accept **constitutionalism**. Constitutionalism refers to the commitment of governments

Constitutionalism refers to the commitment of governments to accept the legitimacy of, and be governed by, a set of authoritative rules and principles that are laid out in a constitution. A **system of constitutional justice** comprises the set of institutions and procedures that are established to protect constitutional rules and principles.

to accept the legitimacy of, and be governed by, a set of authoritative rules and principles that are laid out in a constitution (Stone Sweet 2000, 20). A central part of any commitment to constitutionalism is the establishment of a set of institutions and procedures to protect constitutional rules and principles. These institutions and procedures are known as **systems of constitutional justice**.

The commitment to abide by a constitution varies across both space and time. Historically, few countries have had any system of constitutional justice. Indeed, there was no system of constitutional justice in the world when the first fully codified and written constitution was emerging in the United States in 1787 (Stone Sweet 2008, 218). The historical norm has, instead, been one of legislative supremacy. The norm of legislative supremacy essentially states that the laws created by the people's elected representatives in the legislature should not be constrained by other authorities, such as the constitution. Looking around the world today, though, we see that the norm of legislative supremacy has been replaced by what Shapiro and Stone (1994)

call a “new constitutionalism.” This new constitutionalism describes a situation in which virtually all new constitutions contain a charter of human rights that is protected by such institutions as constitutional courts. These institutions can use the power of constitutional review to invalidate legislation that is deemed to violate individual rights, thereby substantively constraining legislative authority.

Although there has been a general shift toward this new constitutionalism since 1945, there is considerable variation in the extent to which states have delegated constitutional control over their actions to judges. Although formal judicial power has expanded around the world, it has not been expanded in the same way in all countries (Tate and Vallinder 1995; Ginsburg 2003). In this section we briefly describe the historical shift from a norm of legislative supremacy to a situation in which most states now agree to live within the constraints imposed by a constitution. This shift toward a new constitutionalism has increasingly involved judges in the legislative process, leading some to worry about a possible “government of judges.”¹⁷ Following this, we outline some of the distinctive features of the different systems of constitutional justice that have been adopted around the world. As we will see, there are, to a large extent, two basic systems of constitutional justice. These systems of constitutional justice are commonly referred to as the American and European models.

The Shift to a New Constitutionalism

A **constitution**, in a very general sense, provides the formal source of state authority. For example, a constitution establishes governmental institutions, such as legislatures, executives, and courts, and then gives these institutions the power to make, enforce, and interpret laws. In addition to outlining how these institutions should be constituted and function, a constitution also indicates how these institutions should interact with one another. Recent constitutions, such as those adopted in the last sixty years or so, also tend to contain a list of rights that are protected by some kind of constitutional body and that act as substantive constraints on the actions of the government.

Almost all current constitutions are **codified constitutions** in that they are written in a single document. An **uncodified constitution** is one that has several sources, which may be written or unwritten. As of 2007, only three countries—Israel, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom—had uncodified constitutions. Some of the United Kingdom’s uncodified constitution is written and some of it is not. The written part includes constitutional statutes passed by the legislature, such as the 1998 Scotland Act and the 1998 Human Rights Act,

A **constitution** provides the formal source of state authority. In addition to establishing the structure, procedures, powers, and duties of governmental institutions, more recent constitutions also contain a list of guaranteed rights.

A **codified constitution** is one that is written in a single document. An **uncodified constitution** is one that has several sources, which may be written or unwritten.

17. The first known reference to a “government of judges” came in a 1921 book by Edouard Lambert, a French law professor, which examined the control that the U.S. Supreme Court exerted over legislation.

whereas the unwritten part includes things like constitutional conventions, royal prerogatives, customs and traditions, and observations of precedents.¹⁸

In addition to whether constitutions are codified or not, constitutions also differ in regard

to whether they are entrenched or not. An **entrenched constitution** is one that can be modified only through a special procedure of constitutional amendment. Constitutional amendments require more than the approval of a legislative majority. Exactly what is required to pass a con-

stitutional amendment varies from country to country. In federal systems, for example, it is often the case that constitutional amendments require the support of a majority of the regional legislatures. Some countries require a popular referendum. Australia and Switzerland both require that a successful amendment win not only a majority of votes nationwide in a popular referendum but also a majority of the votes in every state or canton. Other countries require legislative supermajorities. Successful amendments in Japan must obtain a two-thirds supermajority in both legislative chambers and a majority in a popular referendum (Lijphart 1999, 222). Sometimes the precise constitutional amendment procedure depends on the particular constitutional provision that is to be modified. Entrenched constitutions, by requiring a special constitutional amendment procedure to be modified, implicitly (sometimes explicitly) recognize that constitutional law has a higher legal status than ordinary statute law. **Unentrenched constitutions** have no special amendment procedures; they can be modified at any point in time by a simple legislative majority just like any other law. As a result, it makes no sense to talk of constitutional amendments in countries like the United Kingdom that have unentrenched constitutions. By their very nature, unentrenched constitutions do not recognize that constitutions have any legal status that is higher than or different from ordinary statutes. Almost all contemporary constitutions are entrenched.

Historically, we can identify two ideal types of constitutions: the **legislative supremacy constitution** and the **higher law constitution**.

Legislative Supremacy Constitution

The underlying principle behind the system of government established by legislative supremacy constitutions is that “elections legitimize legislative authority, and legislative majorities legitimize statutory authority” (Stone Sweet 2000, 20). In a legislative supremacy constitution, there is an explicit recognition that legislatures can do no legal wrong, because they derive their legitimacy from being elected by the people. Legislative supremacy constitutions have three basic features. One is that they are not entrenched and can be revised at

18. Constitutional conventions include things like the duty of the monarch to act on the advice of government ministers and the Salisbury Convention, which states that the upper house will not oppose legislation promised in the government's election manifesto. Customs and traditions include things like always holding general elections on Thursdays. And royal prerogatives include things like appointing and dismissing government ministers, declaring war, and the issue and revocation of passports.

the discretion of the legislature. Legislative supremacy constitutions have no special legal status and are the same as ordinary laws in that they can be modified or replaced without recourse to special amendment procedures. In effect, these constitutions can be changed at any time through a simple majority vote in the legislature. The second distinctive feature is that there is no institution that can review the constitutional legality of statutes. Because legislative authority resides only with the legislature, no statute can be challenged once promulgated; a law can be replaced or modified only by a new statute. If there is a perceived conflict between a statute and some constitutional rule or principle, then judges are to ignore this or rule in favor of the statute. The third distinctive feature of legislative supremacy constitutions is that they do not contain a bill of rights that might act as a substantive constraint on legislative authority. This is not to say that all countries with this type of constitution do not protect rights; some do. Rather, the source of these rights should be the legislature itself and not the constitution. The constitutions of the United Kingdom and New Zealand, along with the historical constitutions of the French Third (1870–1940) and Fourth (1946–1958) Republics, are examples of legislative supremacy constitutions.

Higher Law Constitution

The second ideal type of constitution is the higher law constitution. In contrast to legislative supremacy constitutions, higher law constitutions start from the premise that the state *can* do legal wrong and that, in particular, individual and minority rights must be protected from the state. As a result, higher law constitutions reject the notion of legislative supremacy and include a layer of substantive constraints, in the form of a bill of rights, on the legislature. The inclusion of these constitutionally protected rights constrains states because they give non-state actors a basis on which to make claims against the state. In effect, nonstate actors can claim that legislative statutes are invalid to the extent that they violate their protected rights.

Higher law constitutions also establish a mechanism—**constitutional review**—for defending the supremacy of the constitution and the rights that it contains. Constitutional review is the authority of an institution to invalidate acts of government, such as legislation, administrative decisions, and judicial rulings, that violate constitutional rules (Stone

A **legislative supremacy constitution** has no constitutional review, has no bill of rights, and is not entrenched. A **higher law constitution** has constitutional review, has a bill of rights, and is entrenched.

Constitutional review is the authority of an institution to invalidate legislation, administration decisions, judicial rulings, and other acts of government that violate constitutional rules, such as rights. When constitutional review is conducted by ordinary judges from the regular judicial system, it is commonly referred to as **judicial review**.

Sweet 2000, 21). As we will see, constitutional review can be exercised by judges sitting on special tribunals—constitutional courts—that are not part of the regular judicial system, as in most European countries, or by ordinary judges in the regular judicial system, as in the United States. When constitutional review is conducted by ordinary judges from the regular judicial system, it is commonly referred to as **judicial review**. The ability to engage in constitutional review gives constitutional judges the opportunity to directly intervene in the legislative process and even draft the precise terms of legislation. By allowing constitutional

review, higher law constitutions signal that constitutional laws are superior to “ordinary” laws passed by the legislature. In recognition of the special status of constitutional law, higher law constitutions are entrenched and stipulate special amendment procedures for modifying constitutional provisions. The differences between legislative supremacy constitutions and higher law constitutions are summarized in Table 14.5.

Legislative supremacy constitutions were historically quite common, particularly in Europe, where there has traditionally been a deep political hostility toward judges, but they tend to be relatively rare now. Virtually all new constitutions—both democratic and authoritarian—are higher law constitutions that establish constitutional review and include an extensive list of political and social rights.¹⁹ For example, all 106 constitutions that have been adopted since 1985 and for which we have reliable data contain a catalogue of rights. And all but five of these constitutions—those of Iraq (1990), Laos, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Vietnam—have established provisions for constitutional review (Stone Sweet 2008, 233–234). As we noted earlier, this convergence around the idea that higher law constitutions are somehow better than legislative supremacy constitutions has been called the **new constitutionalism** (Shapiro and Stone 1994). But why did this shift to the new constitutionalism happen?

The **new constitutionalism** describes a situation in which almost all countries now have an entrenched constitution, a bill of rights, and a procedure of constitutional review to protect rights.

The shift toward this new constitutionalism began in Europe after 1945 with constitutional courts being established in Austria (1945), Italy (1948), and West Germany (1949).²⁰

TABLE 14.5

Legislative Supremacy Constitution versus Higher Law Constitution

Characteristic	Legislative supremacy	Higher law
Entrenched	No	Yes
Constitutional review	No	Yes
Bill of rights	No	Yes

19. The rights that are included in these constitutions are fairly extensive (Stone Sweet 2000, 42–43). In addition to many of the rights that we commonly think of, such as equal rights for men and women, equality before the law, the right to religion, and the right of asylum, some constitutions contain additional rights, such as the right to adequate health care (France, Italy), the right to resist political oppression (France, Germany), the right to unemployment compensation (France, Italy, Spain), and the right to adequate housing (Italy, Spain). Higher law constitutions also tend to establish duties on the part of the citizens and the state. For example, some constitutions require citizens to work (Italy, Spain) and financially support and educate their children (Italy, Spain). States are sometimes required to provide public health care (France, Italy, Spain), pursue full employment (Spain), protect consumers (Spain), and protect the environment (Italy, Spain).

20. Higher law constitutions with constitutional review were adopted by many countries in the interwar period: Czechoslovakia (1920), Liechtenstein (1925), Greece (1927), Spain (1931), Ireland (1937), and Egypt (1941). With the exception of Ireland, however, constitutional review was largely ineffective and little utilized. Only the Irish constitutional court survived World War II. Many other countries in addition to Austria, Italy, and West Germany adopted higher law constitutions shortly after World War II: Brazil (1946), Burma (1947), Japan (1947), India (1949), and Thailand (1949).

The adoption of higher law constitutions in these countries was partly a response to the experience with fascism in the interwar period (Stone Sweet 2000, 37). The experience of fascist governments in Italy and Germany made it abundantly clear that states could, indeed, do wrong and that individuals would sometimes need protection from the state. In effect, Europe's experience with fascism undermined much of Europe's faith in a powerful and unconstrained state and highlighted the need to protect individual rights. The adoption of higher law constitutions in Germany and Italy can also be traced to the presence of U.S. troops on their soil after World War II and the pressure that the United States put on these countries to incorporate a bill of rights and constitutional review into their constitutions.

To a large extent, the subsequent adoption of higher law constitutions in other countries has coincided with democratic transitions. For example, both Portugal (1976) and Spain (1978) adopted constitutional courts following their democratic transitions in the 1970s. Central and East European countries, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, the Baltic states, and the states of the former Yugoslavia, also adopted constitutional courts following the collapse of Communist rule in 1989 (Ludwikowski 1996; Schwartz 1999). The strengthening of constitutional courts in Latin America and Asia during the 1980s and 1990s has also been seen as part of a concerted effort to consolidate democracy in these regions of the world (Helmke 2002; Ginsburg 2003; Navia and Ríos-Figueroa 2005). In all of these cases, the adoption of higher law constitutions can, in part, be viewed as an attempt to prevent a repetition of the individual abuses inflicted by the state in the recent past.

Box 14.4**JUDICIAL POWER AND THE JUDICIALIZATION OF POLITICS**

The spread of constitutional review around the world has raised fears about the power of constitutional judges and the possible judicialization of politics. This raises the question of how powerful courts really are in practice. Here we outline what we mean by judicial power and examine the conditions under which courts can effectively influence policy outcomes.

Traditionally, there have been two main approaches to understanding judicial power. One approach looks at the formal, or *de jure*, powers given to courts. This approach essentially involves determining the jurisdiction of a particular court (Billikopf 1973; Lasser 1988; Gunther 1991; Barber 1993). Under this notion of judicial power, a court is powerful whenever it is granted significant legal authority. One obvious problem with this approach is that it does not take into account whether courts use their legal authority or whether their decisions are actually implemented. As several political scientists have pointed out, there is ample empirical evidence of courts that appear to be powerful on paper being ignored (Staton 2004). For example, local governments in the United States and Germany have refused to implement various constitutional decisions relating to equal protection and religious establishment (Rosenberg

1991; Vanberg 2005). There is also plenty of evidence to suggest that courts strategically try to avoid conflict by not making decisions that they know will be opposed by the other branches of government (Volcansek 1991; Clinton 1994; Epstein and Knight 1998a). To illustrate this point, Staton (2008) recounts the story of the president of the Venezuelan Supreme Court, Cecilia Sosa Gomez, who resigned her post in 1999 in protest at the Court's approval of a decision by allies of Hugo Chavez to declare a state of emergency in which judges could be fired without cause. On resigning, Sosa stated that the Court had "committed suicide to avoid being assassinated. But the result is the same. It is dead."

The problem with simply looking at judicial power in terms of the jurisdiction that courts are granted on paper has led most political scientists to focus on the *de facto* power of courts. In other words, they focus on whether courts have the power to change policy outcomes in practice, not in theory. In this sense, political scientists define judicial power as the ability of courts to bring about policy outcomes that they prefer (Cameron 2002). This definition, along with empirical evidence that courts act strategically, necessarily implies that courts are not always the impartial interpreters of laws that legal scholars and judges frequently claim them to be. Just like other political actors, judges have their own policy preferences that influence how they make legal decisions.

Of course, the extent to which judges can make legal decisions in line with their own preferences is likely to depend on the specific environment in which those decisions are made. This brings us to the following question: Under what conditions can courts effectively influence policy outcomes? The central difficulty faced by all courts is that they are inherently weak institutions in that they rely on others to implement and enforce their decisions. As Alexander Hamilton recognized in the *Federalist*, no. 78, a court "must ultimately depend upon the aid of the executive arm even for the efficacy of its judgements," because it has no financial or physical coercive powers of its own. As you might expect, this "implementation problem" can be particularly constraining in situations in which courts are required to make decisions against the very actors on whom they rely to implement their decisions (Vanberg 2001). It is the existence of this implementation problem that drives the strategic behavior of courts. Given their inability to independently enforce their decisions, it is little wonder that judges sometimes rule policies constitutional so as to avoid conflict with elected officials even when they know that these policies are constitutionally suspect (Epstein and Knight 1998b; Rogers 2001; Ramseyer and Rasmusen 2003; Carrubba 2005; Helmke 2005).

The fundamental insight from the "implementation problem" and strategic models of judicial politics would seem to be that judicial power is inherently bounded and constrained. Although there is plenty of evidence that judicial power is often constrained, we do sometimes see courts acting powerfully. For example, Staton (2008) notes that even in periods of serious national security threats the Israeli Supreme Court has placed limits on interrogation techniques that can be used against terrorist suspects by the General Security Service. What explains this? Why is it that courts can act powerfully in some situations but not others?

Two conditions need to be met for courts to exert judicial power (Vanberg 2001, 2005). The first is that courts must enjoy public support. If courts enjoy public support and, hence, high levels of legitimacy, then elected officials can expect to suffer a negative electoral backlash if they do not comply with court decisions (Gibson and Caldeira 1992; Caldeira and Gibson 1995; Gibson, Caldeira, and Baird 1998). The fear of such a backlash creates a powerful incentive for legislative majorities to respect judicial decisions (Vanberg 2000), thereby allowing courts to make decisions in a relatively unconstrained manner. Of course, this “electoral connection” mechanism works only if voters know about court decisions and can identify noncompliance by elected officials. Thus, the second necessary condition for a powerful court is that voters must be able to effectively and reliably monitor legislative responses to judicial rulings. At a minimum, this requires that court decisions be transparent and available to the public. Without this information, voters cannot hold elected representatives accountable for noncompliance. Only when these two conditions are met can courts be expected to influence policy decisions effectively.

The existence of these necessary conditions for judicial power creates strong incentives for courts to act strategically when publicizing their decisions (Staton 2006, 2008). Courts can expect to gain public support and legitimacy by publicizing their work if their decisions show them to be impartial interpreters of the constitution. We have already seen, however, that judges sometimes act politically and seek to impose their own personal preferences on the legislative process. It is likely that publicizing these types of decisions will not increase public support for the judicial system. As a result, courts will have a strong incentive to publicize only some of their decisions—the impartial-looking ones.

That constitutional judges regularly engage in public relations exercises suggests that they are well aware of the role that public support plays in their ability to assert judicial power. For example, virtually all constitutional courts throughout the world maintain a Web site on which they provide information on pending and completed cases, descriptions of their jurisdiction, and biographical summaries of their membership. Constitutional judges also give university lectures and media interviews and participate in other public forums to publicize their decisions and explain their legal reasoning (Staton 2008). Although this type of behavior is to be expected of legislative representatives, who can be held electorally accountable, it is sometimes seen as puzzling as to why unelected and unaccountable constitutional judges would engage in these types of public relations activities. Of course, this kind of behavior immediately becomes understandable once one recognizes that public support is necessary for courts to exert judicial power as we have argued. As noted earlier, constitutional judges have a strategic incentive to be selective in the types of cases, decisions, and legal reasoning that they publicize. Staton (2008) provides strong evidence to support this claim from an in-depth study of the Mexican Supreme Court and a cross-national analysis of constitutional courts around the world. That constitutional judges are strategic in publicizing their decisions only goes to underscore the very political nature of constitutional review.

Different Systems of Constitutional Justice

That higher law constitutions have increasingly been adopted around the world in the last sixty years does not mean that countries are adopting the exact same system of constitutional justice. Systems of constitutional justice vary along many different dimensions (Epstein, Knight, and Shvetsova 2001; Murphy, Pritchett, and Epstein 2001). In what follows we focus on three in particular: (a) the type of constitutional review, (b) the timing of constitutional review, and (c) the jurisdiction of constitutional review; we briefly examine other aspects of constitutional justice systems in Box 14.5.

Abstract constitutional review involves the constitutional review of legislation in the absence of a concrete legal case.

Concrete constitutional review involves the constitutional review of legislation with respect to a specific legal case. A

a priori constitutional review occurs before a law is formally enacted, whereas **a posteriori constitutional review** occurs only after a law is formally enacted.

The two basic types of constitutional review are **abstract constitutional review** and **concrete constitutional review**. Abstract review is “abstract” in that it involves the constitutional review of legislation in the absence of a concrete legal case. In contrast, concrete review is “concrete” in that it involves the constitutional review of legislation with respect to a specific case before the court. These two

types of constitutional review are not mutually exclusive in that countries can allow both types of review. Constitutional review can take place at two points in time during the legislative process. If constitutional review occurs before a law is formally enacted, then it is referred to as **a priori constitutional review**. If constitutional review occurs after a law is formally enacted, then we speak of **a posteriori constitutional review**. Again, *a priori* and *a posteriori* review are not mutually exclusive in that countries can allow constitutional review to take place both before and after a law is enacted.

The jurisdiction of constitutional review can be centralized or decentralized. **Centralized constitutional review** refers to a situation in which only one court is responsible for conducting constitutional review. This single court, called a constitutional court, exists entirely outside of the normal judicial system and settles only constitutional disputes; it does not get involved in normal litigation. As such,

Centralized constitutional review refers to a situation in which only one court can conduct constitutional review.

Decentralized constitutional review refers to a situation in which more than one court can interpret the constitution.

we might want to think of it more as a special tribunal than a court. **Decentralized constitutional review** refers to a situation in which more than one court can interpret the constitution and render laws, decrees, and administrative decisions unconstitutional. These courts and the judges that sit on them are part of the regular judicial system. The highest court in a decentralized jurisdiction system, typically called a Supreme Court, has general jurisdiction in that it can settle all legal disputes and not just constitutional ones.

TABLE 14.6**Different Systems of Constitutional Justice**

Jurisdiction/timing	Concrete		Abstract	
	<i>A priori</i>	<i>A posteriori</i>	<i>A priori</i>	<i>A posteriori</i>
Centralized (European)	Not possible	Yes	Yes	Yes
Decentralized (American)	Not possible	Yes	Not observed	Not observed

Source: Navia and Ríos-Figueroa (2005, 199).

If we focus on these three dimensions of constitutional review, we can distinguish between eight different systems of constitutional justice (Navia and Ríos-Figueroa 2005, 199). As Table 14.6 illustrates, only four of these systems actually exist in the real world. Two of the systems of constitutional justice are ruled out on the grounds that they are not logically possible—concrete review cannot take place *a priori* because it requires a legal case challenging the constitutionality of an existing statute. Two other systems of constitutional justice are not observed in the real world at the national level. Although logically possible, the combination of abstract review and a decentralized jurisdiction is theoretically unappealing. In effect, this combination would allow local judges to nullify laws in the abstract with the consequence being that such laws, or parts of such laws, would simply disappear in particular districts. Not only would this create legal insecurity, but it would also create a chaotic situation with legal holes around the country.²¹ This helps to explain why the combination of abstract review and a decentralized jurisdiction is not observed at the national level in the real world.

Although it is possible to distinguish between four different systems of constitutional justice, as we do in Table 14.6, most political scientists focus on the distinction between centralized and decentralized systems. They refer to decentralized systems as the American model of constitutional justice and to centralized systems as the European model of constitutional justice.²²

21. Somewhat similar concerns exist with any decentralized jurisdiction system. Indeed, the desire to have uniform legal decisions across the country was one reason why many countries have adopted centralized jurisdiction systems. Combining a decentralized jurisdiction system with concrete review (as opposed to abstract review) is somewhat less problematic because any local court decisions apply only to the specific case at hand.

22. The European model is sometimes referred to as the Kelsenian model after the Austrian legal theorist, Hans Kelsen, who helped establish the Austrian Constitutional Court in 1920.

Box 14.5**SYSTEMS OF CONSTITUTIONAL JUSTICE**

As we noted earlier, systems of constitutional justice differ along many different dimensions. In the main text of this chapter, we focus on the type, timing, and jurisdiction of constitutional review. We now examine other aspects of constitutional justice systems. Specifically, we look at who can challenge the constitutionality of a law, how constitutional judges are selected, and the qualifications that are necessary to become a constitutional judge.

Who Can Challenge the Constitutionality of a Law?

In abstract review systems, constitutional challenges are typically initiated by a specifically designated group of elected politicians (Stone Sweet 2000, 45). These politicians might be members of the executive or legislature as in France, Germany, and Spain. For example, the president of the Republic, the president of the National Assembly, and the president of the Senate in France can all refer constitutional questions to the French Constitutional Council. Since 1974, constitutional referrals can also be made by sixty representatives in either the National Assembly or the Senate. In other countries, such as Germany, Italy, and Spain, regional governments get to challenge the constitutionality of laws. Whoever the designated politicians are, they must make referrals or petitions to the constitutional court within some prescribed period of time. For instance, laws must be referred to the French Constitutional Council within fifteen days of their adoption by the legislature. In practice, most attempts to challenge the constitutionality of legislative initiatives are made by opposition politicians. In many cases, constitutional review is the last chance that opposition groups have to delay or block a piece of government legislation. That abstract review allows opposition groups to challenge the constitutionality of laws encourages legislative majorities to consider opposition interests when drafting legislation, thereby fostering policy compromise (Stone 1992; Vanberg 1998).

In concrete review systems, constitutional challenges are usually initiated by the judiciary itself. For example, a constitutional question may become relevant during the course of litigation in the courts. In centralized jurisdiction systems, the judge dealing with the case would refer the constitutional question to the constitutional court. At this point, the proceedings in the case would be suspended until the constitutional court has ruled. In decentralized jurisdiction systems, the judge dealing with the case would rule on the constitutional question; any challenge to the court's ruling would be referred up the judicial hierarchy, potentially all the way to the Supreme Court.

Although somewhat rarer, some countries allow private individuals to bring complaints. For example, individuals in Germany and Spain have the right to go directly to the constitutional court once other judicial remedies have been exhausted. These individual constitutional complaint procedures can occur in both abstract and concrete review situations.

How Are Constitutional Judges Selected?

On the whole, judges in constitutional courts are selected either through a nomination process or by election. If a nomination procedure is used, then the nominating authority simply names a judge or set of judges to the constitutional court. In France, for example, the Constitutional Council comprises nine judges who serve nonrenewable nine-year terms. One-third of these judges are appointed every three years. The president of the Republic, the president of the National Assembly, and the president of the Senate each get to appoint one of the three judges. Former presidents of the Republic, who are no longer engaged in political activities, are also entitled to sit on the Constitutional Council. This helps to explain why, as of 2007, the French Constitutional Council actually had eleven members; two former presidents—Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Jacques Chirac—had both taken up positions on the court.

If an election procedure is used, then a qualified or super-majority within the legislature is usually necessary for appointment. In Germany, for example, the Federal Constitutional Court consists of two “senates,” each with eight judges who serve a twelve-year term. The lower legislative chamber (Bundestag) and the upper legislative chamber (Bundesrat) each get to elect four judges to each of the senates. The election of the judges requires a two-thirds majority in the relevant legislative chamber.

Some countries use nomination *and* election procedures to select their constitutional courts. For example, the Spanish Constitutional Court consists of twelve judges who serve for nine-year terms. The lower legislative chamber (congress) and the upper legislative chamber (senate) each elect four judges. These judges must obtain the support of 60 percent of the representatives in the relevant legislative chamber to be elected. Of the remaining four judges, two are nominated by the government and two are nominated by the General Council of the Judiciary.

What Qualifications Are Necessary to Become a Constitutional Judge?

Most countries, such as Germany, Italy, and Spain, require that judges on constitutional courts have advanced legal training as well as professional experience in some domain of law. In some countries a quota guarantees that a minimum number of constitutional judges be drawn from the ordinary court system (Stone Sweet 2000, 48). In Germany, for example, the sixteen-member Federal Constitutional Court must contain at least six federal judges. Similarly, one-third of the fifteen members on the Italian Constitutional Court are elected by representatives of the judiciary. Law professors comprise the largest group of constitutional court appointees in most countries. In direct contrast to the vast majority of countries, France does not require that the judges on the French Constitutional Council have any legal training at all. In fact, a majority of the French Constitutional Council has always been made up of former ministers and parliamentarians, although many of these individuals have had some legal training.

The American Model

In the United States, “any judge of any court, in any case, at any time, at the behest of any litigating party, has the power to declare a law unconstitutional” (Shapiro and Stone 1994, 400). As this quotation makes clear, constitutional review in the United States is decentralized and carried out by ordinary judges in the regular judicial system. Constitutional review in the United States is, as a result, judicial review. The American separation-of-powers system, in which the executive, legislature, and judiciary are separate but co-equal branches of government, attempts to mark a clear distinction between what we can think of as the “judicial function”—resolving legal cases—and the “political function”—legislating. American courts are supposed to avoid legislating because that is the function of the people’s elected representatives in the legislature. Still, it is recognized that a constitutional issue that needs resolving might arise in the course of a legal case. It is for this reason that ordinary judges in the United States have the right to conduct concrete *a posteriori* constitutional review—they need it to do their prescribed job. Courts in the American model are prohibited, though, from engaging in abstract review or giving advisory opinions on the constitutionality of legislative bills because this is not part of their job and would be usurping the rightful role of the legislature.

The European Model

As mentioned earlier, the judiciary has traditionally been seen as subordinate to the legislature in Europe. In other words, the judiciary has never been seen as a co-equal branch of the government. Indeed, *judicial* review has been explicitly prohibited in French and German constitutions since the end of the eighteenth century. This view of the judiciary helps to explain why American-style judicial review has faced so much hostility in much of Europe. From a European perspective, “American-style judicial review, rather than corresponding to a separation of powers, actually establishes a permanent *confusion* of powers, because it enables the judiciary to participate in the legislative function” (Stone Sweet 2000, 33). To avoid judicial review and a “government of judges” that might ensue, Europeans invented a completely new institution, the constitutional court, to conduct *constitutional* review.

Constitutional courts have several defining characteristics. First, they have a monopoly on conducting constitutional review. Ordinary courts cannot engage in constitutional review and cannot appeal any of the decisions made by a constitutional court. Second, constitutional courts are formally detached from the regular judicial system. A constitutional court is, therefore, not a “judicial” institution. These two defining characteristics mean that judicial review remains prohibited in the European model. Third, constitutional courts have jurisdiction only over constitutional matters; they cannot preside over judicial disputes or litigation as, say, the U.S. Supreme Court can. Fourth, most constitutional courts can engage in abstract constitutional review. In other words, they can evaluate legislative initiatives to see if they are unconstitutional before they actually have the oppor-

TABLE 14.7**American and European Models of Constitutional Justice**

Characteristic	American model	European model
<i>Jurisdiction:</i> Who has the power to engage in constitutional review?	Decentralized; ordinary courts can engage in constitutional review	Centralized; only a single constitutional court can engage in constitutional review; other courts are barred from doing so, although they may refer to the constitutional court.
<i>Timing:</i> When can constitutional review occur?	A posteriori	A priori or a posteriori or both; some courts have a priori review over treaties or government acts; others have both, and some have either but not both.
<i>Type:</i> Can constitutional review occur in the absence of a real case or controversy?	Concrete	Abstract and concrete; most constitutional courts can exercise review in the absence of a real case, and many can also exercise concrete review.
<i>Standing:</i> Who can initiate disputes?	Litigants engaged in a case or controversy and who have a personal stake in the outcome can initiate a dispute.	The range can be broad, from governmental actors (including executives and members of the legislature) to individual citizens.

Source: Adapted from Navia and Ríos-Figueroa (2005, 192).

tunity to harm anyone. This is the only type of constitutional review that is allowed in France. Many constitutional courts can also exercise concrete constitutional review. The main characteristics of the American and European models of constitutional justice are shown in Table 14.7.

Information from 2004 on whether a country employs an American or European model of constitutional justice is shown in Box 14.6 on page 668. In Table 14.8, we illustrate the geographic distribution of the American and European models of constitutional justice around the world. As you can see, the European model of constitutional justice is more popular than the American one, although there are clear regional differences. For example, the American model is predominant in Asia, North America, and the Caribbean, whereas the European model is predominant everywhere else. Some countries, most notably in Central and South America, employ a mixture of the American and European models.

TABLE 14.8**The Geographic Distribution of Different Models of Constitutional Justice, 2004**

Region	American model	European model	Mixed	Other	None
Europe	5	31	3	1	2
Africa	12	30	1	6	3
Middle East	2	4	0	3	1
Asia and Southeast Asia	17	14	2	9	0
North America	2	0	0	0	0
Central America	3	3	3	0	0
South America	3	4	5	0	0
Caribbean	11	0	0	1	0
Total	55	86	14	20	6

Source: Data are from Dr. Arne Mavčič and are available at <http://www.concourts.net>.

Note: "Mixed" means some combination of the American and European models; "Other" means that the system of constitutional justice is unique or unclassifiable; "None" means that there are no mechanisms for constitutional review. Systems based on France are coded as European.

VETO PLAYERS

As we have noted in this chapter, political scientists sometimes distinguish between democracies by whether they are federal or unitary, bicameral or unicameral, and whether they accept constitutionalism or not. In effect, these political scientists see the world in terms of different institutional dichotomies. Recently, though, comparative scholars have begun to move away from this position and to recognize that these institutions are conceptually the same in that they all act as checks and balances on the political system. Put differently, they all affect the ease

with which the political status quo in a country can be changed. This new approach to understanding political institutions is called **veto player theory** (Tsebelis 1995, 1999, 2002).

Veto player theory argues that important characteristics of any country's institutional structure are determined by its configuration of veto players. A **veto player** is an individual or collective actor whose agreement is necessary for a change in the political status quo. There are two types of veto player. An **institutional veto player** is generated by a country's constitution. A **partisan veto player** is generated by the way the political game is played.

as a legislative chamber) whose agreement is necessary for a change of the political status quo.²³ In any given country, there are two types of veto player. First, there is the **institutional**

Veto player theory offers a way to think about political institutions in a consistent way across countries. In effect, veto player theory conceptualizes the institutional structure of a given country in terms of its configuration of veto players.

A **veto player** is an individual or collective actor whose agreement is necessary for a change in the political status quo. There are two types of veto player. An **institutional veto player** is generated by a country's constitution. A **partisan veto player** is generated by the way the political game is played.

23. Note that veto player theory is not restricted to democracies. In dictatorships, veto players might include the military or particular religious leaders and so on. The key to applying veto player theory in any given setting involves identifying which actors are in a position to block changes to the political status quo. This will vary both across countries, across time, and potentially across policy areas.

veto player. Institutional veto players are those generated by a country's constitution. For example, the U.S. Constitution identifies actors like the president, the Congress, and the Senate as institutional veto players because it gives these actors the right to block legislative changes to the status quo. Second, there is the **partisan veto player.** Partisan veto players are those generated by the political game. In other words, partisan veto players are not specified in a constitution but are determined by the way political competition plays out in a given country. For example, particular parties in a legislature or a coalition government might be considered partisan veto players if they are in a position to block changes to the status quo. Such parties are veto players not because they have been identified as such in some document but, rather, because of the way that citizens vote, how votes are translated into seats, how governments form, and so on. Whereas the identity of institutional veto players is essentially fixed across time as long as the constitution remains the same, the identity of partisan veto players changes with the vagaries of political competition.

Rather than see federalism, bicameralism, and constitutional review as entirely different institutions that need to be studied separately, as most political scientists have traditionally done, veto player theory suggests that we might constructively view them as just different types of the same thing; that is, as different types of institutional veto player.²⁴ All three institutions place hurdles on the ability of political actors to change the status quo. For example, a legislative majority in the lower chamber may require the support of a powerful upper chamber to change some policy status quo. As we saw earlier, this is the case in the United States, where the agreement of both legislative chambers is required to pass legislation. Courts are not veto players when they interpret ordinary statutes, because their decisions can be overridden by subsequent legislation. They are veto players, however, when they engage in constitutional review (Tsebelis 2002, 226). Recall that the French Constitutional Council has the ability to invalidate laws on constitutional grounds before they are applied. This suggests that, in many ways, we can think of constitutional courts like the French Constitutional Council as a third legislative chamber (Stone 1992). Similarly, the support of a subnational government in a federal system may be necessary for political actors to change the status quo. This is particularly the case for those policy areas that are constitutionally delegated to subnational governments. In this framework, then, adopting federalism, bicameralism, or constitutional review can be thought of as equivalent to increasing the number of institutional veto players in a country.

As we will see, veto player theory shows that the number of veto players in a country, as well as the ideological distance between them, has important consequences for policy stability. Specifically, veto player theory indicates that countries in which there are many veto players with conflicting policy preferences are likely to be characterized by (a) greater policy sta-

24. In previous chapters, we have looked at whether countries have single party or coalition governments and whether they have two-party or multiparty systems. Just as federalism, bicameralism, and constitutional review can be reconceptualized in terms of institutional veto players, the type of government and the size of the party system in a country can be reconceptualized in terms of partisan veto players. If we do this, then we can think of countries with coalition governments as having more partisan veto players than countries with single-party majority governments.

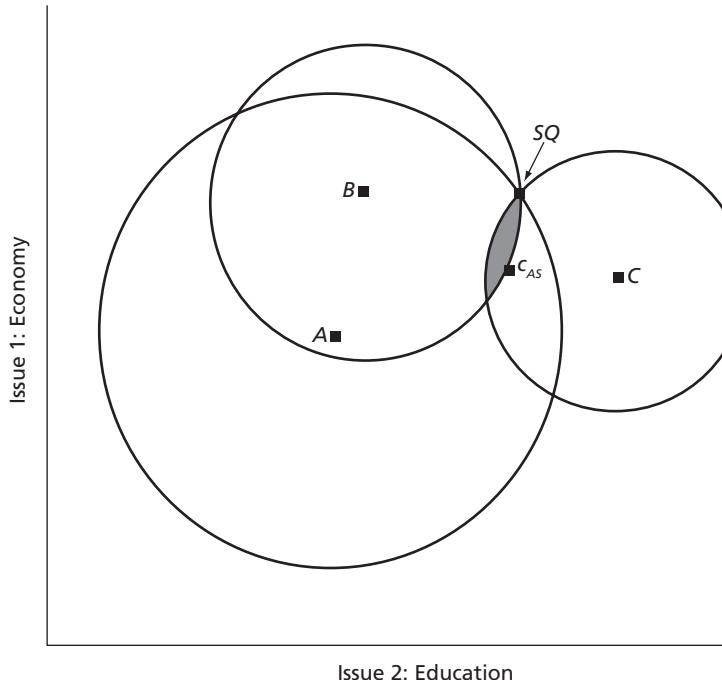
bility, (b) smaller shifts in policy, (c) less variation in the size of policy shifts, and (d) weaker agenda-setter powers. This, in turn, has important consequences for things like judicial and bureaucratic activism, government stability, and regime stability.

To see where these results come from, let's start with the basic building blocks of veto player theory. Veto players can be represented by their preferred policy positions or ideal points in some issue space.²⁵ In Figure 14.4, we have three veto players, A, B, and C, who are located in a two-dimensional issue space on the basis of their most preferred position on two different policies. To give our example some substance, we can think of one issue dimension as being about the appropriate level of state intervention in the economy and the other issue dimension as being about the appropriate amount of money to be spent on education. The status quo policy in the two-dimensional policy space is given by the point SQ. In Figure 14.4, we illustrate the indifference curves for each veto player with respect to the status quo—these are the circles that surround the ideal points of the three veto players and go through the status quo point. These indifference curves, as you will remember, indicate all of the policy outcomes that are equally distant from each veto player's ideal point as the status quo. As a result, each veto player is indifferent between any point on his indifference curve and the status quo. More important, each veto player will prefer any policy outcome inside his indifference curve to the status quo because this policy outcome will necessarily be closer to his ideal point.

A central concept in veto player theory is the winset. Recall that a winset is the set of policy alternatives that would defeat the status quo in a pair-wise contest under whatever voting rules are being employed. Given the very definition of a veto player, unanimity is required to change the status quo. As a result, the winset in a veto player setting is the set of policy alternatives that falls within the indifference circle of *every* veto player. In Figure 14.4, this winset is represented by the shaded petal-shaped area coming from the status quo. Any policy alternative in this shaded area will win the support of all veto players in a pair-wise vote against the status quo.

According to veto player theory, the size of the winset has a significant impact on policy outcomes. First, the size of the winset affects policy stability. When the winset is large, policy is less stable, because there are many policy alternatives that can defeat the status quo. In contrast, when the winset is small, policy is more stable, because there are few policy alternatives that can defeat the status quo. Second, the size of the winset determines the likely size of policy shifts. When the winset is small, policy shifts must necessarily be small; it is impossible to move policy very far from the status quo. When the winset is large, though, the possibility arises for more radical policy shifts. If we think that every policy alternative in a winset is equally possible, then it follows that the average size of policy shifts will increase with the size of the winset. Third, the size of the winset influences how much variation we are

25. At this point, readers may well benefit from rereading the material on spatial models first presented in Chapter 10.

FIGURE 14.4**An Application of Veto Player Theory**

Note: A, B, and C = three veto players; SQ = the status quo policy; c_{AS} = the policy alternative that C would propose if he were the agenda setter; the three circles = the indifference curves of A, B, and C with respect to the status quo; the shaded area = the winset, assuming decisions are made by unanimity rule.

likely to see in the size of policy shifts. As we have already noted, policy shifts must be small when the winset is small. When the winset is large, however, policy shifts may be small or large. As a result, we are likely to observe more variation in the size of policy shifts the larger the size of the winset.

Fourth, the size of the winset affects the power of an agenda setter to influence the policy outcome. So far, we have assumed that all veto players are created equal. Although this assumption allows us to identify the feasible set of policy alternatives that can defeat the status quo (the winset), it does not permit us to identify a specific policy outcome. In reality, it is often the case that some veto players are also agenda setters in that they get to make take-it-or-leave-it policy proposals to the other veto players. Clearly, any veto player who is an agenda setter is at an advantage because he can view the winset as his constraint and select the outcome within it that is closest to his ideal point. For example, if veto player C were the agenda setter in Figure 14.4, then he would propose shifting policy to c_{AS} because this is the closest point in the winset to his ideal point. The size of the winset affects the importance of

agenda setting. When the winset is small, the agenda setter cannot move policy far from where the other veto players would want to move it if they were the agenda setter. In contrast, agenda setting becomes much more important when the winset is large because the agenda setter now has the possibility to move policy far from where the other veto players would choose if they were the agenda setters.

We now know that the size of the winset has a significant impact on policy outcomes. But how do the number of veto players in a country and the ideological distance between them affect the size of the winset? Let's start by examining how the number of veto players influences the size of the winset with the help of Figure 14.5. In the first panel (a) there are two veto players and in the second panel (b) there are three veto players. In this particular comparison, increasing the number of veto players shrinks the size of the winset; that is, the winset in the second panel is smaller than the winset in the first one. But does this mean that increasing the number of veto players *always* shrinks the size of the winset? The answer to this question is no. To see why, let's now compare the second and third panels (b and c). In the third panel there are two veto players and in the second panel there are three veto players. As this comparison indicates, increasing the number of veto players does not shrink the size of the winset; the size of the winset in the second panel is exactly the same as the size of the winset in the third one. The reason for this is that the new veto player (*B*) is ideologically located in such a way that if we were to draw a line connecting the two existing veto players (*A* and *C*), she would be on it.²⁶ What this means, practically speaking, is that it is impossible for veto players *A* and *C* to jointly prefer alternatives to the status quo that veto player *B* will not also prefer. In the language of veto player theory, we say that veto player *B* is "absorbed" by the existing veto players. It is because of this that the winset remains the same size as we move from the third panel (c) to the second panel (b). The bottom line is that veto player theory shows that an increase in the number of veto players decreases the size of the winset or leaves it the same; it never increases the size of the winset.

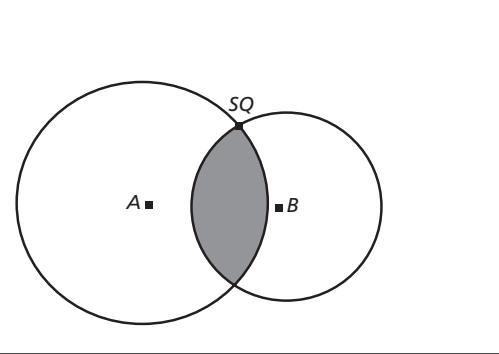
Let's now examine how the ideological distance between veto players influences the size of the winset with the help of Figure 14.6. The two veto players in the first panel (a) have more similar ideal points than the two veto players in the second panel (b). As you can see, increasing the ideological distance between veto players—moving from the first panel (a) to the second panel (b)—shrinks the size of the winset. This is a general result from veto player theory that always holds.

As Figures 14.5 and 14.6 illustrate, the size of the winset in any particular situation is determined jointly by the number of veto players and the ideological distance between these veto players. In general, we can expect the size of the winset to shrink as we increase the number of veto players or the ideological distance between them or both. As we noted earlier, federalism, bicameralism, and constitutional review are all institutions that can be

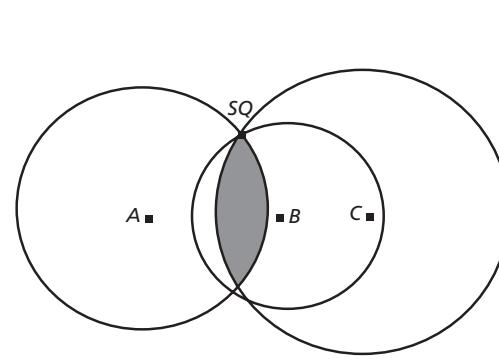
26. In this particular example, the line connecting the two existing veto players (*A* and *C*) is known as the "unanimity core." Whenever an additional veto player is added to the unanimity core, the size of the winset remains unchanged. We discuss the unanimity core in more detail in problems 7 and 8 at the end of this chapter.

FIGURE 14.5**The Number of Veto Players and the Size of the Winset**

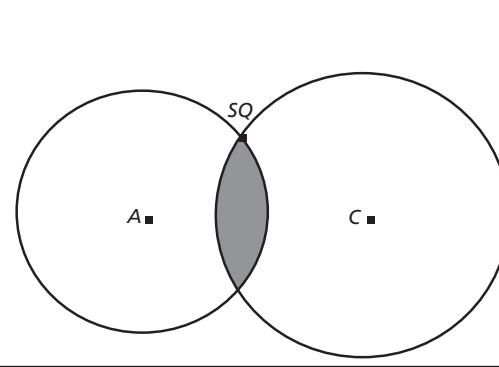
a. Two Veto Players, A and B



b. Three Veto Players, A, B, and C



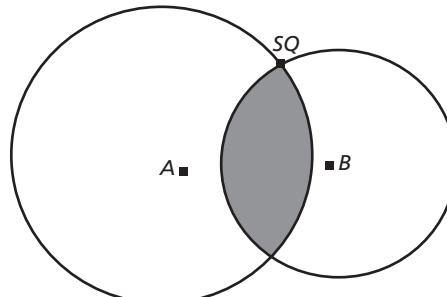
c. Two Veto Players, A and C



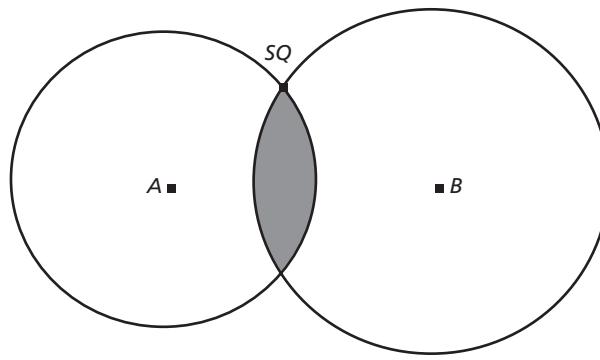
Note: A, B, C = veto players; SQ = the status quo policy; the shaded area = the winset, assuming decisions are made by unanimity rule.

FIGURE 14.6**The Ideological Distance between Veto Players and the Size of the Winset**

a. Similar Ideological Positions



b. Dissimilar Ideological Positions



Note: A, B = veto players; SQ = the status quo policy; the shaded area = the winset, assuming decisions are made by unanimity rule.

reconceptualized as institutional veto players. In regard to policy outcomes, this means that we can expect countries with these types of institutions to be characterized by (a) policy stability, (b) small policy shifts, (c) little variation in the size of policy shifts, and (d) weak agenda-setting powers. These characteristics are likely to be particularly prevalent if the institutional veto players have dissimilar policy preferences. For example, we would expect policy output to be lower and less radical during periods of divided government or cohabitation (Mayhew 1991; Binder 1999, 2003; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002) and when

coalition governments are ideologically diverse (Tsebelis 2002, 173). We would also expect greater policy stability when the two legislative chambers in a bicameral system or the central and subnational governments in a federal system are controlled by different political parties.

We should note at this point that there is nothing inherently good or bad about policy stability. After all, policy stability is typically viewed as a good thing by those who like the status quo, but a bad thing by those who do not. Policy stability, though, can have important consequences for various aspects of a political system, such as government stability, regime stability, and judicial or bureaucratic activism. Let's first briefly consider the effect of policy stability on government and regime stability. Imagine that a government comes to power in a country with the promise to shake up some policy area. Perhaps some crisis requires radical reform. If the configuration of veto players in the country is such that the status quo cannot be changed or can be altered only a little, the government will likely appear ineffective and immobilized. If we are in a parliamentary democracy, political and social actors who want to resolve the crisis will likely push for a vote of no confidence in the government. As a result, veto player theory predicts a connection between policy stability and the likelihood of *government* instability in parliamentary democracies. If we are in a presidential democracy, though, there is no institutional mechanism, such as a vote of no confidence, to remove the ineffective government from office. This may lead political and social actors who want to resolve the crisis to look to extra-constitutional means, such as a military coup, to replace the government. As a result, veto player theory predicts that policy stability will increase the likelihood of *regime* instability in presidential democracies. We return to the connection between policy stability and regime instability in the next chapter, where we examine the effect of institutions on the survival of democracy in more detail.

Let's now briefly consider the effect of policy stability on judicial and bureaucratic activism. Veto player theory suggests that policy stability leads to high levels of judicial and bureaucratic activism (Tsebelis 2002, 222–247). Why? In many situations, judges have the opportunity to make policy through their ability to interpret statutes. Similarly, bureaucrats get to make policy by virtue of actually implementing policy. Obviously, if the members of the legislature do not like policies made by the judges and bureaucrats, they can write new legislation that will effectively overrule the judiciary or bureaucracy. When policy is stable because there are many legislative veto players with dissimilar policy preferences, however, judges and bureaucrats get to interpret and implement laws close to their own ideal points, safe in the knowledge that the legislature will not be able to reach an agreement on overriding them. This suggests that we should expect to see higher levels of judicial and bureaucratic activism in federal and bicameral countries than in unitary and unicameral ones.

CONCLUSION

In Chapter 10, we examined some theoretical results suggesting that constitutional designers necessarily face trade-offs when designing democratic institutions. In particular, Arrow's Theorem demonstrates that stable outcomes (group transitivity) can be guaranteed only if

the freedom of individuals to form their own preferences (universal admissibility) or the ability of individuals to have their preferences influence group decisions (non-dictatorship) are compromised.²⁷ If we accept universal admissibility as inalienable, then the basic tension that exists in democratic regimes is between instability and dictatorship. As we have noted before, increased stability of outcomes is likely to be the result of someone's having been given agenda power.

In this and the three preceding chapters, we have examined many of the dimensions along which democratic institutions vary. For example, in Chapter 11 we looked at the ways in which the relationship between the executive and legislative branches can be organized. In Chapter 12, we examined the tremendous variety of ways in which elections have been organized. And in Chapter 13, we investigated the structure of party systems. In this chapter, we looked at three more ways in which institutions might vary from democracy to democracy—federalism, bicameralism, and constitutionalism. We suggested that these three institutional forms have a common feature—they create political actors capable of blocking a change in the political status quo. Federalism, for instance, has the potential to create powerful regional actors capable of blocking the implementation of national law. Bicameralism creates a second legislative body capable of blocking legislation. And constitutionalism creates the possibility that judges might overturn laws that the legislature approves of. Each of these institutions, therefore, has the effect of creating an institutional veto player.²⁸

Veto player theory can be thought of as a modern-day version of arguments about the effects of mixed government and checks and balances that can be traced back to such political theorists as Aristotle and Montesquieu. As we have demonstrated, countries with many veto players with conflicting preferences are expected to be characterized by great policy stability, smaller shifts in policy, less variation in the size of policy shifts, and weaker agenda-setter powers. As a result, systems with many veto players may, in some sense, overcome the instability of democratic institutions without creating a single powerful agenda setter. Unfortunately, the existence of multiple veto players doesn't fully overcome the dilemmas posed by Arrow's Theorem, because complex veto structures necessarily mean that current policy decisions are profoundly influenced by the status quo policy. In this sense, they grant something like dictatorial power to the policymakers who chose those policies in the past. As a consequence, circumstances or tastes may change in such a way that a large share of the populace might desire policy change but be unable to achieve it. As implied by Arrow's Theorem, then, there appears to be some trade-off between policy stability and the responsiveness of decisions to voters' preferences.

In the next chapter, we have more to say about the way democratic institutions influence the way voters' preferences are translated into policy decisions. We will also have more to say about the potentially explosive effects that can be produced by policy stability in presiden-

27. As we note in Chapter 10, this trade-off—something we called the “institutional trilemma”—assumes that the independence from irrelevant alternatives and unanimity conditions are met.

28. Presidentialism (see Chapter 11) also creates an institutional veto player—the president—who can check the power of the legislature.

tial democracies—policy stability, it seems, may come at the expense of regime instability. A comprehensive examination of the varieties of democracy observed in the world is well beyond the scope of our book, but in the next chapter we attempt to highlight some prominent findings in the comparative politics literature regarding the consequences of the varieties of democracy. Specifically, we look at how variations in democratic institutions influence four sets of important outcomes—the quality of representation, the size of the welfare state, the propensity for ethnic conflict, and the survival of democracy.

KEY CONCEPTS

- a posteriori constitutional review, 642
- a priori constitutional review, 642
- abstract constitutional review, 642
- asymmetric bicameralism, 627
- asymmetric federalism, 612
- bicameral legislature, 620
- centralized constitutional review, 635
- codified constitution, 616
- coming-together federalism, 642
- concrete constitutional review, 622
- congruent bicameralism, 611
- congruent federalism, 635
- constitution, 634
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- unicameral legislature, 620
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- veto player theory, 648

PROBLEMS

The problems that follow address some of the more important concepts and ideas introduced in this chapter.

Spatial Model of Bicameralism

1. In Figure 14.7, we illustrate a situation in which we have a unicameral legislature that includes a median voter (*MV*) and a status quo policy (*SQ*) arrayed along a single left-right issue dimension that runs from 0 (most left) to 10 (most right). The median voter is assumed to have a single-peaked utility function and to vote for the policy that is located closest to her ideal point.

FIGURE 14.7**Illustrating a Unicameral Legislature**

Note: MV = the median voter in the legislature; SQ = the policy status quo.

- What is the range of policies that the median voter prefers to the status quo? If the median voter in the legislature gets to propose a new policy, what would she propose? What would the outcome be?

In Figure 14.8, we illustrate a situation in which we have a unicameral legislature. The location of the status quo policy is SQ , the location of the median voter in the lower chamber is LC , and the location of the median voter in the upper chamber is UC . Assume that both median voters have a single-peaked utility function and that the support of both chambers is needed to pass a new policy.

FIGURE 14.8**Illustrating a Bicameral Legislature**

Note: UC = the median voter in the upper chamber; LC = the median voter in the lower chamber; SQ = the policy status quo.

- What is the range of policies preferred to the status quo by the median voter in the lower chamber? What is the range of policies preferred to the status quo by the median voter in the upper chamber? What is the overlapping range of policies preferred by both chambers to the status quo?
- If the lower chamber is the agenda setter and can make take-it-or-leave-it proposals, where on the left-right issue dimension will the lower chamber make its policy proposal? Would your answer change if the upper chamber is the agenda setter instead? If so, how and why?

Now imagine that the status quo policy is located at 5 instead of 3 on the left-right issue dimension and that the ideal points of the two median voters remain the same as in Figure 14.8.

- Answer parts (b) and (c) again for this new situation. What changes? That is, how do the expected policy outcomes compare across these different scenarios?

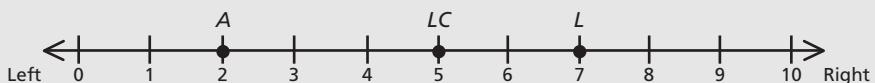
Spatial Model of Judicial Review

2. We now use a spatial model to examine the effects of judicial review. In our model, a bureaucratic agency, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), sets the initial policy. If the agency's policy is not challenged by the legislature or the courts, then the policy prevails. Our model is loosely based on one by Ferejohn and Shipan (1990, 3), who argue that policymaking by bureaucratic agencies is

the ordinary or routine decision-making practice throughout modern government. Relatively few governmental decisions are directly mandated by government acts. For the most part, statutes serve as constraints on what bureaucrats can do rather than as detailed directives. Thus, while not denying the importance of the classical statutory model of democratic government—in which a democratically elected legislature instructs its delegates in public action—it seems likely that a model of administrative action that puts agency actions at the front is more relevant for explaining government action most of the time.

To start with, imagine that we have three actors: a legislature, a legislative committee, and a regulatory agency (we will add a court shortly). We will call this the Agency Policymaking Model. Suppose that the legislature has delegated supervision of the regulatory agency to the legislative committee. In Figure 14.9, we show the ideal points of the median member of the legislature (L), the median member of the legislative committee (LC), and the regulatory agency (A). The agency makes the first move by choosing a policy position. If it wishes, the legislative committee can initiate legislation to alter the agency's policy. If it does so, legislation is sent to the floor of the legislature, where it can be amended freely. If the committee does not wish to initiate legislation, then the policy chosen by the agency stands. As always, you should assume that all actors have single-peaked preferences and that they will vote over alternatives sincerely.

FIGURE 14.9 **Agency Policymaking Model**



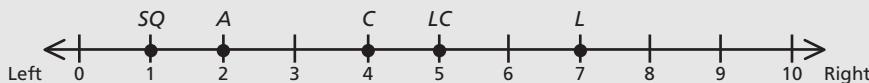
Note: A = the regulatory agency; LC = the median voter on the legislative committee; L = the median voter in the legislature.

- If the legislature gets a chance to amend a proposal from the legislative committee, what will the outcome of the amendment process be? In other words, where will the legislature set policy if it gets the chance?
- What is the range of policies that the legislative committee would prefer to the policy outcome that the legislature would choose in an amendment process?

- c. Given your previous answer, when will the legislative committee initiate legislation to alter the agency's policy? When will the legislative committee not initiate legislation to alter the agency's policy? In your own words, explain your answers.
- d. Given your previous answer, where do you think the agency should initiate policy so that it will not be overturned?

Now imagine that we add a fourth actor: a court. Assume that the court has the ability to review agency actions and can strike them down if it wants to. If this happens, policy reverts to some status quo policy that we will label *SQ*. Ferejohn and Shipan (1990) refer to this as the "Statutory Review Model." After the court has decided whether to strike down the agency's policy, the committee can choose to initiate new legislation if it wants to. If it does so, legislation is sent to the floor of the legislature, where it can be amended freely, as in the Agency Policymaking Model that we just examined. In Figure 14.10, we show the status quo reversion point (*SQ*) and the ideal points of the median member of the legislature (*L*), the median member of the legislative committee (*LC*), the regulatory agency (*A*), and the median judge on the court (*C*).

FIGURE 14.10 | Statutory Review Model, Scenario 1



Note: *A* = the regulatory agency; *LC* = the median voter in the legislative committee; *L* = the median voter in the legislature; *C* = the median judge on the court; *SQ* = the reversion status quo.

- e. Imagine for some reason that the court decides to strike down the agency's policy (wherever it might be). If this happens, policy will revert to the status quo point shown in Figure 14.10. How do you think the legislative committee will react? Will it initiate legislation to change the status quo policy? If the legislative committee does initiate legislation to change the status quo policy, what will the legislature do? What will the final policy position be in this situation if the court decides to strike down the agency's policy?
- f. In the previous question, we did not specify where the agency would implement policy. Let's suppose that the agency chooses to implement its policy at 3.1 on the left-right issue dimension. Would the court prefer to have policy at 3.1 or at the final policy position you found in the previous question (e)? In other words, if the agency chooses to implement policy at 3.1, will the court want to strike it down? Explain your answer.
- g. If the agency chooses to implement its policy at 3.1, the legislative committee will not bother to initiate legislation to change the agency's policy. Explain, in your own words, why this is the case.

- h. Given your answers to the last three questions (e, f, g), what will the final policy outcome be if the agency initially sets policy at 3.1? Explain your answer.

Imagine now that we change the ideal point of the median judge on the court. The new scenario is shown in Figure 14.11.

FIGURE 14.11**Statutory Review Model, Scenario 2**

Note: SQ = the reversion status quo; A = the regulatory agency; LC = the median voter on the legislative committee; C = the median judge on the court; L = the median voter in the legislature.

- What is the range of policies that the court prefers to the ideal point of the median voter in the legislature?
- If the court strikes down the agency's policy (wherever it might be), it is easy to see that the legislative committee will initiate legislation to try to change the status quo policy (make sure that you understand why). We also know that policy will end up at the ideal point of the median voter in the legislature if the legislative committee initiates legislation to change the status quo. Given this, where should the agency implement policy in order to keep the court from striking down its policy in the first place? Will this be the final policy outcome? Explain your answers.

Imagine that we now change the ideal point of the median judge on the court one more time. The new scenario is shown in Figure 14.12.

FIGURE 14.12**Statutory Review Model, Scenario 3**

Note: SQ = the reversion status quo; A = the regulatory agency; LC = the median voter on the legislative committee; L = the median voter in the legislature; C = the median judge on the court.

- k. What is the range of policies that the court prefers to the ideal point of the median voter in the legislature?
- l. As before, if the court strikes down the agency's policy, it is easy to see that the legislative committee will initiate legislation to try to change the status quo policy. We also know that policy will end up at the ideal point of the median voter in the legislature if the legislative committee initiates legislation to change the status quo. Given this, where should the agency implement policy in order to keep the court from striking down its policy in the first place? Will this be the final policy outcome? Explain your answers.
- m. Does the effect of having a court that can engage in judicial review affect policy outcomes? To answer this question, compare the final policy outcome from the Agency Policymaking Model and the final outcome(s) across the three Statutory Review Scenarios. Does the court actually have to do anything, such as make rulings, to affect policy outcomes?
- n. In the particular scenarios that we have evaluated, does the presence of a court with the power of judicial review move policy toward or away from the ideal point of the median voter in the legislature? Again, compare the final policy outcome from the Agency Policymaking Model without a court and the final outcome(s) across the three Statutory Review Scenarios with a court.
- o. Many people worry that judicial review is anti-democratic because judges are making policy instead of the people's elected representatives in the legislature. In this particular model of judicial review, should people be worried by the anti-democratic nature of judicial activism? Explain your answer.

Constitutions, the Provision of Rights, and Constitutional Courts

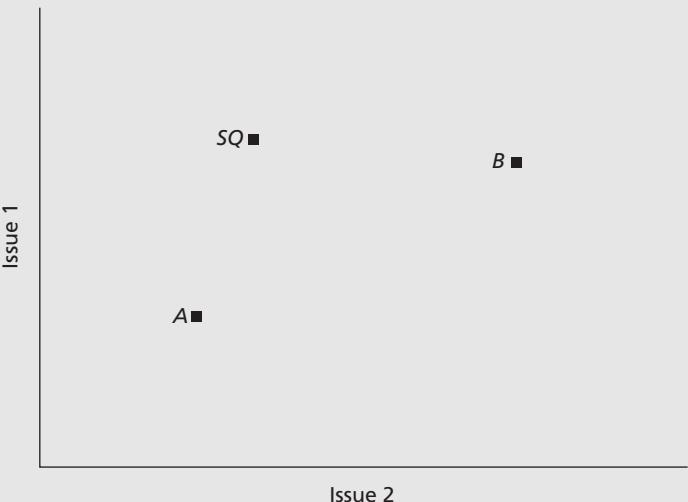
3. Use the "Constitution Finder" at the University of Richmond (<http://confinder.richmond.edu>) to find the constitutions from at least three countries. What rights are explicitly delineated in each constitution? What are the duties expected of citizens? What are the duties expected of the state?
4. Use the hyperlinks maintained by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe to find out more information about three constitutional or supreme courts around the world. For example, what is the composition of the courts? how are judges appointed? what is the competency of the court? how are decisions made? what are some of the recent decisions? (http://www.venice.coe.int/site/dynamics/N_court_links_ef.asp?L=E).

Veto Player Theory

5. In Figure 14.13, we have two veto players, A and B , who are located in a two-dimensional issue space. The status quo policy is given by the point SQ .

FIGURE 14.13

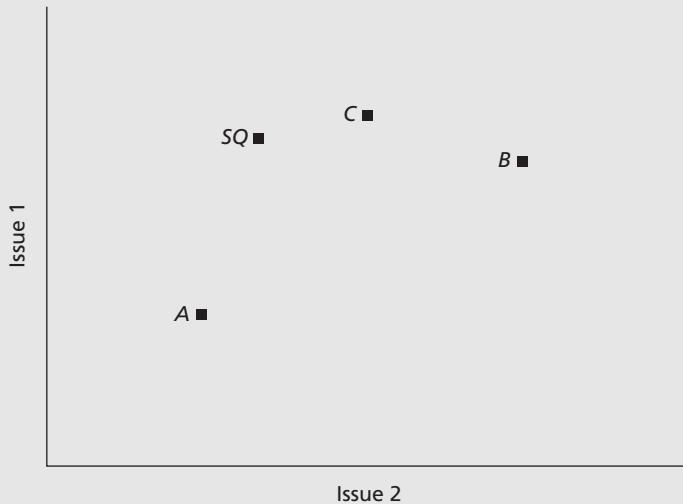
Two Veto Players



Note: SQ = a status quo policy; A , B = veto players.

- a. Using Figure 14.13, draw indifference curves for each veto player with respect to the status quo. Shade in the winset if there is one.
 - b. In your own words, describe what a winset is in the context of veto player theory.
6. In Figure 14.14, we have three veto players, A , B , and C , who are located in a two-dimensional issue space. The status quo policy is given by the point SQ .

FIGURE 14.14 Three Veto Players



Notes: SQ = a status quo policy; A, B, C = veto players.

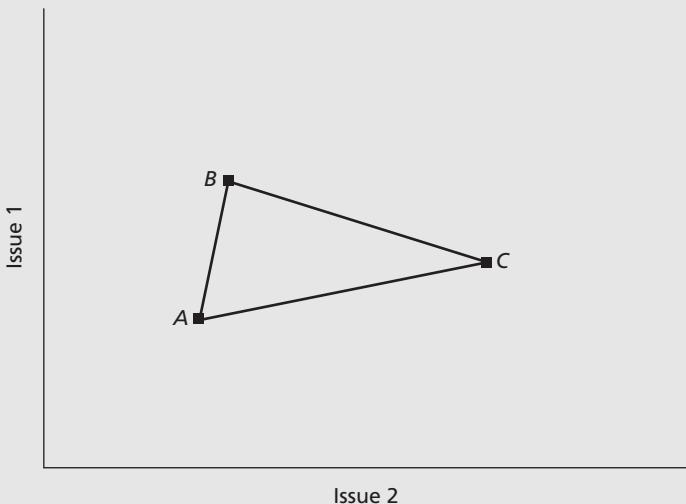
- a. Using Figure 14.14, draw indifference curves for each veto player with respect to the status quo. Shade in the winset if there is one.
- b. Is the winset in Figure 14.14 smaller than the winset in Figure 14.13? What does this mean for policy outcomes?
7. In the chapter, we argued that a central concept in veto player theory is the winset. Recall that in the context of veto player theory, the winset is the set of policy alternatives that would defeat the status quo in a pair-wise contest by unanimity rule. In fact, there is another important concept in veto player theory called the **unanimity core**. The unanimity core is the set of policy alternatives that cannot be defeated in a pair-wise contest by unanimity rule. In other words, the unanimity core can be thought of as a region of policy stability—if policy ever gets into the unanimity core, it cannot be moved. It turns out that the size of the unanimity core is directly related to the size of the winset. Specifically, whatever makes the winset smaller makes the unanimity core bigger. And whatever makes the winset bigger makes the unanimity core smaller. This means that all of the results from veto player theory that we presented in the chapter in the context of the winset can also be presented in the context of the unanimity core. For example, whereas policy stability is associated with having a small winset, it is associated with having a large unanimity core. The following questions examine veto player theory in the context of the unanimity core.

The **unanimity core** is the set of policy alternatives that cannot be defeated in a pair-wise contest under unanimity rule.

another important concept in veto player theory called the **unanimity core**. The unanimity core is the set of policy alternatives that cannot be

defeated in a pair-wise contest by unanimity rule. In other words, the unanimity core can be thought of as a region of policy stability—if policy ever gets into the unanimity core, it cannot be moved. It turns out that the size of the unanimity core is directly related to the size of the winset. Specifically, whatever makes the winset smaller makes the unanimity core bigger. And whatever makes the winset bigger makes the unanimity core smaller. This means that all of the results from veto player theory that we presented in the chapter in the context of the winset can also be presented in the context of the unanimity core. For example, whereas policy stability is associated with having a small winset, it is associated with having a large unanimity core. The following questions examine veto player theory in the context of the unanimity core.

Finding the unanimity core is relatively simple.²⁹ Imagine that the ideal points of the veto players are pins sticking up out of a board. If you were to wrap a piece of string around the outside of these pins, you would have located the unanimity core. For example, the unanimity core for the situation in Figure 14.15 is given by the triangle connecting the three veto players, A, B, and C.

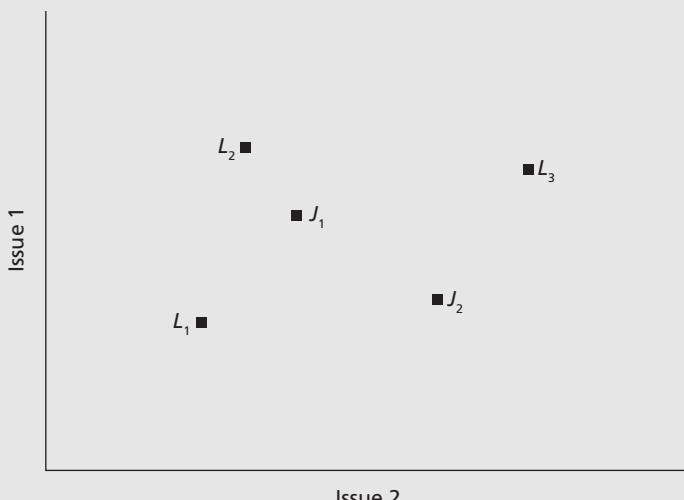
FIGURE 14.15**Illustrating the Unanimity Core**

Note: A, B, C = veto players; the triangle outlines the unanimity core.

- a. Demonstrate that a policy inside the unanimity core in Figure 14.15 *cannot* be defeated by an alternative policy in a pair-wise vote under unanimity rule. To do this, choose some point inside the triangle and label it the status quo. Now draw indifference curves for each veto player with respect to the status quo policy. Is there a winset? What does it mean if you find one? What does it mean if you do not find one?
- b. Now demonstrate that a policy outside the unanimity core in Figure 14.15 *can* be defeated by an alternative policy in a pair-wise vote under unanimity rule. To do this, choose some point outside the triangle and label it the status quo. Now draw indifference curves for each veto player with respect to the status quo policy. Is there a winset? What does it mean if you find one? What does it mean if you do not find one?

29. Note that another word for the “unanimity core” is the “Pareto set” (Tsebelis 2002, 21). The unanimity core, or Pareto set, is the “smallest set of points that contains all ideal points, and the line segments connecting them. These line segments . . . represent the boundaries of the set of possible unanimous agreements. . . . For points inside the Pareto set, any change makes at least one [veto player] worse off” (Hinich and Munger 1997, 61).

- c. What would happen to the size of the unanimity core if the ideal points of the veto players were further apart? What do you think the relationship is between the size of the unanimity core and policy stability? Why?
- d. Suppose that we were to add an additional veto player within the area captured by the triangle in Figure 14.15. Would the size of the unanimity core change? Explain your answer.
- e. Suppose that we were to add an additional veto player outside of the area captured by the triangle in Figure 14.15. Would the size of the unanimity core change?
- f. Based on your answers to questions (d) and (e), does increasing the number of veto players *always* increase policy stability by increasing the size of the unanimity core?
8. Imagine a set of institutional arrangements in which judges have the opportunity to make policy through their ability to interpret statutes. If the members of the legislature don't like the policy made by the judges, they can write new legislation to change it, effectively overruling the judiciary. In this scenario, the judge moves first and sets policy by interpreting the law. The legislature then moves and decides whether to change the law by overruling the judge. Consider the situation outlined in Figure 14.16, where we have three legislative veto players, L_1 , L_2 , and L_3 , located in a two-dimensional policy space. We are going to examine two scenarios with two different judges ruling on separate laws. The ideal points of the two judges are shown in Figure 14.16 as J_1 and J_2 .

FIGURE 14.16**Activist Judges with Agenda-Setting Power**

Note: L_1 , L_2 , L_3 = legislative veto players; J_1 , J_2 = judicial agenda setters.

- a. Draw the unanimity core for this situation.
- b. First consider judge J_1 . If she interprets statutes so that the new policy is exactly at her ideal point, will the legislative veto players be able to overturn it and move it anywhere else? If so, where could they move it? If not, why not? Where should judge J_1 set policy?
- c. Now consider judge J_2 . If she interprets statutes so that the new policy is exactly at her ideal point, will the legislative veto players be able to overturn it and move it anywhere else? If so, where could they move it? If not, why not? Where should judge J_2 set policy?
- d. What do you think would happen to the agenda-setting power of judges if the ideal points of the legislative veto players were further apart? What do you think the relationship is between the size of the unanimity core and the amount of discretion judicial activists can exercise over policy outcomes? Why?
- e. Based on your answers to question (d), do you think that we should expect to see more judicial activism in federal and bicameral countries or in unitary and unicameral ones? Why?

Box 14.6**CHECKS AND BALANCES IN 191 INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES**

Country	Unitary/federal	Unicameral/bicameral	System of constitutional justice
Afghanistan	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Albania	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Algeria	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Andorra	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Angola	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Antigua	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Argentina	Federal	Bicameral	American
Armenia	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Australia	Federal	Bicameral	Other
Austria	Federal	Bicameral	European
Azerbaijan	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Bahamas	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Bahrain	Unitary	Bicameral	Other
Bangladesh	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Barbados	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Belarus	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Belgium	Federal	Bicameral	European
Belize	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Benin	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Bhutan	Unitary	Bicameral	?
Bolivia	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Federal	Bicameral	European
Botswana	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Brazil	Federal	Bicameral	Mixed
Brunei	Unitary	No Legislature	Other
Bulgaria	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Burkina Faso	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Burma	Unitary	No Legislature	Other
Burundi	Unitary	Bicameral	European

Country	Unitary/federal	Unicameral/bicameral	System of constitutional justice
Cambodia	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Cameroon	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Canada	Federal	Bicameral	American
Cape Verde	Unitary	Unicameral	Mixed
Central African Republic	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Chad	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Chile	Unitary	Bicameral	European
China	Unitary	Unicameral	Other
Colombia	Unitary	Bicameral	Mixed
Comoros	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Congo (Brazzaville)	Unitary	Bicameral	Other
Congo (Kinshasa)	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Costa Rica	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Ivory Coast	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Croatia	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Cuba	Unitary	Unicameral	Other
Cyprus	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Czech Republic	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Denmark	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Djibouti	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Dominica	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Dominican Republic	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Ecuador	Unitary	Unicameral	Mixed
Egypt	Unitary	Bicameral	European
El Salvador	Unitary	Unicameral	Mixed
Equatorial Guinea	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Eritrea	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Estonia	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Ethiopia	Federal	Bicameral	Other
Fiji	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Finland	Unitary	Unicameral	Other

Box 14.6**CHECKS AND BALANCES IN 191 INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES
(continued)**

Country	Unitary/federal	Unicameral/bicameral	System of constitutional justice
France	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Gabon	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Gambia	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Georgia	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Germany	Federal	Bicameral	European
Ghana	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Greece	Unitary	Unicameral	Mixed
Grenada	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Guatemala	Unitary	Unicameral	Mixed
Guinea	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Guinea-Bissau	Unitary	Unicameral	Other
Guyana	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Haiti	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Honduras	Unitary	Bicameral	Mixed
Hungary	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Iceland	Unitary	Unicameral	European
India	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Indonesia	Unitary	Unicameral	Mixed
Iran	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Iraq	Unitary	Unicameral	?
Ireland	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Israel	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Italy	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Jamaica	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Japan	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Jordon	Unitary	Bicameral	Other
Kazakhstan	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Kenya	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Kiribati	Unitary	Unicameral	American

Country	Unitary/federal	Unicameral/bicameral	System of constitutional justice
Korea, North	Unitary	Unicameral	Other
Korea, South	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Kuwait	Unitary	Unicameral	Other
Kyrgyzstan	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Laos	Unitary	Unicameral	Other
Latvia	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Lebanon	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Lesotho	Unitary	Bicameral	None
Liberia	Unitary	Bicameral	None
Libya	Unitary	Unicameral	None
Liechtenstein	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Lithuania	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Luxembourg	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Macedonia	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Madagascar	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Malawi	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Malaysia	Federal	Bicameral	American
Maldives	Unitary	Unicameral	?
Mali	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Malta	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Marshall Islands	Unitary	Unicameral	?
Mauritania	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Mauritius	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Mexico	Federal	Bicameral	American
Micronesia	Federal	Unicameral	American
Moldova	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Mongolia	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Montenegro	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Morocco	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Mozambique	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Namibia	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Nauru	Unitary	Unicameral	American

Box 14.6**CHECKS AND BALANCES IN 191 INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES
(continued)**

Country	Unitary/federal	Unicameral/bicameral	System of constitutional justice
Nepal	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Netherlands	Unitary	Bicameral	None
New Zealand	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Nicaragua	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Niger	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Nigeria	Federal	Bicameral	American
Norway	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Oman	Unitary	Bicameral	Other
Pakistan	Unitary	Bicameral	Other
Palau	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Panama	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Papua New Guinea	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Paraguay	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Peru	Unitary	Unicameral	Mixed
Philippines	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Poland	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Portugal	Unitary	Unicameral	Mixed
Qatar	Unitary	Unicameral	?
Romania	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Russia	Federal	Bicameral	European
Rwanda	Unitary	Bicameral	European
St. Kitts & Nevis	Unitary	Unicameral	American
St. Lucia	Unitary	Bicameral	American
St. Vincent	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Samoa	Unitary	Unicameral	American
San Marino	Unitary	Unicameral	?
Sao Tomé et Principe	Unitary	Unicameral	Other
Saudi Arabia	Unitary	Unicameral	?
Senegal	Unitary	Bicameral	European

Country	Unitary/federal	Unicameral/bicameral	System of constitutional justice
Serbia	Federal	Unicameral	European
Seychelles	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Sierra Leone	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Singapore	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Slovakia	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Slovenia	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Solomon Islands	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Somalia	Unitary	Unicameral	?
South Africa	Federal	Bicameral	European?
Spain	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Sri Lanka	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Sudan	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Suriname	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Swaziland	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Sweden	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Switzerland	Federal	Bicameral	Mixed
Syria	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Taiwan	Unitary	Unicameral	Mixed
Tajikistan	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Tanzania	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Thailand	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Timor-Leste	Unitary	Unicameral	?
Togo	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Tonga	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Trinidad & Tobago	Unitary	Bicameral	American
Tunisia	Unitary	Bicameral	Other
Turkey	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Turkmenistan	Unitary	Unicameral	Other
Uganda	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Ukraine	Unitary	Unicameral	European
United Arab Emirates	Federal	Unicameral	?

Box 14.6**CHECKS AND BALANCES IN 191 INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES
(continued)**

Country	Unitary/federal	Unicameral/bicameral	System of constitutional justice
United Kingdom	Unitary	Bicameral	None
United States of America	Federal	Bicameral	American
Uruguay	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Uzbekistan	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Vanuatu	Unitary	Unicameral	American
Venezuela	Federal	Unicameral	Mixed
Vietnam	Unitary	Unicameral	Other
Yemen	Unitary	Bicameral	European
Zambia	Unitary	Unicameral	European
Zimbabwe	Unitary	Bicameral	Other

Source: Data on whether a country is unitary or federal are from Bednar (forthcoming). Data on whether a country employs a unicameral or bicameral legislature are from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008) at <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>. Data on the type of constitutional justice system employed by a country are from Dr. Arne Mavčič (<http://www.concourts.net/>).

Note: Unitary/federal data are for 2000; unicameral/bicameral legislature data are for 2007; constitutional justice system data are for 2004. The two main types of constitutional justice system are European and American; "Mixed" means some combination of the American and European models; "Other" means that the system of constitutional justice is unique or unclassifiable; "None" means that there are no mechanisms for constitutional review; and "?" means that the system is unknown according to the source.

CHAPTER 14

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CHAPTER

2

DOES DEMOCRACY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

**BY WILLIAM ROBERTS CLARK, MATT GOLDER AND SONA NADENICHECK
GOLDER**

Excerpted from William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, Sona Nadenichek Golder, PRINCIPLES OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS (Washington: DC, CQ Press, 2009), pp. 311-354.

Does Democracy Make a Difference?

A monarchy is the best kind of government because the King is the owner of the country. Like the owner of a house, when the wiring is wrong, he fixes it.

Italian peasant, quoted in Banfield and Banfield 1958, 26

In the terrible history of famines in the world, no substantial famine has ever occurred in any independent and democratic country with a relatively free press.

Amartya Sen, 1999

There can be no government without an army. No army without money. No money without prosperity. And no prosperity without justice and good administration.

Ibn Qutayba, ninth-century Muslim scholar

- We live in a world that tends to associate good outcomes with democracy and bad ones with dictatorships. In reality, the world is much more complex than this. Oftentimes, we have no compelling theoretical reason to expect that democracies will outperform dictatorships. Although the empirical evidence indicates that democracies tend to produce high levels of material well-being for their citizens, it also shows that they do not regularly outperform all dictatorships. In effect, some dictatorships perform quite well even though others perform extremely poorly. Classifying the world into democracies and dictatorships fails to explain the variation in the performance of dictatorships.
- Rather than categorize governments as either democratic or dictatorial, the Selectorate Theory characterizes all governments by their location in a two-dimensional institutional space. One dimension is the size of the

selectorate—those with a say in choosing the leader—and the second is the size of the winning coalition—those in the selectorate whose support is essential for the leader to stay in office.

- Leaders in systems with large winning coalitions and large selectorates—democracies—have incentives to produce public goods. These leaders produce good government performance—high levels of wealth, efficient governance, and low rates of corruption and kleptocracy.
- Leaders in systems with small winning coalitions and large selectorates—rigged-election dictatorships—have incentives to provide private rewards to their winning coalition. These leaders produce poor government performance—low levels of wealth, inefficient governance, and high levels of corruption and kleptocracy.
- Leaders in systems with small winning coalitions and small selectorates—monarchies and military juntas—produce middling levels of government performance.

In previous chapters, we examined how political scientists distinguish between democracies and dictatorships, we explored economic and cultural explanations for the emergence and survival of democracy, and we investigated the dynamics of regime transition. Now we ask whether it really matters whether someone lives in a democracy or a dictatorship. We live in a world that tends to associate good outcomes with democracy and bad ones with dictatorships. But is this an accurate reflection of the real world? Although there may be many important normative arguments to justify democracy—that it protects certain freedoms, that it is fairer, or that it is more just—we focus our attention in this chapter on whether democracy makes a *material* difference in people's lives. Are government policies better for the average citizen in a democracy or in a dictatorship? For example, do economies grow faster in democracies or dictatorships? Do people live longer in democracies? Are they healthier? Are they more educated? Are they wealthier? It turns out that the answers to these types of questions are not as straightforward as you might imagine. It is not at all obvious, for example, that democracies experience lower levels of child mortality than dictatorships (Ross 2006), or that democracies produce better economic growth (Przeworski and Limongi 1993).

In the first part of this chapter, we examine the effect of regime type on various aspects of government performance. We begin by looking closely at the competing arguments concerning the effect of democracy on economic growth. Some of these arguments suggest that democracies should produce higher growth than dictatorships do, but others suggest the exact opposite. In other words, political scientists do not, as yet, have a clear theoretical prediction as to whether or when democracies will economically outperform dictatorships. We then report somewhat inconclusive results from tests in which we investigate the effect of regime type on a variety of indicators of material well-being, such as wealth, infant mortality, life expectancy, and health care spending. Overall, the empirical evidence suggests that although democracy is often sufficient for ensuring a high level of citizen material well-being, it is certainly not necessary; some dictatorships perform at relatively high levels as well.

In the second part of this chapter, we present a theory—the Selectorate Theory—that is able to explain our empirical results (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). As we will demonstrate, this theory offers a potential explanation both for why democracies generally produce good government performance and for why some dictatorships perform better than others. According to the Selectorate Theory, though, the key to a country's material well-being has less to do with whether it is a democracy or dictatorship, and more to do with the size of what we refer to as a country's "winning coalition" and "selectorate." We will define these terms in more detail shortly. Once we start to think in terms of the size of the electorate and winning coalition, rather than in terms of regime type per se, it becomes a lot easier to explain why some countries promote better economic policies and provide more public goods than others.

THE EFFECT OF REGIME TYPE ON GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Before presenting the Selectorate Theory, we turn to a large body of research in comparative politics investigating the effects of regime type on government performance. This will give you a sense of what it is that we know about how democratic and authoritarian forms of government influence government performance. We begin by focusing on some of the theoretical arguments linking regime type and economic growth.

The Effect of Democracy on Economic Growth

Do democratic governments promote higher levels of economic growth than dictatorships? This question has generated an enormous literature in both political science and economics, but you'll perhaps be surprised to learn that there is, as yet, no strong consensus on what the answer is. Conflicting arguments abound. Some scholars suggest that democracy promotes economic growth (Barro 1989, 1990; North 1990; Olson 1991), some that it hinders it (de Schweinitz 1959; Galenson 1959; Huntington 1968; Huntington and Dominguez 1975), and some that it makes no difference (Sirowy and Inkeles 1991; Przeworski and Limongi 1993; Przeworski et al. 2000). Typically, theoretical arguments that attempt to link regime type to economic growth focus on three main factors: (a) the protection of property rights, (b) citizens' incentives to consume rather than invest, and (c) dictatorial autonomy. We look at all three in turn.

Property Rights

It is common today for scholars to argue that democracies will enjoy higher levels of economic growth than dictatorships because democracies are characterized by the rule of law and the protection of property rights (North and Thomas 1973; North 1990). According to these scholars, democracy places limits on the ability of governments to engage in the arbitrary seizure of private property. As a result, democracy encourages investment and, in turn, growth. In Chapter 6, one of the arguments for the emergence of democracy—or, at least,

limited government—focused on the role that democratic institutions can play in providing a credible commitment mechanism to asset holders who wish to invest in the economy but who worry that the government will later seize their investments. As you'll recall, we illustrated this argument by examining the emergence of limited government in England during the seventeenth century. Although the emergence of a democratic form of government in England at this time was not originally brought about with the specific intention of promoting economic growth, it does appear to have had precisely this effect. Indeed, the fact that England had a limited government in early modern Europe but France did not offers a potential explanation for why the English economy grew so much faster during this period than the French one. In effect, the causal logic of this “property rights” argument in favor of democracy is that democracy helps ensure the rule of law, that the rule of law then helps secure stable property rights, and that stable property rights then encourage growth-boosting investment (see Figure 9.1).

This argument might seem extremely convincing at first, but Barro (2000) presents evidence that only parts of the causal chain outlined in Figure 9.1 actually work in the real world. As predicted, Barro finds that the rule of law does significantly encourage economic growth when he examines data from roughly 100 countries between 1960 and 1995. Indeed,

FIGURE 9.1**Hypothesized Causal Path between Democracy and Economic Growth**

Democracy



Rule of law



Stable property rights



Investment



Growth

he claims that because a similar relationship exists between the rule of law and the ratio of investment to GDP, then “one route by which better rule of law promotes growth is by encouraging investment” (2000, 40). So far, everything seems good for the property rights argument linking democracy to economic growth. The problem, though, is that Barro does not find democracy to be strongly associated with the rule of law. In effect, the initial step in the causal chain linking democracy to economic growth appears to be missing.

As illustrated in Table 9.1, some countries score high on a rule of law index but poor on



Chee Soon Juan, leader of the Singapore Democratic Party, is arrested outside Singapore's presidential residence, May 1, 2002. Chee, an opposition politician and vocal government critic, was arrested shortly after addressing a small group of supporters and calling for free speech in Singapore.

an electoral rights (democracy) index.¹ These countries are typically run by dictators who promote property rights and a reliable legal system. Examples of such dictators include Augusto Pinochet in Chile (1973–1990), Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore (1959–1990), and Shah Mohammed Reze Pahlavi in Iran (1941–1979). It is perhaps important to note that the legal systems in these countries are reliable—meaning rules tend to be applied in a consistent manner—but not necessarily fair or just. Investors (especially international investors who, by definition, live outside the country), though, are typically more concerned with reliability than fairness. This is because reliable laws, whether fair or not, allow investors to make accurate predictions about their ability

to earn a return on their investments. In contrast to these countries, there are others, like Colombia, Israel, and Venezuela (1980s), and Bolivia, Honduras, and South Africa (1990s), that score high on the electoral rights index but poor on the rule of law index.² These countries are characterized by fairly advanced forms of electoral competition, but legal protection of property rights is largely absent.

1. Both indexes are compiled by a private firm (Political Risk Services) that monitors the investment climate in particular countries and sells their findings to international investors.

2. In some other countries, property rights are protected in some sectors of the economy but not in others. For example, Haber, Razo, and Maurer (2003) detail how the Mexican government between 1876 and 1929 failed to protect property rights in many sectors of the economy but did protect them in sectors in which the technology of production was sophisticated and in which the government relied on actors with high levels of human capital. In effect, the Mexican government protected property rights in those sectors of the economy in which it depended on actors who had credible exit threats. Haber, Razo, and Maurer go on to demonstrate that significant investment, industrial expansion, and economic growth occurred in precisely those sectors with protected property rights and that all of this occurred despite the tremendous social disorder and political instability that plagued Mexico during this period.

TABLE 9.1**Countries with Large Gaps between Rule of Law and Electoral Rights Indexes****a. High Rule of Law Relative to Electoral Rights in 1982**

Country	Rule of law index	Electoral rights index
Burkina Faso	0.50	0.00
Chile	0.83	0.17
Ethiopia	0.50	0.00
Guinea	0.50	0.00
Hong Kong	1.00	0.50
Hungary ^a	0.83	0.33
Myanmar (Burma)	0.50	0.00
Niger	0.67	0.00
Poland ^a	0.67	0.17
Singapore	1.00	0.50
Somalia	0.50	0.00
Taiwan	1.00	0.33

b. High Rule of Law Relative to Electoral Rights in 1998

Bahrain	0.83	0.00
Cameroon	0.50	0.00
China	0.83	0.00
Egypt	0.67	0.17
Gambia	0.83	0.00
Hong Kong	0.83	0.33
Iran	0.83	0.17
Kuwait	0.83	0.33
Malaysia	0.83	0.33
Morocco	1.00	0.33
Myanmar (Burma)	0.50	0.00
Oman	0.83	0.17
Saudi Arabia	0.83	0.00
Singapore	1.00	0.33
Syria	0.83	0.00
Tanzania	0.83	0.33
Tunisia	0.83	0.17
United Arab Emirates	0.67	0.17
Yugoslavia	0.83	0.17

a. Data are unavailable for 1982 and are shown for 1985.

TABLE 9.1**Countries with Large Gaps between Rule of Law and Electoral Rights Indexes (continued)****c. Low Rule of Law Relative to Electoral Rights in 1982**

Country	Rule of law index	Electoral rights index
Bolivia	0.17	0.83
Colombia	0.33	0.83
Cyprus ^a	0.33	1.00
Dominican Republic	0.50	1.00
Greece	0.50	1.00
Honduras	0.17	0.83
South Africa	0.50	1.00
Uruguay	0.50	1.00

Source: Barro (2000), from Political Risk Services.

Note: The indexes run from 0 to 1 with higher numbers indicating greater rule of law or greater electoral rights. The table shows observations for which the magnitude of the gap between the rule of law and electoral rights indexes was at least 0.5.

a. Data are unavailable for 1982 and are shown for 1985.

Barro's evidence indicates that breakdowns in the rule of law and the protection of property rights occur under both dictatorships and democracies. As a consequence, he concludes that "the electoral rights index has no predictive content for the rule of law index" and, therefore, that encouraging democracy on the grounds that it will lead to economic growth "sounds pleasant, but is simply false" (Barro 2000, 46, 47). Other scholars, however, disagree. For example, some have found that more democratic countries *are* more likely to protect property rights (Leblang 1996; Rigobon and Rodrik 2004) and, as a consequence, experience higher growth rates (Leblang 1996, 1997). The precise relationship between democracy and economic growth clearly remains a hotly contested issue.

One reason why the relationship between democracy and economic growth is not clear cut has to do with the fact that democratic governments appear to be more than capable of abrogating or abolishing property rights when they want. One explanation for why democracy might fail to protect property rights can be derived from an influential model of the size of government that political scientists refer to as the "Meltzer-Richard" model (Meltzer and Richard 1981). The model starts with a situation in which everyone in society is asked to pay a portion of his or her income as a tax (t). The government then takes this tax revenue and divides it equally among all members of society. Because government spending is divided equally among all members of society in this imaginary world but the amount of tax paid is a function of each individual's income, anyone with above-average income ends up paying above-average taxes and gets back government benefits equal only to those received by the

average taxpayer. As a result, any individual with below-average income in this society stands to be a net beneficiary of the tax system; in contrast, anyone with above-average income stands to be a net contributor to the tax system.³ Because the Meltzer-Richard model assumes a balanced budget, the amount of redistribution a government can engage in is constrained by the amount of taxes it can raise. As a result, individuals who stand to be net recipients of the government's "tax and transfer system" will prefer high taxes (and the ensuing high transfers), whereas individuals who are net contributors to the system will prefer low taxes and few transfers.

In a market economy, income is likely to be tied to productivity. Highly productive individuals have high incomes and less productive individuals have low incomes. Consequently, people's preferred tax rate is related to their level of productivity in a manner similar to that shown in Figure 9.2. If their level of productivity is extremely low (say, below x_0), then they

FIGURE 9.2

Individual Productivity and Desired Tax Rate according to the Meltzer-Richard Model


Note: x = an individual's level of productivity; \bar{x} = the average level of individual productivity in society. Individuals with a productivity level below x_0 will choose not to work and to live entirely on government transfers. t = an individual's desired tax rate; t_{\max} = the maximum desired tax rate.

3. Note that redistribution from the "rich" to the "poor" occurs in this society despite the fact that government spending is not targeted toward the poor and that both the poor and rich pay exactly the same tax rate. "Means tested" welfare programs that restrict access to government benefits to low-income families (such as food stamp programs in the United States) and "progressive" income tax systems that apply higher tax rates to rich people than poor people would make the system even more "redistributive." All that is necessary to make a system redistributive, though, is to have the total tax paid by each person be an increasing function of income while making benefits independent of income.

choose not to work at all and they survive purely on government transfers. As a result, individuals in this category have a preferred level of taxation that is uniformly high (t_{\max}). In contrast, individuals whose level of productivity is above the societal average (\bar{x}) and, hence, have an above-average income, pay more taxes than the average citizen but receive only the societal average of government transfers. As a result, such individuals are net contributors to the tax and transfer system and prefer a tax rate of zero. Between these two groups are individuals with productivity levels that are somewhat high but below the societal average. Because these individuals are net beneficiaries of the tax and transfer system, they prefer a non-zero tax rate. The precise level of their desired tax rate (on the downward sloping line), however, depends on the distance between their productivity level and the societal average. Those with productivity rates very close to the societal average want tax rates close to zero, because they expect to benefit only slightly from the tax and transfer system, whereas those with low productivity rates want tax rates almost as high as do individuals that have left the labor market altogether, because they expect to benefit from the tax and transfer system a lot.

So far, we have used the Meltzer-Richard model to explain why some individuals might prefer a higher tax rate than others. In order to make predictions about what the tax rate will be, however, we need to say something about how policy is actually chosen. In general, democracies tend to represent the interests of a wider portion of society than dictatorships. This means that the interests of poor (low-productivity) people are given more effective representation in democracies than in dictatorships. If we assume that dictatorships make tax policy to reflect the preferences of individuals with above-average incomes but that democracies make tax policy to reflect the preferences of individuals with below-average incomes, then a change from autocracy to democracy can be expected to lead to an increase in the level of taxation and, therefore, an increase in the amount of redistribution from the rich to the poor. Indeed, this increase in the level of taxation and redistribution when countries transition to democracy is likely to be quite large if there is widespread inequality in society.

How might this affect economic growth? Well, consider that potential investors—in this story, the rich—are always deciding whether to consume (spend) their after-tax income or invest it. If they think that the tax rate is too high, then they will prefer to consume rather than invest. In the absence of investment, economic growth can be expected to grind to a halt. Although democracy might be expected to offer property owners protection against seizures by the state, the Meltzer-Richards model illustrates that democracy introduces the possibility that the poor will seize the property of the rich through a redistributive tax scheme. When left-wing parties come to power in democracies promising to “expropriate” the rich—take their wealth and redistribute it to the poor—wealthy citizens often feel threatened and sometimes call on the military to step in and protect their property rights. This is a story commonly told about right-wing military coups that toppled left-wing democratic regimes in Latin American countries, such as Argentina (1976), Chile (1973), and Guatemala (1954) (O’Donnell 1973; Stepan 1985; Drake 1996). The same theme can be found in the writings of the political elites setting up the American democracy in the late eighteenth century

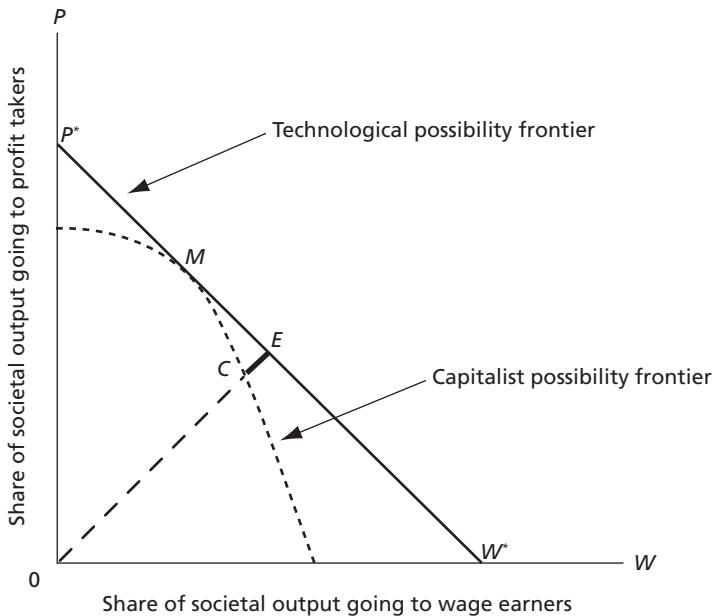
(Roemer 1998). Why else did the founding fathers extend the suffrage only to male property holders and spend so long trying to write a constitution that protected property?⁴

There are, however, two criticisms of the Meltzer-Richard model. Both of these criticisms suggest that the model may overstate the extent to which democratic politics will lead to large-scale redistribution and, therefore, to growth-reducing disinvestment. First, it is well known that political participation in democracies is inversely related to income; poor people are much less likely to vote than rich people (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Leighley and Nagler 1992a, 1992b; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Blais 2000). As a result, it is possible that, in reality, democracies implement tax and transfer policies that are not very different from the policies adopted in dictatorships. In fact, if the “decisive” voter in both systems has a level of productivity (and, therefore, income) higher than the societal average (\bar{x}), then there should be no difference in the tax and transfer system between the two regimes types.

The second criticism of the Meltzer-Richard model is related to a famous Marxist argument that highlights what political scientists call the “structural dependence of the state on capital” (Block 1977; Lindblom 1977; Przeworski and Wallerstein 1988). The important insight from this Marxist theory is clearly seen with the help of a model by Przeworski (1991, 9–10). The model starts with an economy comprising two groups: one group (P) derives its income from profits; the other group (W) derives it from wages. For any given level of technological development in society, there is a maximum level of output that the economy is capable of producing. We might think that the fruits of this output can be divided between profit takers and wage earners in any number of ways. The downward-sloping line in Figure 9.3 represents all of the feasible ways we could divide society’s maximum output between profit takers and wage earners. At P^* , the profit takers receive all of the output and the wage earners receive nothing. At W^* , the wage earners receive all of the output and the profit takers receive nothing. In between these two points, there is a continuum of distributional possibilities that includes the perfectly egalitarian distribution (E), in which the profit takers and wage earners each receive half of society’s maximum potential output. Political scientists sometimes refer to this downward-sloping line as the “technological possibility frontier” because it represents all the different divisions of what it is possible for society to technologically produce.

As just mentioned, there is a maximum level of output that an economy is capable of producing. It turns out that this level of output can be achieved only if profit takers and wage earners efficiently invest their resources—their capital and labor—in the economy. As we’ll show, this will happen only if profit takers and wage earners receive a particular division of societal output whereby each group receives the entire return on the investments they make. In other words, only one of the points or divisions on the technological possibility frontier is actually consistent with the economy’s producing the maximum that it is capable of pro-

4. Several political scientists have applied the basic argument of the Meltzer-Richard model to claim that economic inequality undermines the prospects for stable democracy (Huntington 1993; Acemoglu and Robinson 2000, 2001, 2006; Rosendorff 2001; Boix 2003; Dunning 2006). The logic of the claim is that as inequality rises, the poor become more likely to vote to expropriate the rich, and as a result the rich become more likely to try to undermine democracy to prevent this from happening.

FIGURE 9.3**The Potential Trade-off between Growth and Equality**

ducing. In Figure 9.3, this is point M . Because M is on the technological possibility frontier to the left of the egalitarian point (E) in this specific society, we are assuming that, in line with much of historical experience, profit takers will receive more of society's maximum output than wage earners.⁵ But why, you might wonder, is there only one division of societal output between profit takers and wage earners that maximizes total economic output? Why wouldn't any of the other possible divisions on the technological possibility frontier also maximize output?

The answer to this question has to do with the fact that individuals in a capitalist economy always have a choice about how to allocate their resources. For example, profit takers are always comparing what they could get from investing their capital against the enjoyment they could get from simply consuming it. Similarly, wage earners are always comparing what they could get from an additional hour's work against the value they place on an

5. The precise position of point M on the technological possibility frontier depends on the relative rate of return on capital and labor. If the rate of return on capital is larger than the rate of return on labor, then the division of societal output will benefit capital and be on the technological possibility frontier to the left of the egalitarian point (E); if the rate of return on labor is greater, then the division of societal output will benefit labor and be to the right of the egalitarian point. What do we mean by "rate of return"? In everyday language, the rate of return on an investment is just the ratio of money gained on an investment relative to the amount of money invested. If capital and labor were measured in the same units, then the relative rate of return on capital would be higher than that on labor if one unit of capital produced more than one unit of labor.

additional hour of leisure. If profit takers or wage earners ever receive less than their entire return on their capital or labor investments—perhaps because the government taxes them—then profit takers will start consuming more of their capital rather than investing it and wage earners will start taking more leisure time rather than working. As a result, society's resources will be underutilized and there will be a decline in societal output away from what is technologically possible. The logic here leads to what we might call a “capitalism possibility frontier”—the curved line in Figure 9.3—that is entirely inside the technological possibility frontier except for the point at which capital and labor receive the entire return on their investments (M). In other words, a capitalist economy will always produce less than is technologically possible unless profit takers and wage earners divide societal output between them in a manner indicated by point M .

To help illustrate how the model works, imagine a society in which the tax and transfer system has historically been controlled by an autocratic government representing the interests of profit takers. Over time and through experience, the autocratic government has discovered that societal output is maximized by returning a larger share of society's product to the profit takers than to the wage earners. Recall that this is point M in Figure 9.3. Now, imagine that the autocratic government is replaced by a democratic one in which there are at least as many wage earners as profit takers. This change in regime would, presumably, put pressure on the government to use its tax and transfer system to redistribute wealth in a more egalitarian fashion—say, to a point like E . So far, the predicted effect of a shift to democracy is essentially the same as that generated by the Meltzer-Richard model that we examined earlier—there will be pressure for redistribution.

But note, now, what happens if the government actually uses its tax and transfer capability in this way. Because profit takers are no longer receiving the full value of their investments, they will begin to remove their capital assets from the economy, either by consuming them or by shifting them to a different economy—a process known as “capital flight.” As a result, societal output will decline from point E on the technological possibility frontier to point C on the capitalist possibility frontier that is associated with the new egalitarian distribution of income. The distance between points E and C (the short boldface line in Figure 9.3) constitutes the cost in lost societal output that results from the redistributive policy. In effect, Przeworski's model illustrates that there is a potential trade-off between equality and growth—increased equality can be obtained only by accepting reduced economic growth.

Structural Marxists argue that governments will recognize this trade-off and choose to promote growth over equality. They argue that whether the government is controlled by capitalists or by workers, the fact that resource allocation decisions are in the hands of private individuals in a capitalist economy means that policies will be adopted that protect the interests of the capitalist class. As Fred Block (1977, 15) notes,

Those who manage the state apparatus—regardless of their own political ideology—are dependent on the maintenance of some reasonable level of economic activity. This is true for two reasons. First, the capacity of the state to finance itself through taxation or borrowing depends on the state of the economy. If economic activity is in decline,

the state will have difficulty maintaining its revenues at an adequate level. Second, public support for a regime will decline sharply if the regime presides over a serious drop in the level of economic activity, with a parallel rise in unemployment and shortages of key goods. Such a drop in support increases the likelihood that the state managers will be removed from power one way or another.

In other words, even if the tax and transfer system comes under the control of actors who want to increase redistribution from profit takers to wage earners, either for ideological reasons or simply because they think it politically expedient, they probably will not introduce such a redistributive scheme in practice. This is because they recognize that they will pay a large price in the form of (a) reduced societal output and, therefore, a smaller tax base in the future and (b) increased unemployment and, hence, increased opposition, for doing so. Ironically, the very people redistribution is supposed to help—the poor—are most likely to suffer first from any economic downturn because the least productive members in society are likely to be the first to become unemployed (Hibbs 1987). As a result, structural Marxists argue that strongly redistributive tax and transfer systems are likely to be self-defeating—they hurt those they are intended to help—and that the political benefits of such policies will be fleeting—state managers are likely to be punished for causing an economic downturn. In this sense, capitalists “have a veto over state policies in that their failure to invest at adequate levels can create major political problems for the state managers” (Block 1977, 15). It is precisely for this reason that some political scientists talk of the “**structural dependence of the state on capital**” (Przeworski and Wallerstein 1988). If structural Marxists are correct, then a change in “who governs” is not likely to have much of an effect on the tax and transfer system. Consequently, a change from dictatorship to democracy will *not* have the negative effect on economic growth suggested by the Meltzer-Richard model discussed earlier.

It is important to recognize that the predictions we have drawn from Przeworski’s model depend on many implicit assumptions that may or may not be satisfied in any given situation. The first, and least problematic, assumption is that the distribution that maximizes societal output (M) returns a larger share of society’s product to the profit takers than to the wage earners. Recall that it was this assumption that led us to place point M on the technological possibility frontier to the left of the egalitarian point in Figure 9.3. Historical experience tells us that this is probably a reasonable assumption. What happens, however, if the reverse is true and the distribution that maximizes societal output returns a larger share of society’s product to the wage earners rather than the profit takers? In other words, what happens if point M is to the right of the egalitarian point? Well, it turns out that any attempt to reach a more egalitarian distribution from this point would still result in a decline in societal output. The difference is that the decline would now occur because workers choose to work less and not because capitalists decide to disinvest. In effect, we would be talking about the structural dependence of the state on labor in this scenario. The bottom line, though, is

The **structural dependence of the state on capital** is a theory suggesting that capitalists have a veto over state policies in that their failure to invest at adequate levels can create major problems for the state managers.

that there would be a drop in societal output and, as a result, there would be similar incentives not to implement a redistributive tax and transfer system; the potential trade-off between equality and growth remains.

The second assumption concerns the expected effect of capital flight on the amount of societal output going to wage earners. Although aggressive redistribution by wage earners in a democracy will reduce societal output, it is important to remember that wage earners will get a larger (more egalitarian) share of the “smaller” economic pie as a result of increased government transfers. Thus, there may be conditions under which wage earners are better off pushing for redistribution rather than opposing it. Ultimately, aggressive redistribution will be deterred only if the threat of capital flight by profit takers is sufficiently large to shrink societal output to such an extent that wage earners end up worse off than if there were no redistribution. Whether this is the case depends on the alternatives that capitalists have. For example, if it is relatively easy for capitalists to direct their resources away from investment into consumption or from domestic investment into foreign investment, then aggressive redistribution is likely to result in a sharp and immediate economic decline that hurts wage earners. Thus, democracy is less likely to lead to aggressive redistribution and, hence, lower economic growth when the capitalists that influence the economy have what we referred to in Chapters 3 and 6 as “credible exit threats.”⁶ In contrast, democracy is much more likely to lead to aggressive redistribution when there are constraints on international capital markets or when immobile asset holders dominate the economy. When capital markets are constrained or immobile asset holders dominate, the poor are relatively free to redistribute wealth from the rich to themselves, safe in the knowledge that it is hard for the rich to remove their assets from the economy. Evidence in support of this claim can be seen in the rapid expansion of redistributive tax and transfer systems that occurred when international capital markets collapsed between 1918 and 1939, and in the aggressive redistribution that occurs in a whole range of countries (the Persian Gulf states, Norway, Venezuela, and so on) whose economies are dominated by the “immobile” oil sector.

To this point, we have shown that any movement away from a distribution of resources that maximizes societal output (M) toward a more egalitarian division results in a reduction in output. We should note that *any* movement from point M , whether toward a more equal division of resources or a more unequal one, leads to a decline in output. For example, allocating a greater share of resources to profit takers—moving from M toward P^* in Figure 9.3—also leads to a decline in societal output. This is because workers no longer receive their full return on

6. As we noted earlier, many political scientists have argued that economic inequality undermines democratic stability. The idea is that as inequality rises, the poor become more likely to vote to expropriate the rich and, as a result, the rich become more likely to try to undermine democracy to prevent this from happening. It is worth noting that the argument that we have just presented indicates that inequality does not necessarily have a negative effect on democratic stability in all situations. Even in highly unequal societies, the poor may have few incentives to vote for the expropriation of the rich if they recognize that doing so will lead to capital flight, economic decline, and a worsening of their own situation. Given this, the rich may decide that there is no need to block or undermine democracy. In effect, our argument suggests that economic inequality should only harm the prospects for democracy in those countries where capitalist elites do not have sufficiently credible exit threats.

Box 9.1**AESOP'S FABLE****The Goose with the Golden Eggs**

"One day a countryman going to the nest of his Goose found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But he took it home on second thoughts, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find nothing." (www.aesopfables.com)

their labor and, therefore, decide to consume more leisure rather than work. At a certain point, this may even be involuntary—workers who receive less than subsistence will be too sick or malnourished to work. The Nobel Prize-winning economic historian Robert Fogel (2004) estimates that, throughout most of human history, the average person consumed enough food to work for only about two hours a day. As a result, even dictators are likely to try to move the distribution of societal output toward M , lest they “kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.”

In conclusion, tracing a link between democracy and economic growth through the protection of property rights and the rule of law is extremely difficult. The basic problem is that although effective property rights and the rule of law appear to promote economic growth, it is not at all clear that democracies are better at protecting property rights or implementing the rule of law than dictatorships. As a result, it is extremely difficult to tell a compelling story about the effect of regime type on economic growth if the causal mechanism has to do with the protection of property rights. On the one hand, does the state itself or do the poor pose the more important threat to investment and production? If it is the state, then democracies (in which the predatory powers of the state are limited) should experience higher economic growth. If it is the ability of the poor to expropriate the rich through a redistributive tax scheme, then dictatorships should experience higher economic growth. On the other hand, if the structural Marxists are correct and state managers—whatever their ideological stripe—are able to figure out that tax and transfer systems that produce income distributions that fail to maximize societal output are self-defeating, then who rules—democrats or dictators, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat—will have little effect on the amount of redistribution in society, and, therefore, little effect (at least by the mechanism presently under consideration) on economic growth.

Consumption versus Investment

A second argument linking regime type and economic growth is based on the claim that democracy encourages workers to consume their assets immediately rather than invest them (de Schweinitz 1959; Galenson 1959). As a result of this consumption, democracies are expected to produce poor economic growth. Note that this story is different from the previ-

Box 9.2**CONSUMPTION VERSUS INVESTMENT****The Trade-off**

For the sake of argument, let's say a potential investor has 100 units of after-tax income. Should she consume it immediately or invest it? If she consumes it, she can consume all of it. If she invests it, it may grow and she will have more to consume in the future. Let's assume that she is confident that the return on her investment will be 10 percent per year. Her choice between consumption and investment, therefore, comes down to a choice between consuming 100 units this year or 110 units next year. Clearly 110 units are better than 100 units, but most people "discount" the future. That is, 100 units of consumption today is typically better than waiting a year to consume the same 100 units. Whether 100 units today will be better than 110 units a year from now, however, will depend on a person's discount factor. Suppose, for example, that a person thinks that 105 units next year is as good as 100 units today. Given the choice between consuming today or investing with an expected return of 10 percent, the person will choose to invest. This is because if the person believes that 105 units next year is as good as 100 units today, then she must think that 110 units next year is *better* than 100 units today. Now, imagine that the government imposes a 55 percent tax on any profits that come from investments. This means that 5.5 units of the 10-unit profit that she expects to make from investing will have to be given to the government. As a result, investing 100 units today will allow her to walk away with only 104.5 units next year. Suddenly, consuming today is preferred to investing.

ous argument in that we are now talking about investment by workers rather than investment by economic elites. The claim is that poor people (workers) tend to consume rather than invest. The intuition is that the poor cannot afford to direct their assets away from immediate consumption—they need to eat and pay the rent today—toward investment for the future. When workers can organize by forming political parties or trade unions, as they can in democracies, they have the ability to drive wages up, thereby reducing profits for business owners and, hence, overall investment. Because workers can vote in democracies, the government also has incentives to direct money toward them and away from investment in the economy, thereby slowing economic growth even further. If democratic governments fail to do this and instead promote saving and investment too heavily, they will likely be voted out of office. In contrast, if dictators are future oriented—they care about the future—then they can use their power to force people to save, thereby launching economic growth. As Rao (1984, 75) puts it,

Economic development is a process for which huge investments in personnel and material are required. Such investment programs imply cuts in current consumption that would be painful at the low levels of living that exist in almost all developing societies. Governments must resort to strong measures and they must enforce them with an iron hand in order to marshal the surpluses needed for investment. If such measures were put to a popular vote, they would surely be defeated. No political party can hope to win a democratic election on a platform of current sacrifices for a *bright future*. (Rao's italics)

As you may have noticed, a lot of implicit assumptions underpin this story. For example, it is assumed that the poor have a higher propensity to consume than the rich and that economic growth is primarily driven by capital investment. Even if we were to accept these assumptions, it still does not follow that dictatorships will produce better economic growth than democracies unless we happen to also assume that dictators care more about the future than democratic leaders. But why would this necessarily be the case? In effect, without a clear set of expectations about the incentives and constraints facing both democratic leaders and dictators, it is difficult to tell a compelling story about how each will behave. As a result, this second argument also fails to provide clear predictions about whether democracies or dictatorships will produce higher economic growth.

Autonomy from Special Interests

A third argument linking regime type and economic growth has to do with the claim that dictators are not subjected to as many pressures from special interests as democratic leaders. This claim is based on the intuition that democratic leaders are more heavily influenced by special interests because they can so easily be voted out of office if they fail to retain the political and financial support of powerful interest groups. Unfortunately, some political scientists use the claim that dictators enjoy more autonomy from special interests than democratic leaders do in order to argue that dictatorships are better for economic growth, and some use it to argue the exact opposite, that is, that dictatorships are worse for growth.

One story states that because dictators are insulated from the pressures of interest groups (both business and labor), they do not need to spend money in an inefficient manner to keep various electoral constituencies happy. In effect, dictators have the ability to make difficult short-term policy decisions that will have good long-term effects on the economy. As a result, dictatorships will produce better economic growth than democracies. We hope you have noticed the key assumption behind this story—the dictator *chooses* to promote economic growth. But why would the dictator necessarily choose to do this? As long as the dictator is satisfied with his own share of the annual revenue, why should the national level of economic growth matter? Do you think it is reasonable to assume that dictators are necessarily benevolent and that they behave in the national interest?

The second story basically states that dictators who are autonomous and insulated from pressure groups will be able to behave in a predatory way because there is no one to constrain their behavior. As a result, economic elites will be less likely to invest and continue to produce because they will be worried that a predatory dictator will confiscate all of their wealth and profits. Given the lack of investment, economic growth is expected to be low. Political scientists who make this type of argument go one step further and claim that economic growth will be lower in dictatorships than in democracies. As you'll quickly realize, the implicit assumption necessary to make this final leap is that democracies protect property rights (limit state predation) better than dictatorships. We have already seen from our earlier discussion of economic growth and property rights, however, that this assumption is extremely hard to defend from both a theoretical and empirical point of view.

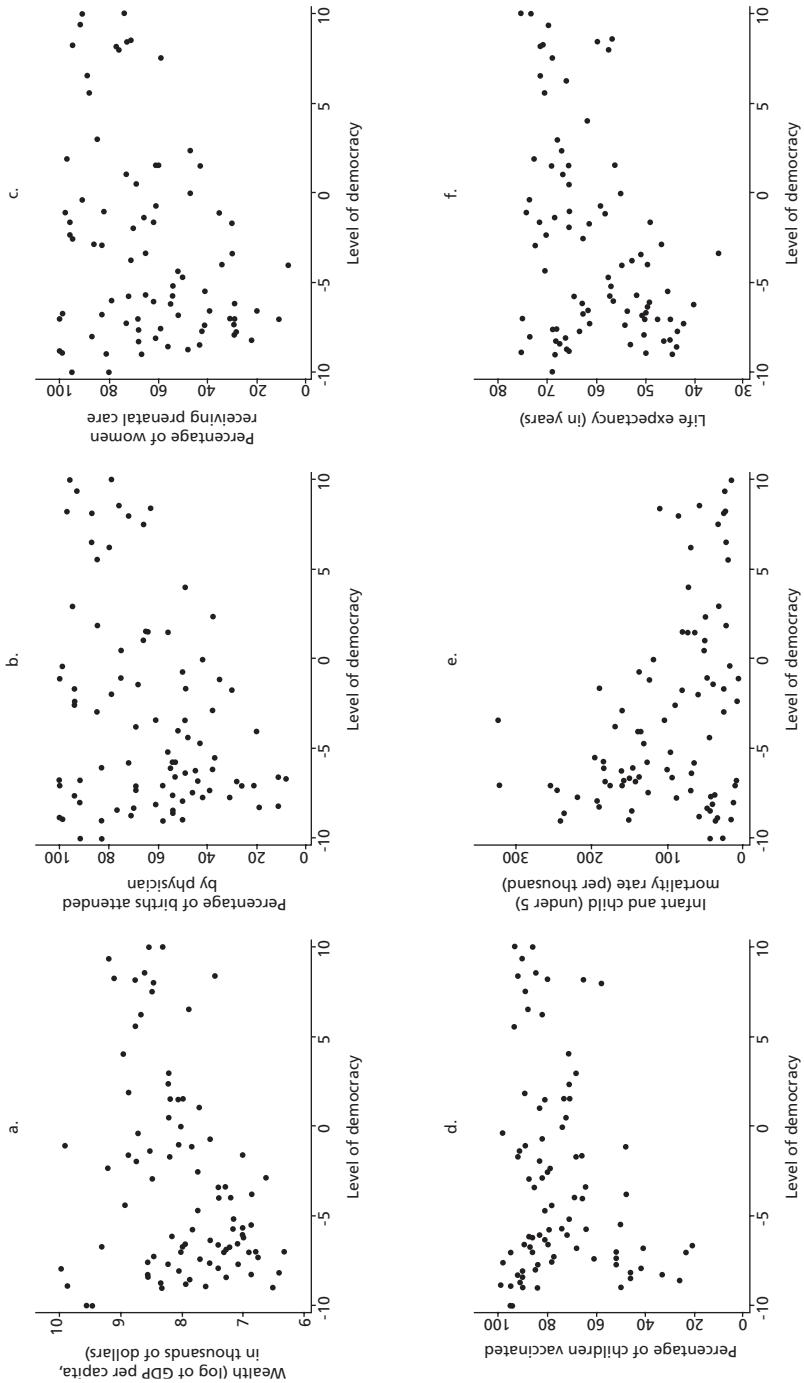
We suspect that you have not found the various causal arguments that we have presented linking regime type and economic growth entirely convincing. You almost certainly have noticed that they reach quite different predictions. But what does the empirical evidence say? Do democracies or dictatorships produce higher economic growth in the real world? In an overview of eighteen different studies (with twenty-one different findings in total) examining the effect of regime type on economic growth, Przeworski and Limongi (1993) report that eight find that dictatorships grow faster, eight find that democracies grow faster, and five find that regime type has no effect on growth. They conclude that “we do not know whether democracy fosters or hinders economic growth.... Our own hunch is that politics does matter, but ‘*regimes*’ do not capture the relevant differences” (65; italics added). Before looking further at how politics might matter for things like economic growth, we turn briefly to some data on other indicators of material well-being that should shed some light on how well different regimes perform.

Empirical Evidence of the Effect of Democracy on Government Performance

How does a country’s level of democracy affect the material well-being of its citizens? In Figure 9.4, we show how the average level of democracy in eighty-eight countries between 1960 and 1990 is associated with six different indicators of material well-being: (a) wealth as measured by GDP per capita, (b) the percentage of births attended by a physician, (c) the percentage of pregnant women receiving prenatal care, (d) the percentage of infants and children receiving vaccinations, (e) infant and child (under five years of age) mortality rates per thousand, and (f) life expectancy as measured in years. Given that we are interested in how the *level* of democracy influences material well-being, we employ Polity IV’s continuous measure of democracy in our plots (Marshall and Jagers 2003). As you will recall from our discussion of democracy measures in Chapter 5, Polity IV codes a country’s level of democracy on a scale that ranges from –10 (most dictatorial) to +10 (most democratic). Data on the various indicators of material well-being come from McGuire (2002).

Before examining the information in Figure 9.4, let’s first stop to think about what relationship we would expect to find between a country’s level of democracy and material well-being. Several theories of regime type suggest that democracies are better than dictatorships at improving the material well-being of their citizens, especially that of their poorest citizens—the people who, arguably, need government assistance the most. One idea is that the poor are able to vote leaders out of office in a democracy if their political leaders do not implement policies aimed at improving their situation. As a result, democratic leaders have an incentive to help the poor. A second idea has to do with the fact that democratic regimes are typically characterized by a greater freedom of the press than dictatorships (Sen 1981, 1999). This means that democratic governments—and their electorates—are more likely to be aware of the serious problems faced by the poor in the first place. Thus, democratic governments are in a position to act to alleviate the problems, and the electorate are in a position to evaluate these efforts. In contrast, dictatorships are more likely to be able to censor embarrassing new stories. For example, it seems reasonable to think that a dictatorship might well have tried to suppress the diffusion of the shocking images that were broadcast from New Orleans in the wake of hurricane Katrina in the

FIGURE 9.4 | The Effect of Democracy on Various Indicators of Material Well-Being



Note: The x-axes measure a country's average level of democracy from 1960 to 1990 as coded by Polity IV. The measure ranges from -10 (most dictatorial) to +10 (most democratic). The y-axes vary by graph.

United States in 2005. The third idea is simply that democratic leaders provide more public goods and more redistribution from the rich to the poor than dictators. Some argue that democratic leaders do this because they expect it to help them win elections and stay in power (McGuire and Olson 1996; Lake and Baum 2001). Others argue that they do this because democratic governments have a broader range of supporters to appease, which creates incentives for democratic leaders to produce public, rather than private, goods (Ghorbarah, Huth, and Russett 2004).⁷ If any of these arguments are correct, then we should see a clear trend in the data showing that government performance is better when countries are more democratic.

A first glance at the information in Figure 9.4 might lead one to think that there is very little relationship between democracy and the various indicators of material well-being. Notice, however, the “triangular” nature of the data in each of the plots. This feature of the data indicates an interesting asymmetry suggesting that although democracies seldom perform poorly in terms of these indicators of material well-being, they frequently fail to outperform a substantial number of dictatorships. Put differently, although it appears that dictatorships often produce outcomes that are substantially worse than most democracies, some



Veiled students at computers in the library of the Zayed University in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, March 5, 2005.

seem to perform every bit as well as democracies. In other words, democracy appears to be *sufficient* for ensuring some degree of success in these various areas of material well-being, but it is obviously not *necessary* for success.

Triangular data like that seen in Figure 9.4 are often a sign that the variables being captured are related through a process of complex causation. In this case, they suggest that there is greater variability in the performance of dictatorships than in that of democracies. As a result, attempts to gauge the differences in performance between de-

mocracies and dictatorships that fail to take account of the variation *among* dictatorships are likely to be misleading at best and wrong at worst. Making sense of the variability in performance among dictatorships, therefore, is crucial if we are to get a clear picture of the effects of democracy on material well-being. That said, it will not do to just remove the high-performing dictatorships, declare them “different,” and estimate the difference in performance between democracies and the remaining dictatorships in an attempt to confirm our prejudices about

7. Some have argued, however, that even if democracies do redistribute at higher levels than dictatorships, and even if democracies do provide more public goods than dictatorships, these policies are not necessarily directed *at the poor*; rather, they are directed at the middle class (Ross 2006).

bad dictatorial performance. Instead, it is important to understand *why* some dictatorships perform poorly and some do not.⁸

Thus far, we have seen contradictory theoretical and empirical evidence suggesting that we don't really know if, how, or why regime type matters for economic growth or a host of other political outcomes that we generally think are important for ensuring a good quality of life. Does this mean that political institutions such as regime type have no effect on policy and outcomes? We believe that this is too quick and too pessimistic a conclusion to draw. As we are about to demonstrate, political institutions do, in fact, matter a great deal for determining the type of performance that governments have incentives to provide. Institutions do matter for government performance, but you will see that thinking about the world in terms of democracies and dictatorships is not always the most useful approach to explaining how or why. In the next section, we lay out a theory—the Selectorate Theory—that clearly links institutions with governmental performance.

SELECTORATE THEORY

The basic assumption underpinning Selectorate Theory is that all political leaders, whether of democracies or dictatorships, are motivated by the desire to gain and maintain office. Of course, political leaders may have other goals as well, such as implementing particular policies or helping certain groups in society. Although the Selectorate Theory does not deny this, it argues that the competitive nature of politics forces leaders in all regimes to at least behave “as if” they desire to gain and maintain office. Political actors who fail to exert effort on gaining and retaining power are likely to be replaced by competitors who do exert such effort. Knowing that they can achieve whatever goals that motivate them only if they win, all political leaders are, therefore, forced to act as if they care about gaining and maintaining office even if this is not their primary motivation. It turns out that a large proportion of a leader's systematic behavior can be understood from this perspective. A key part of this perspective is that there is a competitor willing, at any moment, to replace the incumbent leader. It is important to recognize that leaders, whether democratic or dictatorial, always face political competition; someone else always wants to be the leader, and current leaders must continually guard against losing power to these competitors.⁹

The puzzle posed by the authors of the Selectorate Theory, Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow (2003; hereafter referred to as BDM²S²), is the following: if all political leaders have the same (induced) goals, why do we get variance in political outcomes? In other words, why do some leaders produce good economic outcomes and some leaders produce bad ones? Why do some leaders provide public goods but others don't? Why do some

8. The presence of oil wealth in mainly dictatorial countries leaps to mind as one possible explanation for the dictatorial “over-achievers” shown in Figure 9.4. A closer examination of the data, however, reveals that only some, and by no means most, of the dictatorial over-achievers are oil exporters. As you are no doubt aware, many OPEC members have less-than-distinguished performance records.

9. It is often much easier to identify political challengers in democracies than in dictatorships. Competitors who seek to replace a dictator are likely to face significant threats to their lives, and as a result they tend to keep a low profile until they deem the moment right to challenge the dictator. The fact that we are not always able to identify who the competitors are in a dictatorship should not lead us to think that there is no political competition or that the dictator is unchallenged.

leaders engage in kleptocracy or corruption but others don't? Why do some leaders adopt policies that lead to peace and prosperity but others adopt policies that lead to war and ruin?

Given that all political leaders wish to gain power and keep it, you might think that they would all want to produce good economic performance. It turns out, however, that good economic performance does not necessarily result in longevity in power. For example, BDM^{2S² (2003, 273–276) provides both a list of the twenty-five “best” leaders in regard to their provision of peace and prosperity from 1955 to 2002 and a list of the top twenty-five longest-ruling leaders in the same time period.¹⁰ There is *no overlap* between the leaders on the two lists. The twenty-five highest-performing leaders average an annual economic growth rate of 7 percent; fourteen of the twenty-five longest-ruling leaders average an annual growth rate of 4.4 percent (the others do not report their economic data). The high-performing leaders last just six years in office on average, whereas the longest-ruling leaders last 35.1 years. These data would seem to suggest that producing good performance leads to short terms in office, whereas poor performance produces long stretches of time in office. Why, then, do some political leaders ever produce good performance? What explains the variation in the performance of political leaders?}

Institutions

Selectorate Theory characterizes all governments by their location in a two-dimensional institutional space. One dimension is the size of the electorate, and the second dimension is the size of the winning coalition.

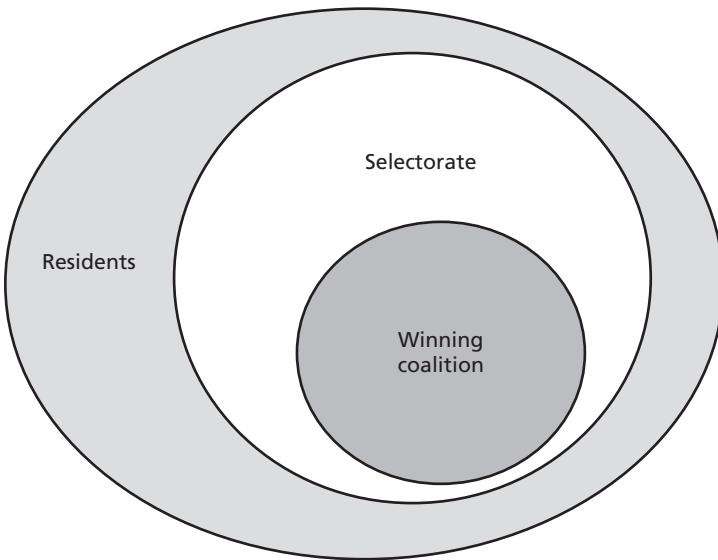
ers to behave in ways that benefit society, whereas other environments encourage them to behave in ways that benefit only themselves and a few others. Each country has a fundamental set of institutions or rules that govern interactions between residents within its borders. These include rules that define who is **disenfranchised**, who is part of the **electorate**, and who is part of the **winning coalition**. The relationship between the disenfranchised, the electorate, and the winning coalition in a country is shown graphically in Figure 9.5.

The **disenfranchised** are those residents who do not have the legal right to participate in choosing the government. The **electorate** is the set of people who can play a role in selecting the leader. The **winning coalition** includes those people whose support is necessary for the leader to stay in power.

The disenfranchised are all those residents who do not have the legal right to participate in choosing the government. As Bueno de Mesquita (2006, 416) notes, “Most people throughout history have been part of this group. In monarchies, everyone except a handful of aristocrats was in the disenfranchised group. When John Lackland became King John of England in 1199,

Selectorate Theory argues that the variation in the performance of political leaders can be explained in regard to the institutional environment in which they operate. Some institutional environments encourage political leaders to behave in ways that benefit society, whereas other environments encourage them to behave in ways that benefit only themselves and a few others. Each country has a fundamental set of institutions or rules that govern interactions between residents within its borders. These include rules that define who is **disenfranchised**, who is part of the **electorate**, and who is part of the **winning coalition**. The relationship between the disenfranchised, the electorate, and the winning coalition in a country is shown graphically in Figure 9.5.

10. Membership on the first list is based on producing a long-term growth rate in the top quartile for all governments in the period, avoiding involvement in wars, and scoring in the top portion of the Freedom House rankings in regard to political rights and civil liberties.

FIGURE 9.5**The Institutional Environment in the Selectorate Theory**

only 197 lay barons, and 39 ecclesiastical barons, had a say in his selection. Everyone else in England was essentially disenfranchised.”

The selectorate (S) is the set of people who have a legitimate say, if they so choose, in the selection of the leader. The term *selectorate* is chosen deliberately so as to indicate that the people “selecting” a leader do not necessarily have to do so by voting. In other words, the selectorate is not always the same as an electorate. In some forms of dictatorship, the selectorate is quite small. For example, the selectorate in a monarchy, like that in Saudi Arabia or Oman, typically comprises only members of the royal family, or, perhaps, the wider nobility and certain religious leaders. For example, as we just saw, the selectorate in King John’s England consisted of just 236 barons. Similarly, the selectorate in a military junta, like that in Chile under General Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990), usually consists only of members from the armed forces or, perhaps, the heads of each of the military branches. In other forms of dictatorship, though, the selectorate can be quite large. For example, the selectorate arguably consists of all adult citizens with the right to vote in dictatorships that hold rigged elections like Indonesia under President Suharto (1967–1998), Iraq under Saddam Hussein (1979–2003), the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos (1965–1986), the Soviet Union (1922–1991), and many other states in the Middle East and Africa. Although the selectorate can be small or large in dictatorships, it is nearly always large in democracies. In a democracy, the selectorate comprises all those who are eligible to vote. In the past, certain groups, such as women, nonwhites, and those without property, were ineligible to vote in particular democracies. For example, nonwhites were banned from

voting in apartheid South Africa between 1948 and 1994, and women did not get the right to vote until 1945 in France and until as late as 1971 in Switzerland. In most contemporary democracies, however, the selectorate means all adult citizens.

The winning coalition (W) consists of those members of the selectorate whose support is necessary for the leader to remain in power.¹¹ If the leader is ever unable to keep his win-

Box 9.3**AN EXAMPLE OF A SMALL WINNING COALITION****Kenya 1989**

Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow (BDM^{2S²}) (2003, 55–56) provides the following example from Kenya of how an extremely small winning coalition can determine a country's political leadership with the help of a rigged electoral system.

The Kenyan government introduced what it called a queue voting system in 1986. Under these rules, instead of using a secret ballot, voters lined up publicly behind a representative of the candidate they supported. If a candidate was deemed to have received 70 percent or more of the vote, the candidate was elected. Otherwise a runoff was held by secret ballot. Many of these queuing elections were rigged by a simple mechanism of lying about how many people lined up in favor of this or that candidate. The ruling party ensured victory by cheating in about one-third of the elections. The case that is of particular interest is striking because of its egregious nature. In it the winning coalition—all the votes it took to elect an official—appears to have been just one man.

In a by-election on February 1, 1989, in Kiharu, one candidate—Dr. Julius Kiano—was a former government minister who was highly regarded by the citizens of Kiharu. He was, however, distrusted by the ruling party because of his independence. Indeed, that was why he had been dropped from the government. He was opposed in the by-election by a relatively unknown and inexperienced man named Mweru. A local reporter happened to photograph a chalkboard with the tally of votes: 9,566 (92.46 percent) for Kiano and 780 (7.53 percent) for Mweru. The Returning Officer, charged with responsibility for determining and reporting who won the election, returned voter totals of 2,000 for Kiano and 9,000 for Mweru. Mweru won based on the support of a winning coalition of one man, the Returning Officer (Throup and Hornsby 1998, 42–45). Of course, the winning-coalition size for the whole country—where the same electoral procedure was used—was larger. It surely included at least one individual from each constituency and probably considerably more people whose loyalty to the ruling government was not in doubt. As surely, the winning coalitions in any district did not need to meet the test of majority rule, let alone the 70 percent stipulated for queuing elections.

11. To make meaningful cross-national comparisons, the winning coalition and the selectorate are not conceptualized in terms of the absolute numbers of residents who belong to them; rather, they are conceptualized in terms of the *proportion* of residents that they represent.

ning coalition loyal, he will lose his position to a challenger. In democracies, the winning coalition is always quite large and comprises those voters who are required to elect the winning candidate or government. If there are only two candidates or parties at election time, then the winning coalition is as large as a majority of the electorate. In contrast, the winning coalition in a dictatorship is always quite small. For example, the winning coalition in a military junta might be a majority of the officers or a small group of colonels and generals who together control the armed forces. In Communist countries like China or North Korea, the winning coalition is often just a small subset of the Communist Party. In fact, the winning coalition in North Korea was estimated several years ago at between 250 and 2,500 people out of a population of 20 million (Bueno de Mesquita 2006, 417); more recent estimates now put it as low as 73 people.¹² In a monarchy, the winning coalition might consist of a majority of the nobility. As Box 9.3 on a 1989 by-election in Kenya indicates, the winning coalition can, in some circumstances, be as small as one person—the person counting the votes—in dictatorships with rigged electoral systems.

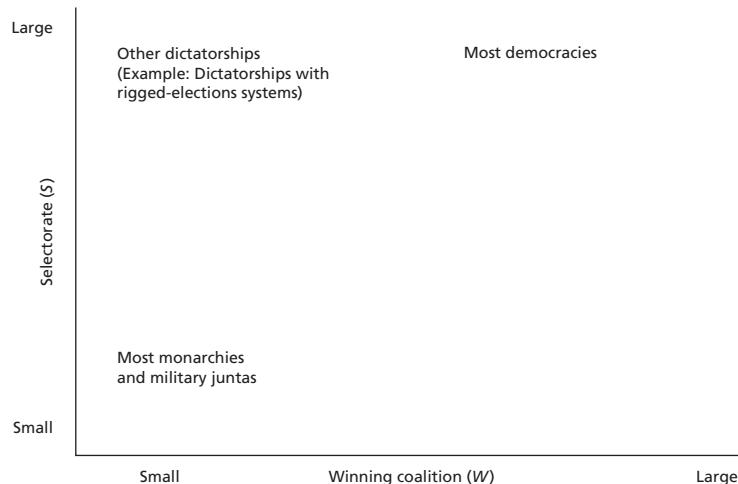
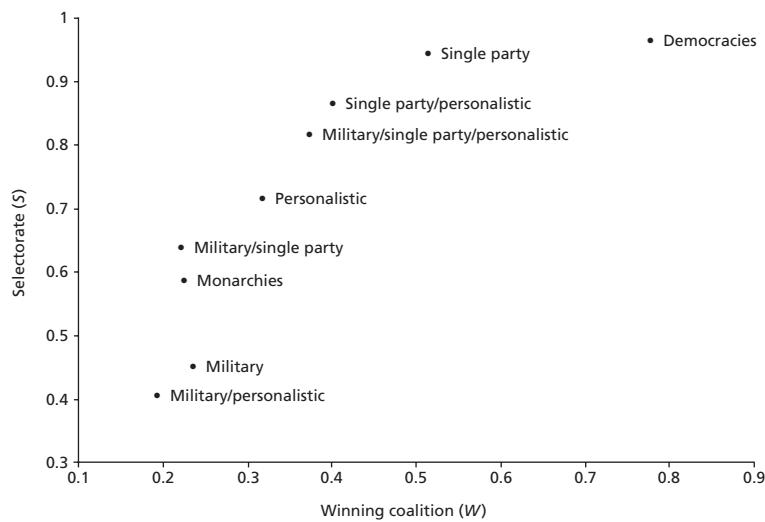
Mapping *W* and *S* onto a Typology of Regimes

As we have noted, the Selectorate Theory is able to differentiate various forms of government—monarchies, military juntas, one-party rigged electoral systems, democracies, and so on—by the size of their electorate and winning coalition. In Figure 9.6a, we plot the *theoretical* location of these various forms of government in a two-dimensional institutional space, where one dimension is the size of the electorate and the other dimension is the size of the winning coalition. As you can see, the Selectorate Theory differentiates between different types of dictatorships as well as between dictatorships and democracies. The key factor that distinguishes democracies from dictatorships is the size of the winning coalition. Whereas all dictatorships have small winning coalitions, all democracies have large ones. And the key factor that distinguishes between the different varieties of dictatorships is the size of the electorate. Dictatorships with rigged electoral systems have large electorates, whereas military juntas and monarchies tend to have small ones.

As you can imagine, measuring the size of a country's winning coalition and electorate in the real world is extremely difficult. Nonetheless, BDM^{2S²}

12. This number comes from correspondence with Alastair Smith and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita. These political scientists have recently begun to estimate the size of a country's electorate and winning coalition through the use of expert surveys.

13. For precise details on how the size of a country's electorate and winning coalition are measured, see BDM^{2S²}

FIGURE 9.6**Selectorate Theory and Regime-Type Locations****a. Theoretical Regime-Type Locations****b. Actual Regime-Type Locations (1946–2000)**

Source: Data on the size of *W* and *S* are from BDM²S² (2003); data on the different forms of dictatorships are from Geddes (2003).

Note: *W* and *S* both range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 1. Geddes classifies dictatorships into four types: (a) personalist, (b) military, (c) single-party, or (d) hybrid mixtures of these pure types. Countries that are not classified as one of these four types of dictatorships are either monarchies or democracies; we employ data from Polity IV to determine which were monarchies and which were democracies. For more detailed information about Geddes's classification of dictatorships, see footnote 14.

to 2000.¹⁴ Even though BDM^{2S² do not use information about the form of government to measure the size of a country's electorate and winning coalition, Figure 9.6b reveals that the scores for each country situate the different forms of government in the two-dimensional institutional space in a manner that is entirely consistent with the theoretical locations shown in Figure 9.6a. As expected, the average size of the winning coalition in a democracy is much larger than that in any of the various forms of dictatorship. Also as predicted, there is considerable variation in the average size of the electorate among dictatorships, with monarchies and military dictatorships having small electorates and single-party dictatorships having large ones.}

Government Performance

We now look at how the institutional environment in which a leader operates influences government performance. According to the Selectorate Theory, political leaders must keep members of their winning coalition happy in order to stay in power. They can do this by distributing public goods or private goods or both. As you will recall from Chapter 8, public goods benefit everyone in society regardless of whether they are in the winning coalition or not. This is because public goods are non-excludable (once it is provided, anyone can enjoy it) and non-rivalrous (the amount of the good available to be consumed is not diminished by the number of people who consume the good). Examples of public goods might be increased spending on education, health care, and infrastructure. In contrast, private goods benefit only some members of society and not others. In effect, private goods, such as business or export licenses, private jets, villas in the south of France, can be given directly to members of the winning coalition; those who are not members of the winning coalition cannot enjoy the benefits of these private goods. It is the job of an incumbent leader to figure out how many public and private goods to distribute in order to keep his winning coalition loyal.

14. The different forms of government are identified with the help of a data set on dictatorships from Geddes (2003, 50–53, 225–232). Geddes classifies all countries (with the exception of monarchies) that endured three or more years of dictatorial rule as (a) personalist, (b) military, (c) single-party, or (d) a hybrid mixture of these pure types. For Geddes, a *military dictatorship* is one in which a group of officers decides who will rule, and these officers exercise influence over policy, for example, Brazil (1964–1985), El Salvador (1948–1984), and South Korea (1960–1987). A *single-party dictatorship* has one party, which dominates both access to political office and control over policy. Poland under the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) prior to 1989 and Mexico under the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) prior to 2000 represent examples of single-party dictatorships. A *personalist dictatorship* differs from a military or single-party dictatorship in that access to office and the benefits of office depend on the whims of an individual leader, such as Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic (1930–1961), Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines (1972–1986), and Idi Amin in Uganda (1971–1979). Dictatorships that exhibit a mixture of characteristics from these three pure types of dictatorship are classified as hybrid dictatorships. For example, Geddes classifies dictatorships like that of Sani Abacha in Nigeria (1993–1999) and Valentine Strasser in Sierra Leone (1992–1996) as military-personalist hybrids because they had personalist leaders with militaries that exerted considerable autonomy and influence. Countries that are not classified as one of these four types of dictatorships by Geddes are either monarchies or democracies. We employed data from Polity IV to determine which were monarchies and which were democracies; fortunately, distinguishing monarchies from democracies is relatively easy.

In addition to deciding what mix of public and private goods to hand out to his winning coalition, the leader must also pick a tax rate. This tax rate ultimately determines how much money the leader has at his disposal to pay for the provision of public and private goods. Depending on the tax rate chosen, residents decide how to allocate their time between economically productive activities and leisure. At the same time that the incumbent is deciding his tax rate and announcing his offer of public and private goods, a challenger also makes an offer to the electorate (a combination of public goods, private goods, and a tax rate) in an attempt to put together an alternative winning coalition. The bottom line is that the political entrepreneur—the incumbent leader or challenger—who is best able to meet the needs of the relevant actors wins.

Loyalty Norm

It turns out that the manner in which leaders distribute public and private goods depends on the size of the winning coalition and the size of the electorate. Recall that the goal of the incumbent leader is to stay in power and that to do this he must keep the winning coalition happy. The key for the leader, then, is to stop members of the current winning coalition from defecting. Given this, let's start by thinking about the conditions under which a member of the current winning coalition might decide to defect and shift his loyalty to a challenger. Clearly, any disgruntled member of the winning coalition must weigh the potential risks and rewards from defecting. Oftentimes, there will be more than one potential defector in a winning coalition or multiple challengers to whom they can defect, or both. Moreover, it is almost always the case that there will be members of the electorate who are not in the winning coalition but who would like to be. As a result, individuals who defect from the current winning coalition have no guarantee that they will end up as part of the next leader's coalition. Indeed, any promise by a challenger to make them part of their future winning coalition if they defect and bring down the incumbent leader is not credible for obvious reasons. Thus, individuals who choose to defect risk losing access to the private goods that they presently enjoy as members of the current winning coalition.

The risk that members of the winning coalition face when they think about defecting is embodied in the ratio of the size of the winning coalition to the size of the electorate (W/S). The ratio W/S essentially represents the probability that a member of the electorate will be in any winning coalition. As a result, it indicates the probability that someone who defects from the current winning coalition will be in the next winning coalition. Members of the electorate have only a small chance of being in the winning coalition when W/S is small (when few people in the electorate are needed to form a winning coalition), but they have a large chance when W/S is large (when many people in the electorate are needed to form a winning coalition). As you can imagine, the size of W/S has important implications for the loyalty of members in the current winning coalition. If W/S is small, then members of the winning coalition are likely to be intensely loyal to the incumbent leader because they realize that they are lucky to be part of the winning coalition and that they have a low probability of being in anyone else's winning coalition. As W/S gets larger and the probability of

being in the next leader's winning coalition increases, this loyalty to the incumbent leader naturally declines.¹⁵ In effect, W/S represents a sort of **loyalty norm**: there is a strong loyalty norm in small W/S systems and a weak loyalty norm in large W/S systems.

The existence or absence of a strong loyalty norm has important implications for the performance of leaders in power. For example, political leaders in small W/S systems with strong loyalty norms have greater opportunities to engage in **kleptocracy** and **corruption** than leaders in large W/S systems with weak loyalty norms. Why? Consider the following example of two societies, A and B. In both societies, the political leader has \$1 billion in tax revenue to distribute among the 1,000 members of his winning coalition and himself. The only difference between the two societies is that the electorate is made up of 100,000 people in society A and just 10,000 people in society B. In effect, society A has a stronger loyalty norm (smaller W/S) than society B. It is easy to see that both of the leaders in societies A and B could pay each member of their winning coalitions up to \$1 million in private goods to win over their support; that is, \$1 billion divided equally among the 1,000 people in the winning coalition. As we'll see, though, neither leader has to actually pay out this much to ensure the loyalty of their winning coalition. In fact, it also turns out that the leader of society A, by taking advantage of the strong loyalty norm in his country, does not have to pay out as much as the leader of society B to keep his winning coalition happy. Ultimately, this means that the leader in society A can keep more of his tax revenue for his own discretionary use (kleptocracy)—perhaps to buy palaces, private jets, or whatever else he might desire. How does all this work exactly?

Let's start with society A. The probability that a member of the current winning coalition will be a member of the next leader's coalition if he defects is just 1 percent; that is, $W/S = 1,000/100,000 = 0.01$. It is this low probability of being in the next leader's coalition that generates the strong loyalty norm we mentioned earlier. Anyone who defects from the current winning coalition in society A has a 1 percent chance of obtaining (at most) \$1 million in private goods and a 99 percent chance of obtaining nothing.¹⁶ As a result, the expected value of defecting in terms of private goods is just \$10,000, or $\$1 \text{ million} \times 0.01 + \0×0.99 . All the incumbent leader, therefore, has to do to stay in power is to offer each member of his winning coalition slightly more than \$10,000 in private

The strength of the **loyalty norm** is determined by W/S —the probability that a member of the electorate will be in the winning coalition. Members of the winning coalition are most loyal when W/S is small and least loyal when W/S is large.

Corruption is when public officials take illegal payments (bribes) in exchange for providing benefits for particular individuals. **Kleptocracy** is when corruption is organized by political leaders with the goal of personal enrichment.

15. In the language of the Exit, Voice, and Loyalty model examined in Chapters 3 and 6, a large W/S indicates that members of the winning coalition have credible exit threats; that is, they can defect and still have a high probability of being in the next leader's winning coalition.

16. A million dollars is the most that a defector can receive because that is the most that a challenger can offer to each member of the winning coalition if all tax revenue is spent on private goods.

goods and come close to matching the provision of public goods promised by any challenger. In effect, the incumbent can skim off for himself the difference between the \$1 million per supporter that he could have distributed and the something over \$10,000 per supporter that he needs to distribute to stay in power. If the incumbent's challenger offers a particularly attractive set of public goods, then the incumbent can give some of this "slush fund" to his supporters to purchase their continued loyalty (Bueno de Mesquita 2006, 421).

What about society B? Well, the probability that someone in the current winning coalition will be a member of the next leader's coalition if he defects is now 10 percent; that is, $W/S = 1,000/10,000 = 0.1$. This is somewhat higher than in society A and, as a result, the loyalty norm in this society is weaker. The expected value of defecting from the current winning coalition in terms of private goods is \$100,000, that is, $\$1,000,000 \times 0.1 + \0×0.9 . This means that the incumbent leader in society B has to pay a little more than \$100,000 in private goods to each member of his winning coalition and come close to matching whatever provision of public goods a challenger has promised in order to stay in power. In society B, the incumbent gets to skim off for himself the difference between the \$1 million per supporter that he could have distributed and the something over \$100,000 per supporter that he needs to distribute to stay in power. This is still a lot of money, but it is considerably less than the leader in society A can skim off for himself.

Although we might think that all leaders want to engage in kleptocracy and corruption, the example that we have just provided illustrates that the institutional arrangements in a country influence their ability to do so without jeopardizing their hold on power. Specifically, leaders in small W/S systems (society A) have greater opportunities to "steal" from their citizens by skimming off tax revenue into their own pockets than leaders of large W/S systems (society B). As an example of widespread kleptocracy and corruption, consider the small W/S system of Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko (1965–1997). Mobutu was reportedly able to put as much as a third of the national budget under his personal control and skim off a quarter of all the profits from the country's vast copper mines. As Rose-Ackerman (1999, 116) notes, "Corruption and predation undermined the formal private sector, and grandiose infrastructure projects were used as sources of payoffs" for Mobutu and his supporters. Indeed, in the thirty-two years that Mobutu was in power, he is estimated to have stolen a staggering \$4 billion. As another example, consider the small W/S system of the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos (1965–1986). Marcos is thought to have stolen somewhere between \$5 billion and \$10 billion during the thirty-one years that he was in office (BDM²S² 2003, 167).

The strong loyalty norm that encourages leaders in small W/S systems, such as dictatorships with rigged electoral systems, to engage in kleptocracy also generates incentives for poor public policy more generally. Note that members of the winning coalition in these systems are loyal because (a) the leader provides them with more private goods than any challenger can and (b) they have to worry about being cut out of the next leader's coalition if they decide to defect. It follows from this that as long as members of the winning coalition are being sufficiently "bribed," they do not really care about the material well-being of the citizenry more generally (Bueno de Mesquita 2006, 423). As a result, leaders in small W/S

systems have no incentive to produce good public policy—it does not help them stay in power. Leaders in small W/S systems recognize that they stay in power by keeping their supporters happy with private goods. “Just think of Saddam Hussein’s success in holding on to power even after a worldwide trade embargo against Iraqi goods left his nation’s economy in shambles. . . . As long as Saddam Hussein continued to pay the military well and keep his clansmen happy, he was unlikely to suffer an internal coup” (Bueno de Mesquita 2006, 424). We should note that not only does good public policy fail to help leaders in small W/S systems stay in power, it may actually get the leader ousted. This is because allocating resources to things like public goods that benefit the citizenry more widely opens up an opportunity for a challenger to credibly promise to provide more private goods to members of the winning coalition than are currently being provided by the incumbent.

In contrast to these types of systems, large W/S systems such as democracies do not have strong loyalty norms. For example, voters in a democracy are unlikely to lose access to private goods, such as particular tax policies or redistributive schemes, that benefit them if they switch their support from the incumbent leader to the leader of an opposition party. As a result, leaders in large W/S systems have to work harder to keep their supporters happy and cannot afford to skim off too many resources if they want to stay in power. Moreover, because leaders in large W/S systems need more resources to keep their winning coalition loyal, they have a strong incentive to produce good overall economic performance. As a result, they are unlikely to tax or steal from their citizens too much lest this cause the citizens to spend more time relaxing and less time working. Remember that if the citizens do not work, then there will be a smaller economic pie with which the leader can win over the winning coalition. All in all, government performance should be better in large W/S systems than in small W/S systems—kleptocracy should be lower, taxation and state predation should be lower, economic growth should be higher, and so on.¹⁷

The Size of the Winning Coalition

In addition to the strength of the loyalty norm (W/S), the Selectorate Theory indicates that the manner in which leaders distribute public and private goods also depends on the size of the winning coalition (W). Leaders always prefer to use private goods rather than public goods to satisfy their winning coalition. As our example of leaders in societies A and B illustrate, an incumbent leader is always able to defeat a challenger if competition is restricted to the distribution of private goods. This inherent advantage comes from the simple fact that challengers cannot credibly guarantee to put would-be defectors in their own winning coalition. Recognizing the uneven playing field, challengers, therefore, attempt to defeat incumbents by emphasizing the provision of public goods. Not only does this help to explain why challengers

17. Although large W/S systems encourage leaders to perform well in office, there is no guarantee that good performance will translate into longevity in office. Due to a weak loyalty norm, leaders in large W/S systems are likely to survive in office for shorter periods of time than leaders in small W/S systems even if they produce better government performance. This helps to explain why democratic leaders rarely last as long in office as even the poorest performing dictators in rigged electoral systems.

spend considerable time criticizing incumbents for their poor performance in tackling corruption and providing food, health care, education, and the like, but it also helps to explain why these same challengers frequently maintain the preexisting system of corruption and do little to increase the provision of public goods when they finally come to power. In this regard, we can think of people like Jomo Kenyatta, who railed against corruption in Kenya before coming to power in 1963, but who then did little to stamp it out while in office (BDM²S² 2003, 374–375). Kenya has consistently ranked at the bottom of Transparency International’s list of corrupt countries.¹⁸ The Selectorate Theory suggests that foreign countries that today promote and support seemingly public-minded opposition leaders, such as Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe, should not necessarily expect government performance to significantly improve if these opposition leaders ever come to power.

Although incumbent leaders always prefer to use private goods to keep their winning coalition loyal, it turns out that this is not always a viable strategy. Much depends on the size of the winning coalition. As the size of the winning coalition increases, the share of private goods that can go to each member of the winning coalition shrinks. In our earlier example, the leaders in societies A and B had \$1 billion in tax revenues to distribute to the winning coalition. Because the winning coalition comprised 1,000 members, the maximum amount of private goods that any one member could receive was \$1 million. If the winning coalition in these societies had comprised 1 million members, then the maximum amount of private goods that any one member could have received is just \$1,000. Clearly, the private goods deal looks a lot better when the winning coalition is small than when it is large. It follows that the advantage the incumbent has over the challenger in regard to the provision of private goods shrinks as the winning coalition gets larger. At some point, the winning coalition is so large that it is no longer efficient or viable for the leader to buy the support of the winning coalition with just the help of private goods. In effect, the value of the private goods going to each member of the winning coalition becomes so small that the members would obtain more value if the leader provided public goods. An implication of this is that leaders in small *W* systems (dictatorships) will tend to use private goods to stay in power, whereas leaders in large *W* systems (democracies) will primarily use public goods. The fact that democratic leaders simply do not have sufficient resources to “bribe” all the people they need to win an election with private goods helps to explain why political competition in contemporary democracies is nearly always a contest over public goods—who has the best education policy, who has the best health care plan, and so on.

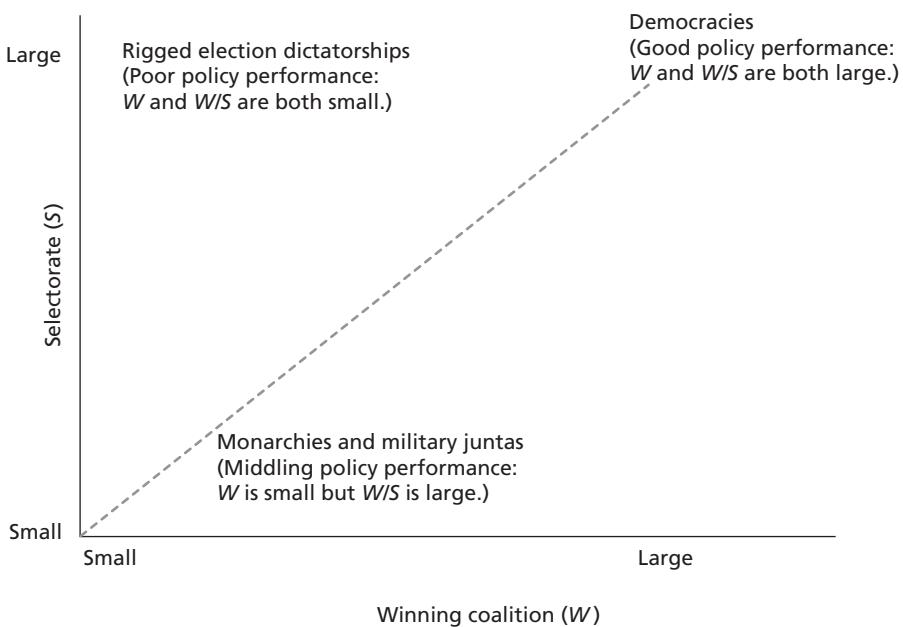
In Figure 9.7, we summarize how a leader’s institutional environment (*W* and *S*) affects government performance and the material well-being of citizens. The dotted line indicates those positions where *W/S* is large; that is, the loyalty norm is low. Note that *W/S* can be large when both *W* and *S* are large, as in democracies, or when both *W* and *S* are small, as in military juntas and monarchies. As Figure 9.7 illustrates, we can think of three different levels of government performance—good, middling, poor—depending on the institutional environ-

18. Transparency International is a nongovernmental organization that produces an annual Corruptions Perceptions Index for countries around the world. Highly corrupt countries have low scores. This index is based on surveys that ask businessmen and analysts about their perceptions of the level of corruption in each country.

ment in place. Government performance is likely to be good when W and W/S are both large (democracies). This is because leaders are likely to provide public goods rather than private goods (W is large) and because the weak loyalty norm (W/S is large) forces leaders to work hard to stay in office.

In contrast, government performance is likely to be poor when W and W/S are both small (dictatorships with rigged electoral systems). In countries with this type of institutional environment, leaders have little incentive to care about the state of the national economy or the material well-being of the citizenry in general. Instead, they provide small amounts of private goods to members of their winning coalition and engage in highly kleptocratic and corrupt activities. The only thing keeping these types of leaders from excessive predation is the refusal of residents to work and therefore the lack of anything to prey on. This constraint is obviously much weaker if the country is rich in natural resources, such as oil and minerals, or if the leaders receive significant amounts of foreign aid (Smith 2007).

Government performance is likely to be middling when W is small and W/S is large (monarchies and military juntas). Although leaders in these types of system provide few public goods to the general citizenry, they are forced to care about their own overall performance in office because of the weak loyalty norm at work. For example, leaders have an incentive to produce reasonably good economic performance, because this is the only way

FIGURE 9.7**The Selectorate Model and Government Performance**

Note: W/S is large along the dotted line.

of generating the necessary resources to pay off their not-so-loyal winning coalition. That these leaders are interested in good economic performance necessarily means that they also care, to some extent, about the material well-being of the residents who make up the workforce, and thus have an incentive to provide some basic public goods.

As you'll no doubt have realized, the theoretical predictions about government performance shown in Figure 9.7 are entirely consistent with our earlier empirical results in Figure 9.4. Recall that those empirical results suggest that whereas democracies tend to produce relatively good government performance, the performance of dictatorships varies considerably. Some dictatorships appear to perform quite well, and others seem to perform extremely poorly. As we can now see, the Selectorate Theory offers a potential explanation for this variation in the performance of dictatorships. On the one hand, dictatorships with rigged electoral systems are likely to produce poor government performance because they are characterized by small winning coalitions and strong loyalty norms. On the other hand, monarchies and military juntas are likely to produce reasonably good government performance because they are characterized by weak loyalty norms.

Before examining whether there is any empirical evidence to support the Selectorate Theory, we should stop and ask ourselves what this all means for the *type* of leader necessary to generate good public policy. By now you should realize that implementing good public policy is not as simple as identifying decent human beings who genuinely want to improve their fellow citizens' lives and then ensuring that these people rise to political power. It turns out that having a civic-minded leader is neither necessary nor sufficient for successful public policies. Simply put, what is needed for good public policy is a set of institutions that creates a large W , large W/S system. If the political institutions in a country are such that a large proportion of the residents can participate in choosing their leader and the leader depends on a large proportion of that electorate to remain in power, then only leaders who provide a sufficiently high level of government performance will be *able* to stay in power. It doesn't matter whether the leader cares about providing good government performance for its own sake or whether he cares about it only because it helps him stay in power; both goals dictate the same course of action. This results in competition to provide more, and better, public goods, as well as good economic policies designed to generate higher overall revenue. Under such conditions, residents have incentives to invest and the economy is expected to grow.

The bottom line is that even if there are two types of leaders in the world—those that are civic minded and those that are not—all leaders are forced to govern well in large W , large W/S systems and poorly in small W , small W/S systems if they want to stay in power. This point is well illustrated by leaders who had the opportunity to rule over very different systems of government. Consider Leopold II (1835–1909), who was king of Belgium (large W , large W/S) and ruler of the Congo Free State (small W , small W/S). Consider also Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) who ruled China (small W , small W/S) for twenty years and then Taiwan (large W , large W/S) for another twenty-five. In both of these cases, the two leaders provided more public goods and better government performance in the large W , large W/S systems that they governed (BDSM²S² 2003, 208–213). For more details, see Box 9.4 on Leopold II.

Box 9.4**THE TALE OF TWO LEOPOLDS**

Leopold II is remembered as an excellent king of Belgium (1865–1909) who provided his subjects with significant amounts of public goods, instituted progressive reforms, and promoted high levels of economic growth and industrial development. For example, he gave workers the right to strike, expanded the suffrage, set limits on child labor, introduced educational improvements, and supported massive public works projects designed to lower unemployment and enhance the economy.



While Leopold was presiding over this set of progressive policies in Belgium, he was taking a decidedly different approach in the Congo Free State (1885–1908), over which he also ruled. Leopold created a low-paid military force in the Congo, the Force Publique, and offered the soldiers additional wages based on commissions for goods such as rubber and ivory. Without laws to protect Congolese workers, the members of the Force Publique used slave labor, torture, and murder to meet its quotas. The soldiers were also given rewards for killing “anti-government rebels,” although more often than not these were villagers who simply did not want to be forced into slave labor. The soldiers would bring hands (or heads) to the Belgium commissioner as proof of the number of “rebels” that had been killed; eyewitness accounts report that some of these hands obviously belonged to women and children, and suggested that ordinary Congolese were being killed because doing so meant that soldiers could get higher wages. Leopold and the Force

Publique gained incredible riches from the sale of ivory and rubber on the world market. This revenue was not returned to the Congo Free State in the form of public goods to benefit its residents. The only goods exported to the Congo, in fact, were weapons for the Force Publique to keep the flow of goods (the result of slave labor) headed toward Belgium. Thus Leopold was allowing—even promoting—slave labor in the Congo at the same time as he was promoting laws protecting workers in Belgium.

What was different about the institutions in the two countries? Belgium was a constitutional monarchy, which means that Leopold’s rule relied on the support of a popularly elected government. The winning coalition size was reasonably large. By contrast, the Congo Free State was considered to be Leopold’s personal property. Leopold’s winning coalition in the Congo consisted of just himself and the members of the Force Publique. As the *Selectorate Theory* predicts, Leopold worked hard to promote economic growth and provide significant amounts of public goods when his winning coalition was large (Belgium) but provided small

amounts of private goods for his supporters and stole the rest of the revenue for himself when the winning coalition was small (Congo).

Which was the real Leopold? BDM^{2S2} (2003, 208–213), who provide the account of the two Leopolds that we have drawn on here, conclude that it must have been the “murderous ruler of the Congo” rather than the “civic-minded king of Belgium.” Why? Well, Leopold simply inherited his institutions in Belgium and acted accordingly. In contrast, he had free reign to set up any type of government arrangement he wanted in the Congo. Leopold’s actions in both countries were entirely consistent with the institutional incentives he faced.

It follows from this discussion that one’s preference for the type of institutions in a country depends on one’s position in the society: as the leader, a member of the selectorate, a member of the winning coalition, or just a member of the disenfranchised class. Leaders clearly prefer to set up institutions that encourage a small winning coalition and a large selectorate, because these institutions help them not only to stay in power but also to enrich themselves at the expense of their citizenry. Members of the winning coalition like institutions in which W is small but W/S is large: a small W means that the leader will provide its members with private goods, whereas a large W/S guarantees that the leader will have to provide large quantities of these goods to counteract the weak loyalty norm. Members of the selectorate and the disenfranchised classes like institutions in which both W and W/S are large; a large W forces the leader to provide its members with public goods, and the large W/S provides strong incentives for the leader to perform well in office to counteract the weak loyalty norm. In other words, leaders prefer to rule over rigged-electoral systems, members of the winning coalition prefer to live in monarchies or military juntas, and everyone else prefers to live in democracies.

Some Empirical Evidence

We now put some of the implications derived from the Selectorate Theory to the test. Specifically, we ask how the size of a country’s W and the size of its W/S affect the material well-being of the citizenry. Recall that we expect better government performance as both W and W/S get larger. In Table 9.2, we show the effect of W and W/S on six different indicators of material well-being: economic growth, wealth as measured by GDP per capita, health care expenditures as a percentage of GDP, education expenditures as a percentage of GDP, infant mortality rates per thousand, and life expectancy in years. We control for the size of the selectorate (S) in each country.

Recall that it is the dependent variable that we want to explain—economic growth, life expectancy, and so on. Our independent or explanatory variables are what we hypothesize might affect the various dependent variables. In each table of results, our explanatory variables are W (and S) in Model 1 and W/S in Model 2. Next to each independent variable is a

TABLE 9.2**Effect of *W* and *W/S* on Six Indicators of Material Well-Being**

a. Economic Growth Dependent variable: Economic growth rate.			b. Wealth Dependent variable: Log of GDP per capita.		
Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2
<i>W</i>	0.02*** (0.005)		<i>W</i>	2.30*** (0.22)	
<i>S</i>	-0.004 (0.005)		<i>S</i>	-0.67*** (0.17)	
<i>W/S</i>		0.02*** (0.004)	<i>W/S</i>		1.83*** (0.19)
Constant	0.01*** (0.004)	0.009*** (0.003)	Constant	6.97*** (0.15)	6.66*** (0.13)
<i>N</i>	3,772	3,772	<i>N</i>	3,813	3,813
<i>R</i> ²	0.0071	0.0067	<i>R</i> ²	0.35	0.32

c. Education Dependent variable: Government spending on education as share of GDP.			d. Health Care Dependent variable: Government spending on health care as share of GDP.		
Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2
<i>W</i>	2.07*** (0.37)		<i>W</i>	4.09*** (0.61)	
<i>S</i>	-0.44 (0.27)		<i>S</i>	-0.35 (0.51)	
<i>W/S</i>		1.8*** (0.30)	<i>W/S</i>		3.95*** (0.49)
Constant	2.86*** (0.23)	2.63*** (0.21)	Constant	3.04*** (0.32)	2.80*** (0.33)
<i>N</i>	3,313	3,313	<i>N</i>	1,204	1,204
<i>R</i> ²	0.12	0.12	<i>R</i> ²	0.22	0.22

continues

TABLE 9.2**Effect of *W* and *W/S* on Six Indicators of Material Well-being (continued)**

e. Infant Mortality			f. Life Expectancy		
Dependent variable: Infant mortality (deaths per 1,000 live births).			Dependent variable: Life expectancy at birth (in years).		
Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2
<i>W</i>	-101.5*** (8.3)		<i>W</i>	24.6*** (1.9)	
<i>S</i>	10.1 (6.3)		<i>S</i>	-2.6* (1.4)	
<i>W/S</i>		-96.4*** (7.2)	<i>W/S</i>		23.1*** (1.5)
Constant	113.1*** (6.7)	119.4*** (6.4)	Constant	49.0*** (1.3)	47.5*** (1.3)
<i>N</i>	3,365	3,365	<i>N</i>	2,692	2,692
<i>R</i> ²	0.33	0.33	<i>R</i> ²	.34	.33

Source: Data are from BDM²S² (2003) and McGuire (2002).

Note: *W* = winning coalition; *S* = electorate; *W/S* = loyalty norm; data on *W*, *S*, and *W/S* cover all countries in the world averaged over the time period 1960–1999. Robust standard errors clustered by country are in parentheses.

* = greater than 90% significant.

** = greater than 95% significant.

*** = greater than 99% significant.

coefficient indicating how an increase in the independent variable affects the dependent variable. For instance, a positive coefficient on *W* would indicate that an increase in the size of the winning coalition increases whatever dependent variable we are considering. Beneath each coefficient is a standard error, which basically tells us how confident we are in our results. As we have done in previous chapters, we use stars, next to the coefficients to indicate our confidence in the results. A coefficient with no stars would suggest that there is no evidence that the independent variable in question has any impact on the dependent variable under consideration.

Let's start by looking at the effect of *W* and *W/S* on economic growth in Table 9.2a. First, we can see that the coefficient on *W* in Model 1 is positive and highly significant. As predicted, this indicates that larger winning coalitions are associated with higher levels of economic growth. Second, we can see that the coefficient on *W/S* in Model 2 is positive and highly significant as well. As predicted, this indicates that countries with weaker loyalty norms (that is,

higher W/S) are associated with higher levels of economic growth. This same pattern of results is repeated for all of the different indicators of material well-being. Wealth, education, health care expenditures, and life expectancy are all higher and infant mortality is lower when W and W/S are large. These results offer a great deal of support for two of the key implications derived from the Selectorate Theory. Increasing the size of the winning coalition does lead to better outcomes from the point of view of the average citizen. Likewise, increasing the ratio of W/S , thereby making the loyalty norm weaker, also leads to better outcomes. In other words, political institutions do clearly have an effect on the kinds of government policies that are generally thought to be important for the material well-being of citizens around the world.

CONCLUSION

As we noted at the very beginning of this chapter, we live in a world that tends to clearly associate good outcomes with democracy and bad ones with dictatorships. As we have shown, the world, in reality, is much more complex than this. Oftentimes, we have no compelling theoretical reason to believe that democracies outperform dictatorships. For example, we presented several different stories linking regime type to economic growth. They all reached different conclusions. Some suggested that democracy is good for economic growth, whereas others suggested that dictatorship was better. When it comes to the empirical evidence, it does appear that democracies produce a relatively high level of material well-being for their citizens. It is not the case, however, that democracies regularly outperform all dictatorships. Although some dictatorships perform extremely poorly on many different indicators of material well-being, others perform relatively well. As a whole, the empirical evidence suggests that thinking of the world purely in terms of a democracy-dictatorship dichotomy may not be the best way to explain the variation in the performance levels of different countries.

In the second half of this chapter, we presented a new theory—the Selectorate Theory—that provides a potential story both for why democracies produce a relatively high level of material well-being for their citizens and for why some dictatorships perform better than others. Starting from the simple assumption that all political leaders care about winning and retaining power, the Selectorate Theory offers an explanation for the observed variation in the performance of different forms of government that focuses on the institutional structure surrounding political leaders. This “institutional structure” refers primarily to the size of a country’s winning coalition and selectorate. As we saw, leaders in systems with large winning coalitions and weak loyalty norms like democracies have to provide public goods and a high level of overall government performance if they want to remain in office. In contrast, leaders in systems with small winning coalitions and strong loyalty norms, like dictatorships with rigged electoral systems, are “forced” to provide private goods and produce a poor level of overall government performance because this is the best way to stay in power in these countries. In between these two ends of the performance spectrum are leaders in systems with small winning coalitions and weak loyalty norms, such as monarchies

and military juntas. Although these leaders are more likely to provide private than public goods, they do have to care about their overall government performance because of the weak loyalty norm at work.

KEY CONCEPTS

corruption, 339
disenfranchised, 332
kleptocracy, 339
loyalty norm, 339
selectorate, 332

Selectorate Theory, 332
structural dependence of the state on capital, 323
winning coalition, 332

PROBLEMS

The following problems address some of the more important concepts and theories introduced in this chapter.

Classifying Political Regimes

1. Rather than classify governments as either democratic or dictatorial, the Selectorate Theory characterizes all governments in regard to their location in a two-dimensional institutional space. One dimension is the size of the selectorate (S) and the second dimension is the size of the winning coalition (W). These two dimensions are graphically shown in Figure 9.8 along with the types of governments that fall into each cell. Use Internet and other resources to determine into which cell of the two-dimensional space in Figure 9.8 each of the following governments should be placed. Explain your answers.
 - a. Cuba
 - b. Iraq under Saddam Hussein (pre-2003)
 - c. United States in 1776
 - d. United Arab Emirates
 - e. Chile under Augusto Pinochet
 - f. Argentina
 - g. South Africa under apartheid (pre-1991)
 - h. Taiwan
 - i. Jordan

FIGURE 9.8**Winning Coalition Size, Selectorate Size, and Government Type**

		Winning coalition (<i>W</i>)	
		Small	Large
Selectorate (<i>S</i>)	Large	Other dictatorships (Example: Dictatorships with rigged-election systems)	Most democracies
	Small	Most monarchies and military juntas	Combination not possible

Note: The bottom right cell is empty because, by definition, the winning coalition cannot be larger than the selectorate.

Public and Private Goods

2. In Chapter 8 we introduced the notion of public and private goods.
 - a. Name at least three examples of private goods that leaders might use to stay in power.
Explain why they are private goods.
 - b. Name at least three examples of public goods that leaders might use to stay in power.
Explain why they are public goods.

The Distribution of Public and Private Goods: The Size of the Winning Coalition

3. Suppose that a political leader raises \$1 billion in tax revenue. Assume that the leader can supply public goods worth \$2,000 to each individual in society if he spends all of this tax revenue on providing public goods. Assume also that the size of the winning coalition is 250,000. With all of this in mind, answer the following questions.

- a. If the leader were to spend all of the tax revenue on providing private goods, what would the maximum value of the private goods be for each member of the winning coalition if we assume that they all receive the same amount?
- b. Would the leader prefer to provide only public goods or only private goods in this situation? Why?

Now suppose that the size of the winning coalition is 750,000. Keeping everything else the same, answer the following questions.

- c. If the leader were now to spend all of the tax revenue on providing private goods, what would the maximum value of the private goods be for each member of the winning coalition if we assume that they all receive the same amount?
- d. Would the leader prefer to provide only public goods or only private goods in this new situation? Why?
- e. Based on the answers you have given and the description of the Selectorate Theory in this chapter, why is providing public goods a more efficient way for leaders in democracies to stay in power?
- f. Based on the answers you have given and the description of the Selectorate Theory in this chapter, why is providing private goods a more efficient way for leaders in dictatorships to stay in power?

The Distribution of Public and Private Goods: The Loyalty Norm

4. Suppose that a political leader raises \$1 billion in tax revenue. Assume that the size of the winning coalition is 250,000 and that the size of the electorate is 50 million.
 - a. If the leader were to spend all of the tax revenue on providing private goods, what would the *maximum* value of the private goods be for each member of the winning coalition if we assume that they all receive the same amount?
 - b. How much are private goods worth to someone who is not a member of the winning coalition?
 - c. What is the probability that a member of the electorate will be a member of the winning coalition?
 - d. What is the probability that a member of the electorate will *not* be a member of the winning coalition?
 - e. Suppose that you, as a member of the winning coalition, are thinking of defecting to the challenger. What is the (maximum) expected value of defecting to the challenger in terms of private goods?
 - f. Based on your answer to the previous question, how much does the political leader have to give each member of the winning coalition in terms of private goods in order to ensure that the members remain loyal?
 - g. What is the difference between how much the political leader *could* give each member of the winning coalition and how much the political leader *needs* to give each member of the winning coalition to ensure the members' loyalty?

Now suppose that the size of the selectorate is just 1 million. Keeping everything else the same, answer the following questions.

- h. What is the probability that a member of the selectorate will be a member of the winning coalition?
- i. What is the probability that a member of the selectorate will *not* be a member of the winning coalition?
- j. Suppose that you, as a member of the winning coalition, are thinking of defecting to the challenger. What is the (maximum) expected value of defecting to the challenger in terms of private goods?
- k. Based on your answer to the previous question, how much does the political leader have to give each member of the winning coalition in terms of private goods in order to ensure that the members remain loyal?
- l. What is the difference between how much the political leader *could* give each member of the winning coalition and how much the political leader *needs* to give each member of the winning coalition to ensure the members' loyalty?
- m. Based on the answers you have given and the description of the Selectorate Theory in this chapter, why are leaders in rigged-election dictatorships particularly well placed to steal the state's wealth for themselves?

International Organizations and Economic Development

5. Many international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), have economic development and the alleviation of poverty as two of their central goals. Although international organizations frequently provide expertise and resources for economic development and poverty relief, these resources are often misappropriated. Consider the recent description of events in Kenya.

In December 2002 Mwai Kibaki was elected president following the retirement of the long-term incumbent Daniel Arap Moi. Billions of dollars were stolen under Moi's regime. Given worsening economic conditions, aid agencies such as the IMF agreed to the resumption of aid to Kenya. The Kenyan government promised to reduce corruption. Unfortunately, rather than being used to root out corruption, these funds have been largely stolen. The BBC reports that graft has cost Kenya \$1 billion under Kibaki's increasingly autocratic regime. A majority of Kenyans believe they are worse off under Kibaki than Moi. (Smith 2005, 566)

- a. Would the ongoing corruption in Kenya come as a surprise to someone familiar with the Selectorate Theory? Explain your answer.
- b. What does the Selectorate Theory have to say about the potential of international organizations such as the IMF and WB to achieve their goals of economic development and poverty reduction in countries with small winning coalitions? Explain your answer.

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CHAPTER

3

PARLIAMENTARY, PRESIDENTIAL, AND MIXED DEMOCRACIES: MAKING AND BREAKING GOVERNMENTS

**BY WILLIAM ROBERTS CLARK, MATT GOLDER AND SONA NADENICHECK
GOLDER**

Excerpted from William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, Sona Nadenichek Golder, PRINCIPLES OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS (Washington: DC, CQ Press, 2009), pp. 395-462.



Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies

Making and Breaking Governments

The essence of pure parliamentarism is mutual dependence. . . .

The essence of pure presidentialism is mutual independence.

Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach, "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation"

A cabinet is a combining committee—a *hyphen* which joins, a *buckle* which fastens, the legislative part of the state to the executive part of the state. In its origin it belongs to the one, in its functions it belongs to the other.

Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution*

- Political scientists often classify democracies as parliamentary, presidential, or mixed. Whether a democracy is parliamentary, presidential, or mixed depends on the relationship between the government, the legislature, and (if there is one) the president.
- The government formation process in parliamentary democracies can be quite complicated and take a long time. Several different types of government can form: single-party majority governments, minimal winning coalitions, minority governments, surplus majority governments, and so on. The type of government that forms depends on many factors, including whether the political actors in a country are office seeking or policy seeking. Although some governments in parliamentary democracies last several years, others last just a few days.
- The government formation process in presidential democracies is different in many ways from that in parliamentary democracies. Presidential democracies have more minority governments but fewer coalition governments on average than parliamentary ones. They also have more

nonpartisan ministers and a lower proportionality in the allocation of ministerial posts. Governments in presidential democracies look more like those in parliamentary democracies if the president is weak.

- The government formation process in mixed democracies is relatively understudied. There is evidence, however, that governments in mixed democracies share characteristics from governments in both parliamentary and presidential democracies.

In Chapter 5 we looked at how political scientists distinguish between democracies and dictatorships. For example, one set of scholars classifies countries as democratic if (a) the chief executive is elected, (b) the legislature is elected, (c) there is more than one party competing in elections, and (d) there has been an alternation of power under identical electoral rules (Przeworski et al. 2000). Our focus now turns to examining the different types of democracy that exist around the world. As you can imagine, we could distinguish between democracies in many, many different ways. Most political scientists, however, tend to classify democracies according to the form of government they have, that is, according to the rules that define who the government is, how the government comes to power, and how the government remains in power (Cheibub 2007). This classification scheme includes three basic types of democracy: parliamentary, presidential, and mixed.¹ In this chapter, we examine how scholars distinguish between these three types. We then take a close look at how governments form and survive in these democratic systems.

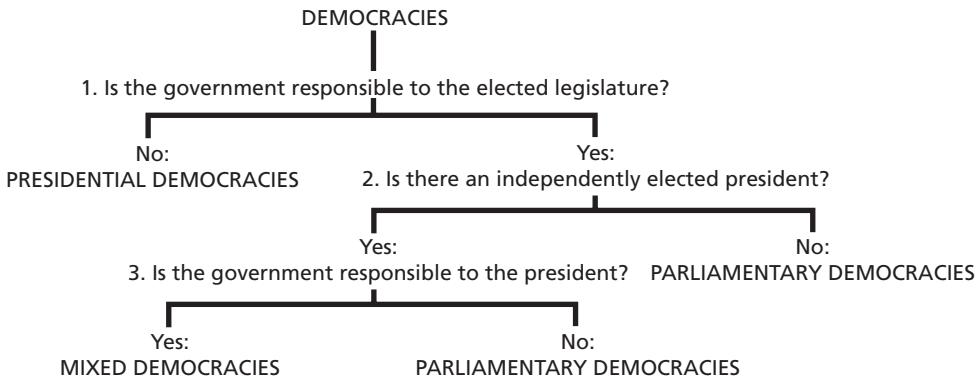
CLASSIFYING PARLIAMENTARY, PRESIDENTIAL, AND MIXED DEMOCRACIES

Whether a democracy is parliamentary, presidential, or mixed depends on the relationship between (a) the government, which comprises the political chief executive and the ministers that head the various government departments, (b) the legislature, and (c) the president (if there is one; Cheibub 2007).² Ultimately, distinguishing between the three types of democracy requires identifying which actors can remove the government from office. Democracies in which the legislature cannot remove the government are presidential; democracies in which only the legislature can remove the government are parliamentary; and democracies in which both the legislature and the president can remove the government are mixed. In effect, three basic questions are necessary to be able to unambiguously classify democracies as parliamentary, presidential, or mixed.³ These questions are shown in Figure 11-1.

1. Mixed regimes are sometimes called semi-presidential or premier-presidential (Duverger 1980; Shugart and Carey 1992; Sartori 1997; Elgie 1999).

2. Our upcoming discussion about how to classify parliamentary, presidential, and mixed democracies draws heavily on Cheibub (2007). Interested scholars should also see Cheibub and Gandhi (2004).

3. Some political scientists employ slightly different criteria to those we are about to present for classifying democracies as parliamentary, presidential, or mixed (Verney 1959; Lijphart 1984, 1999; Shugart and Carey 1992; Stepan and Skach 1993; Sartori 1997; Shugart and Mainwaring 1997). These alternative criteria are, however, among other things, operationally ambiguous because they do not allow one to unambiguously code all democracies as either parliamentary, presidential, or mixed (Elgie 1998; Müller, Bergman, and Strøm 2003; Cheibub 2007).

FIGURE 11.1**Classifying Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies**

Source: Cheibub 2007, 35.

Is the Government Responsible to the Elected Legislature?

The first question is whether the government is responsible to the elected legislature. Recall that the government is made up of the political chief executive and the ministers that head the various government departments. **Legislative responsibility** means that a legislative majority has the constitutional power to remove the government from office without cause.⁴ In those democracies that are characterized by legislative responsibility, the mechanism that the legislature can initiate to remove a government is called the **vote of no confidence**. Basically, a vote of no confidence involves a vote in the legislature on whether the government should remain in office. If a majority of legislators vote against the government, then the government must resign. Some countries, such as Belgium, Germany, Israel, and Spain, adopt a slightly different version of this procedure called a **constructive vote of no confidence**. A constructive vote of no confidence requires that those who oppose the government also indicate who should replace the government if the incumbent loses. In effect, a successful constructive vote of no confidence removes one government from office and replaces it with another in a single step. One of the reasons for adopting a constructive vote of no confidence is that it tends to reduce government instability. As you can imagine, it is often easier to get people to

Legislative responsibility refers to a situation in which a legislative majority has the constitutional power to remove a government from office without cause.

A **vote of no confidence** is initiated by the legislature; if the government does not obtain a legislative majority in this vote, it must resign. A **constructive vote of no confidence** must indicate who will replace the government if the incumbent loses a vote of no confidence. A **vote of confidence** is initiated by the government; if the government does not obtain a legislative majority in this vote, it must resign.

4. Legislatures may be able to remove members of the government from office in presidential systems, but only “for cause”—typically incapacitation or criminal behavior.

vote against a government than it is to get them to agree on who should replace it. During the interwar period in Weimar Germany, it was relatively easy to build legislative majorities who opposed the incumbent government. It was extremely difficult, however, to construct and maintain majorities in favor of a particular alternative. As a result, governments tended to be extremely short-lived. It was in response to this that the postwar German constitution adopted the *constructive* vote of no confidence. With this new provision, an incumbent German government can be brought down only if a legislative majority can also agree on an alternative government to replace it.

In addition to votes of no confidence, some countries have what is known as a **vote of confidence** (Huber 1996). A vote of confidence is similar to a vote of no confidence in that governments who do not obtain a legislative majority must resign.⁵ The difference is that votes of confidence are initiated by governments, whereas votes of no confidence are initiated by the legislature. You might be wondering why a government would ever call a vote of confidence in itself. There are a number of reasons. For example, one has to do with the fact that votes of confidence can be attached to pieces of legislation in many countries. If a government is unsure about its ability to gain sufficient legislative support to pass some piece of legislation, then it can choose to make the vote on this legislation a vote on the continued existence of the government. Oftentimes, legislators who do not like the particular piece of legislation that the government is trying to pass may nonetheless decide to vote for it under these circumstances because they do not actually wish to bring the government down over it. This is particularly the case if bringing the government down means new elections and the possibility of losing their seats. Similarly, governments can employ votes of confidence in an attempt to unite a divided party or to humiliate critics who publicly criticize the government but who are unwilling to actually vote the government out of office. Of course, these tactical uses of the vote of confidence can backfire against those who use them if the government misjudges the willingness of its opponents to call its bluff and vote against the motion.

In sum, legislatures in democracies that exhibit legislative responsibility can remove governments by successfully passing a vote of no confidence or defeating a government-initiated vote of confidence. As Figure 11.1 illustrates, democracies in which there is no legislative responsibility are presidential; democracies that have legislative responsibility may be either parliamentary or mixed. To help determine whether these latter democracies are parliamentary or mixed, we must start by asking a second question.

Is There an Independently (Directly or Indirectly) Elected President?

The second question is whether there is an independently elected president. “Independently elected” refers to the independence of the president from the legislature—the president is

5. Germany represents a slight exception. Article 81 of the German constitution allows a government that has lost a vote of confidence in the lower house (Bundestag) to retain power for six months if it continues to enjoy the support of a majority in the upper house (Bundesrat).

elected to serve a fixed term in office and cannot be removed by the legislature.⁶ Presidents can be either directly elected if the voters cast ballots for the candidate they wish to elect (such as Benin, Mexico, and South Korea) or indirectly elected if voters cast ballots to elect an assembly whose role it is to elect a president (such as the Czech Republic, Italy, and the United States). The mere presence or absence of an independently elected political actor with the title of president, though, is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition in and of itself to classify a democracy as parliamentary, presidential, or mixed. As Figure 11.1 indicates, the defining characteristic of a presidential regime is not that there is an independently elected president; rather, it is that there is no legislative responsibility. In fact, independently elected presidents can exist in all three types of democracy.⁷ For example, directly elected presidents exist in presidential democracies (such as Guatemala, Malawi, and Russia), parliamentary democracies (such as Cape Verde, Ireland, and Slovakia), and mixed democracies (such as France, Mali, and Poland). Similarly, indirectly elected presidents exist in presidential democracies (such as the United States), parliamentary democracies (such as Germany, Greece, and Italy), and mixed democracies (such as Finland prior to 1999).⁸

Although the presence of an independently elected president is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for distinguishing between the three types of democracy, we can conclude that any democracy that has legislative responsibility but no independently-elected president must be parliamentary. Most parliamentary democracies fall into this category (Cheibub 2007, 37). Still, as we have already indicated, some parliamentary democracies do have independently elected presidents. To distinguish between these parliamentary democracies and mixed democracies, we must ask a third and final question.

Is the Government Responsible to the President?

The third question is whether the government is responsible to an independently elected president. Governments are responsible to a president in a direct way if the president can unilaterally dismiss the government in its entirety or one minister at a time (such as in Iceland and Portugal). They are responsible to the president in an indirect way if the president can dismiss the government by dissolving the legislature (such as in France and Portugal). Democracies in which the government is responsible to both the legislature and an independently elected president are mixed. Democracies in which the government is responsible only to the legislature

6. Some democracies, like the United States, allow for the possibility of removing the president only through the extraordinary and costly procedure of impeachment.

7. It is worth noting that simply bestowing the title of president on a political actor does not necessarily make that actor an independently elected president. For example, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, and South Africa all have political actors that are called “presidents.” The fact that these actors can all be removed from office through a vote of no confidence by the legislature, though, means that they are not *independently* elected. In effect, these actors are the same as prime ministers in parliamentary democracies even though they go by the title of president. It is for this reason, in combination with the existence of legislative responsibility in these countries, that these democracies are considered parliamentary (Cheibub 2007, 39–40).

8. In 2000, Finland adopted a new constitution that removed the president’s power to dissolve the legislature and appoint or remove the government. As a result, Finland is today a parliamentary, rather than a mixed, democracy.

(irrespective of whether they have an independently elected president) are parliamentary. In those parliamentary democracies with independently elected presidents, the president may be the “head of state,” but he is not the “head of government.” Instead, the prime minister is the “head of government” and the president’s duties are restricted to the largely ceremonial tasks

of the “head of state.” When the head of state in a parliamentary democracy is not a president, it is typically a monarch—again, with largely ceremonial duties.

As our discussion indicates, we can classify our three types of democracy in the following way:

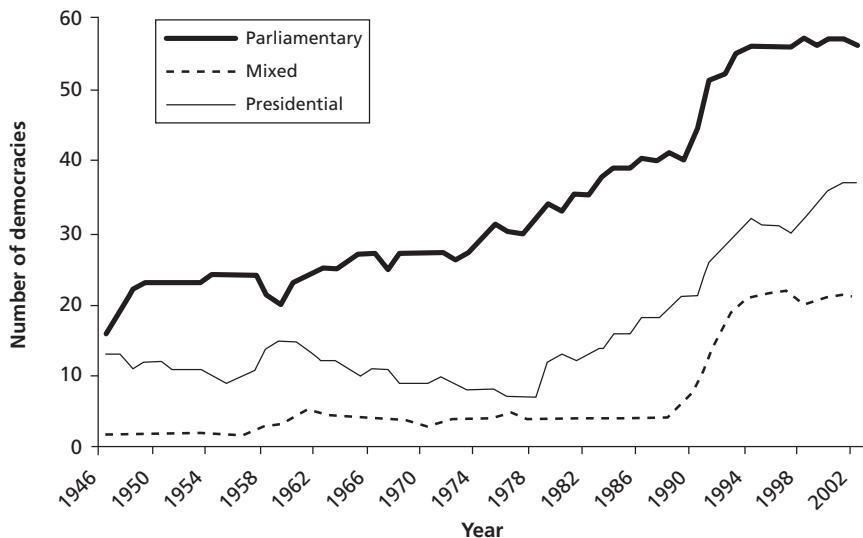
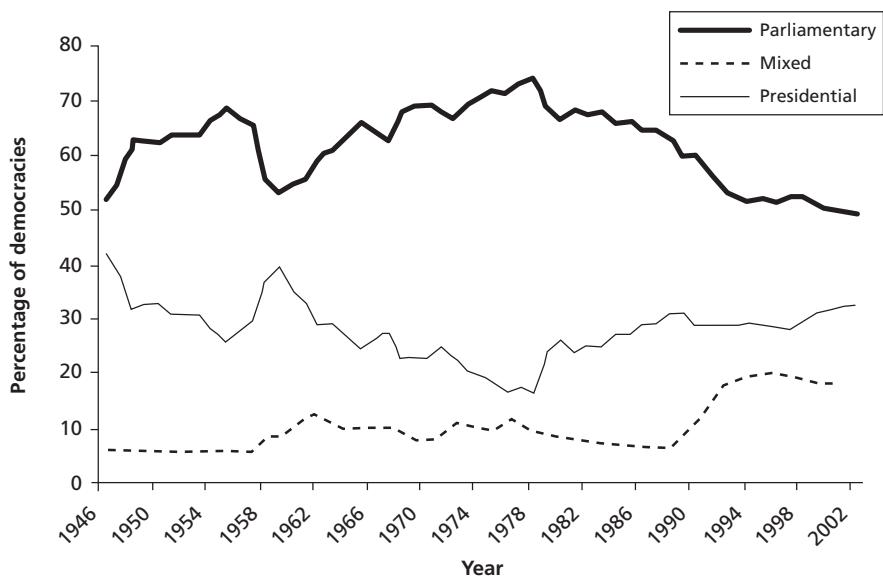
- **Presidential democracy:** Democracies in which the government does not depend on a legislative majority to exist are presidential.
- **Parliamentary democracy:** Democracies in which the government depends only on a legislative majority to exist are parliamentary.
- **Mixed democracy:** Democracies in which the government depends on a legislative majority and on an independently elected president to exist are mixed.

An Overview of Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies

Figure 11.2 shows the number and percentage of parliamentary, presidential, and mixed democracies that there were in the world each year from 1946 to 2002. As the figure indicates, the parliamentary form of democracy is the most common in the world. Almost half (56 out of 114) of the world’s democracies in 2002 were parliamentary. The percentage of parliamentary democracies in the world has been much higher than this in the past, though, with fully 74 percent of democracies being parliamentary in 1978. About a third (37 out of 114) of the world’s democracies were presidential in 2002 and about a fifth (21 out of 114) were mixed. A striking feature of Figure 11.2 is the rapid increase in the number and percentage of mixed democracies in the world from 1946 to 2002. For example, out of the world’s 31 democracies in 1946, only those of Finland and Iceland (6 percent) were mixed. In contrast, by 2002 fully 21 (18 percent) of the world’s 114 democracies were mixed. In Table 11.1 we list those democracies that were parliamentary, presidential, and mixed in 2002.

MAKING AND BREAKING GOVERNMENTS: PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACIES

Having addressed the criteria for classifying democracies as parliamentary, presidential, or mixed, we now try to give a more in-depth insight into how these different democratic systems operate in the real world. We do so by carefully examining how governments form and survive. We start with parliamentary democracies.

FIGURE 11.2**Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies, 1946–2002****a: Number of Democracies by Democracy Type****b: Percentage of Democracies by Democracy Type**

Source: Data were generously provided by José Antonio Cheibub. Przeworski and colleagues' criteria were employed to determine whether a country was a democracy or a dictatorship.

TABLE 11.1**Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies, 2002**

Parliamentary	Presidential	Mixed
Albania, Andorra, Antigua, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent, Sweden, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom, Vanuatu	Argentina, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ivory Coast, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ghana, Greek Cyprus, Guatemala, Guinea- Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, South Korea, Malawi, Mexico, Micronesia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Peru, Philippines, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Switzerland, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zambia	Armenia, Central African Republic, Croatia, France, Haiti, Iceland, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Moldova, Mongolia, Niger, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Ukraine

The Government

The **government in a parliamentary democracy** comprises a prime minister and the cabinet. The **prime minister** is the political chief executive and head of the government in a parliamentary democracy. The **cabinet** is composed of ministers whose job it is to be in the cabinet and head the various government departments. In a parliamentary democracy, the executive branch and the government are the same thing.

The **government in a parliamentary democracy** is essentially made up of a prime minister and a cabinet. As an example, the British government is shown in Table 11.2. The **prime minister** (PM) in a parliamentary democracy is the political chief executive and head of the government. The position of prime minister goes under a number of different titles in various countries—“prime minister” in the United Kingdom, “chancellor” in Austria and Germany, “taoiseach” in Ireland, “premier” in Italy and Poland, and even “president” in the Marshall Islands and South Africa. Here, and throughout, we will follow convention and refer to the political chief executive in a parliamentary system as prime minister. The **cabinet** is equivalent in many ways to a “country’s board of directors” (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006, 40). The cabinet comprises ministers whose job it is to be in the cabinet and to head one of the government’s various departments, such as Education, Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Social Policy. The department of which the minister is head is often referred to as the

ous countries—“prime minister” in the United Kingdom, “chancellor” in Austria and Germany, “taoiseach” in Ireland, “premier” in Italy and Poland, and even “president” in the Marshall Islands and South Africa. Here, and throughout, we will follow convention and refer to the political chief executive in a parliamentary system as prime minister. The **cabinet** is equivalent in many ways to a “country’s board of directors” (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006, 40). The cabinet comprises ministers whose job it is to be in the cabinet and to head one of the government’s various departments, such as Education, Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Social Policy. The department of which the minister is head is often referred to as the

TABLE 11.2**British Government, May 2005**

Minister	Department	Minister	Department
Tony Blair	Prime Minister	Jacqui Smith	Chief Whip
John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister	Alan Johnson	Education
Gordon Brown	Chancellor of the Exchequer	Stephen Timms	Treasury
Margaret Beckett	Foreign Affairs	Hazel Blears	Without Portfolio
John Reid	Home Department	Baroness Amos	House of Lords
David Miliband	Environment	Lord Falconer	Constitution
Douglas Alexander	Transport/Scotland	Hilary Benn	Development
Patricia Hewitt	Health	Des Brown	Defence
Peter Hain	Northern Ireland/Wales	Tessa Jowell	Culture/Sport
John Hutton	Work and Pensions	Ruth Kelly	Local Government
Alistair Darling	Trade & Industry	Jack Straw	House of Commons leader/ Lords Reform
Hilary Armstrong	Social Exclusion/ Duchy of Lancaster		

minister's portfolio. Each minister is directly responsible to the cabinet for what happens in her department. If a problem arises in a particular department, then the minister is supposed to be held responsible for it. This practice is known as the constitutional doctrine of **ministerial responsibility**. Although this practice is part of the constitutional theory of almost all parliamentary democracies, it is now relatively rare to see ministers actually resign when things go wrong under their supervision.

As a member of the cabinet, as well as the head of a government department, a minister is part of a collective entity that is responsible for making the most important decisions about the direction of governmental policy. Cabinet ministers are typically bound by the doctrine of **collective cabinet responsibility**. This doctrine means that, although ministers may air their disagreements about policy freely in cabinet meetings, once a cabinet decision has been made, each minister must defend the government policy in public. Cabinet ministers who feel that they cannot do this must resign, as Robin Cook did as foreign minister in the United Kingdom in 2003 when he disagreed with the British government's decision to go to war over Iraq. This notion of collective cabinet responsibility stands in stark contrast to the behavior and expectations about cabinet ministers in presidential democracies. This is because cabinet members in presidential democracies are in charge of particular policy areas and are not responsible for, or expected to influence, the overall direction of government policy; that is the domain of the president and his staff.

Ministerial responsibility refers to the constitutional doctrine by which cabinet ministers must bear ultimate responsibility for what happens in their ministry.

Collective cabinet responsibility refers to the doctrine by which ministers must publicly support collective cabinet decisions or resign.

The Government Formation Process

In parliamentary democracies, citizens do not elect the prime minister or cabinet members; they elect only members of the legislature. So, how, you might wonder, do governments actually form and take office? Consider the results from the 1987 West German legislative elections shown in Table 11.3. Can you figure out what German government formed after these elections just by looking at the table? It's not obvious, right?

When thinking about the government formation process, it is important to remember that any proposed government must enjoy the “confidence” of the legislature, both to come to power and to stay in power. As we saw earlier, this is the defining characteristic of a parliamentary democracy—the government must always enjoy the support of a legislative majority. In some countries, a potential government may have to demonstrate that it has such support before it can take office by holding what’s known as an **investiture vote** (see Box 11.1). If the proposed government does not win a majority in this vote, it cannot take office. Even if there is no formal investiture vote, though, a potential government in a parliamentary democracy must still have the *implicit* support of a legislative majority at all times. This is because of the ability of the legislature to call a vote of no confidence in the government at any time. If the government ever loses such a vote because it cannot garner the support of a legislative majority, then it must resign. Ultimately, a parliamentary government can be removed from office any time a majority of legislators decides that this is what should happen. As a result, governments that come to power in parliamentary systems must always enjoy the implicit support of a legislative majority even if they never have to explicitly demonstrate this in an investiture vote or a vote of no confidence.

If a single party controlled a majority of the seats in the legislature, then one might expect

A **single-party majority government** is a government in which a single party controls a legislative majority.

that party to form a **single-party majority government**. In fact, this expectation is strongly supported by data from the Constitutional

Change and Parliamentary Democracy (CCPD) Project. These data show that a party controlling a majority (50 percent plus 1 or more) of legislative seats nearly always forms a gov-

TABLE 11.3 German Legislative Elections, 1987

Party	Seats	Percentage
Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU)	223	44.9
Social Democrats (SPD)	186	37.4
Free Democrats (FDP)	46	9.3
Greens	42	8.5
Other parties	0	0.0
Total	497	100

Source: Data are from Adam Carr at <http://psephos.adam-carr.net>.

Box 11.1**INVESTITURE VOTES**

An **investiture vote** is a formal vote in the legislature to determine whether a proposed government can take office. The precise rules governing investiture votes vary from country to country (Bergman 1993). Some constitutions require an absolute majority—more than half of all legislative members must vote for the proposed government. Other constitutions require only a plurality—more people should vote for the proposed government than vote against it. In Germany and Spain, a proposed government must win an absolute majority in a first vote of investiture but only a plurality if a second vote is needed. In Belgium, Ireland, and Italy, a new government requires only a plurality in the first vote. If abstentions are allowed, they may count for or against the government, depending on the country. For example, abstentions count in favor of the government in Italy. As Strøm (1995, 75) reports, "Giulio Andreotti's famous [1976] government of *non sfiducia* ('non-no confidence') was supported by no more than 258 deputies out of 630. Yet Andreotti comfortably gained office, since all but 44 of the remaining members abstained."

An **investiture vote** is a formal vote in the legislature to determine whether a proposed government can take office.

ernment on its own. For example, a single party controlling a majority of seats formed a government on its own fifty (85 percent) out of a possible fifty-nine times that such a party existed in thirteen West European parliamentary democracies from 1945 to 1998.⁹

But what happens when no single party commands a legislative majority, as in Germany in 1987? This is, in fact, the normal situation in most parliamentary democracies. As the CCPD data reveal, fully 251 of the 310 governments (81 percent) that formed in the thirteen West European parliamentary democracies in their sample emerged from political situations in which no single party controlled a majority of legislative seats. As we shall see in more detail when we examine electoral rules in the next two chapters, the frequent use of proportional representation electoral systems helps to explain why so few parties ever win a majority of votes or seats. Only countries like the United Kingdom that employ disproportional electoral rules, such as single-member district plurality systems, regularly produce single parties that control a legislative majority. Even in these countries, it is rare for a single party to actually win a majority of the votes; instead, the mechanical effect of the disproportional electoral rules awards legislative majorities to parties with less than 50 percent of the vote.

9. The countries included here are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Comparative Parliamentary Democracy Project can be found at <http://www.pol.umu.se/ccpd/CCPD/index.asp> (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003). Data are from the March 2006 release.

We know that any potential government must implicitly control a legislative majority before coming to office. There are no rules about who should be in this legislative majority. As a result, any legislator could conceivably be a part of the government's majority support and, hence, play a role in appointing the government. In practice, though, the tight discipline of political parties in many countries means that the actual business of forming a government tends to be done by a small group of senior politicians in each party (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006, 49). These politicians typically include party leaders and potential cabinet members. After an election or the fall of a previous government, these party leaders bargain with one another and a government forms as soon as enough party leaders have committed their support (and that of their party) for it to command a legislative majority. But can we say anything more about the government formation process and the type of government that these actors are likely to choose?

Table 11.4 illustrates all of the potential governments that could have formed in West Germany in 1987. It also indicates the number of surplus seats controlled by each potential government that were not required for obtaining a legislative majority. For example, a coalition between the SPD, FDP, and the Greens would have twenty-five "surplus" seats more than they actually needed to guarantee a legislative majority. In contrast, a coalition between just

TABLE 11.4**Potential West German Governments, 1987**

Party	Seats	Percentage	Surplus seats
CDU/CSU + SPD + Greens + FDP	497	100.0	248
CDU/CSU + SPD + Greens	451	90.7	202
CDU/CSU + SPD + FDP	455	91.5	206
CDU/CSU + FDP + Greens	311	62.6	62
SPD + FDP + Greens	274	55.1	25
CDU/CSU + SPD	409	82.2	160
CDU/CSU + FDP	269	54.1	20
CDU/CSU + Greens	265	53.3	16
SPD + FDP	232	46.7	-17
SPD + Greens	228	45.9	-21
FDP + Greens	88	17.7	-161
SPD	186	37.4	-63
CDU/CSU	223	44.9	-26
Greens	42	8.5	-207
FDP	46	9.3	-203

Note: The numbers in the "Surplus seats" column are the number of seats controlled by each potential government that were not required for obtaining a legislative majority.

the SPD and Greens would be twenty-one seats shy of a majority. One question you should ask yourself is whether all of these potential governments are equally plausible. To answer this question, you really need to know more about the exact process by which governments form in parliamentary democracies.

A graphical depiction of the government formation process in parliamentary regimes is shown in Figure 11.3. The head of state, typically a monarch or president, presides over the government formation process and it is he who ultimately invests a government with the constitutional authority to take office.¹⁰ The extent to which the head of state actively becomes involved in the actual bargaining varies from country to country. In some countries, the head of state is limited to simply swearing in the government proposed by the party elites. If there is an investiture vote, then the proposed government must demonstrate that it has a legislative majority. Once this is done, the head of state simply appoints the government. This government stays in power until the next election, until it loses in a vote of no confidence, or until it resigns. In other countries, the head of state plays a more active role by choosing a particular politician to initiate the government formation process. This politician is known as a **formateur**. It is her job to construct a government.

A **formateur** is the person designated to form the government in a parliamentary regime. The formateur is often the PM designate.

In some countries, the constitution explicitly states who the formateur will be. For example, the Greek constitution states that the head of state must appoint the leader of the largest party as the formateur. If this person fails to form a government, then the head of state allows the leader of the second largest party to try to build a government by making him the new formateur. This process continues until a formateur successfully forms a government. Obviously, the head of state has little discretion in these countries because the election results determine the order in which parties get to try to form the government.

In other countries, the formateur is determined by tradition. For instance, there is an implicit convention in the United Kingdom that the outgoing prime minister gets the first chance to form the government. Only if the old prime minister cannot form a government does one of his rivals get the chance. Thus, even if the outgoing prime minister loses support in the polls, he still gets to be the first formateur. Of course, if the outgoing prime minister loses significant electoral support, he will be unable to form a government and, thus, his right to get first crack at forming a government is little more than a formality; in practice, a beaten prime minister usually admits defeat on election night. There have been a few notable exceptions to this, though. For example, the outgoing prime minister Edward Heath remained in office for a few days after losing the February 1974 legislative elections in the United Kingdom before conceding that he could not form a government. Again, the head of state enjoys little discretion in appointing the formateur in countries like the United Kingdom.

10. Our description of the government formation process in parliamentary democracies builds on Gallagher, Laver and Mair (2006, 47–54).

Government Formation Process in Parliamentary Democracies



In contrast to these countries, there are others in which the head of state is less constrained and can actually “choose” the formateur in a more meaningful sense. For example, choosing the formateur has been one of the more important duties belonging to the head of state in countries like Iceland and the Czech Republic. The Icelandic president’s prerogative of choosing the formateur was critical in the formation of a coalition between the Social Democratic Party and the Independence Party, which governed from 1959 to 1971. The president’s ability to choose the formateur also played a crucial role in the formation of subsequent nonpartisan governments in Iceland (Kristinsson 1999, 93–94). Following legislative elections in June 2006, the Czech president, Vaclav Klaus, was able to influence the government formation process in a starkly partisan way because of his power to appoint the formateur. The Czech elections resulted in a dead heat in the 200-seat legislature: a coalition of left-wing parties won 100 seats, and a coalition of right-wing parties won 100 seats. The Czech president, who belonged to a right-wing party called the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), appointed a member of his own party—Mirek Topolanek—to be the first formateur. When his nominated formateur failed to get his proposed government passed in an investiture vote that saw all 100 legislators from the right vote for it and all 100 legislators from the left vote against it, the Czech president simply renominated the same person to be the next formateur. In somewhat dubious circumstances, Topolanek managed to win a second investiture vote even though he proposed the same government as before—he won the vote 100 to 98 when two left-wing legislators surprisingly decided to abstain rather than vote against the proposed government.

In other countries, the ability of the head of state to engage in partisan politics is seen as inappropriate. As a result, such countries have limited the power of the head of state to appointing an **informateur**. An informateur is someone who is supposed to lack personal political ambition and whose job it is to look at politically feasible coalitions and recommend people who would make good formateurs. In the Netherlands, the monarch chooses an informateur, who then chooses a formateur. The existence of an informateur means that the head of state is, at least theoretically, one step removed from the partisan nature of the government formation process.

An **informateur** examines politically feasible coalitions and nominates the formateur.

Despite the discretion enjoyed by some heads of state, it turns out that the formateur is nearly always the leader of the largest party in the legislature. In most cases, the formateur is also the prime minister designate. All of this is to be expected, given that the leader of the largest party can often credibly threaten to veto any proposal by other possible formateurs. Once the formateur has been chosen, she has to put a cabinet together that is acceptable to a legislative majority.

The ability to nominate cabinet members is one of the most important powers held by the prime minister (formateur). In single-party majority cabinets, the prime minister has enormous discretion in regard to whom to appoint to the cabinet and is constrained only by the internal politics of her party. Politicians might be rewarded with cabinet appointments because they have demonstrated loyalty to the party or the prime minister, because they represent a particular ideological faction within a party, or because they have useful

administrative skills. In some cases, a PM might feel that internal party politics require her to appoint internal party opponents to the cabinet. In fact, the British PM Margaret Thatcher, later to be called the “iron lady,” felt compelled to appoint a cabinet in which her own party supporters were in a distinct minority on first being elected in 1979 (Young 1990, 138). Still, even at this initial moment of relative weakness, Thatcher (1993, 26) later recalled, “I made sure that the key economic ministers would be true believers in our economic strategy.”

In coalition cabinets, the discretion that the PM has in nominating cabinet members is obviously more constrained. Typically, party leaders in the proposed cabinet will nominate particular ministers to the subset of portfolios that have been allocated to their party during the initial stages of the government formation process. Although possible, it is rare to see the PM or party leaders veto a nomination by another party leader. On the face of it, this would seem to suggest that the leaders of each government party are generally free to pick the people they want for “their” portfolios. The fact that we do not see nominations vetoed, though, does not necessarily mean that party leaders have full discretion in whom they nominate. It might simply be the case that objectionable ministerial choices are not proposed in the first place (Indriðason and Kam 2005). Given the considerable influence that cabinet members have over policy in their respective portfolios, party leaders will bargain hard, first over how many ministers they get, and second over who should be appointed to these posts, before deciding whether to support the proposed cabinet.

Once a cabinet has been formed, the support of a legislative majority may or may not have to be demonstrated by a formal investiture vote. If the investiture vote is unsuccessful, then the government formation process starts all over again; there may or may not be a new election before this happens. If the investiture vote is successful (or there is no required vote), however, then the head of state simply appoints the cabinet nominated by the formateur to office. At this point, the government is free to rule until it is defeated in a vote of no confidence or until a new election is necessary. If the government is defeated in a vote of no confidence or a new election is called, then the incumbent government remains in office to

A **caretaker government** occurs when an election is called or when an incumbent government either resigns or is defeated in a vote of no confidence. It rules the country for an interim period until a new government is formed.

run the country as a **caretaker government**.¹¹ This caretaker government remains in office until the next round of the government formation process is complete and a new government is ready to take its place. In most countries,

there is a strong constitutional convention that caretaker governments will not make any important policy changes to those in place when the outgoing government loses its parliamentary basis (Herman and Pope 1973; Golder 2007). Ireland represents somewhat of an exception to this in that Irish caretaker governments can, and do, use the full range of powers available to any “normal” government (Laver and Shepsle 1994, 292). As you can

11. In Germany, the “constructive” vote of no confidence means that an alternative government must be proposed as part of a no confidence motion. As a result, there is no caretaker government in Germany if the legislature ever passes such a motion, because there is no interim period between governments.

Box 11.2**PRINCIPAL-AGENT, OR DELEGATION, PROBLEMS**

Forming a coalition cabinet raises an interesting problem. Each party in government (principal) delegates the discretion and resources to make policy in a particular ministry to a cabinet minister (agent). In a single-party government, the cabinet ministers all come from the same party. As a result, we expect that each cabinet minister is likely to implement his party's preferred policy. In coalition governments, though, the leaders of each government party delegate power to make policy to cabinet ministers from *different* parties. It is often the case that party leaders will agree to a coalition policy that is some mix of each party's preferred policy during the government formation process. But what's to stop cabinet ministers from implementing their own party's preferred policy in the ministries that they control rather than the policy that they had

agreed to before coming to power? This is known generally as a **principal-agent, or delegation, problem**. The problem is that the cabinet minister has more information about the available policy options in her ministry than the

A **principal-agent, or delegation, problem** refers to the difficulties that arise when a principal delegates authority to an agent that (a) has different goals than the principal, and (b) cannot be perfectly monitored.

rest of the cabinet and can take advantage of this informational asymmetry if she wants.

Müller and Strøm (2000) suggest that problems of delegation that arise in the context of coalition governments can be resolved simply by writing very detailed coalition agreements in an attempt to bind the relevant parties to an agreed government policy. In effect, parties promise, in writing, to implement the coalition policy. But what makes these promises credible? Why would parties keep these promises just because they have written them down in detail? Political parties have recognized that there is a delegation problem when forming a cabinet and have come up with a couple of institutional solutions to help monitor and keep tabs on what their coalition partners are doing.

One solution is to use what are known as "junior ministers." These individuals are also sometimes known as ministers of state or undersecretaries. Although it is rare for government parties to veto cabinet nominations by another party, Michael Thies (2001) has argued that they often appoint their own junior ministers to cabinet portfolios controlled by their coalition partners in order to ensure that their coalition partners do not stray too far from the agreed government policy. The appointment of junior ministers is part and parcel of the deal that sets up the cabinet, but these junior ministers are not actually full members of the cabinet—they generally do not share power with ministers, they do not vote in cabinet, and they only occasionally participate in cabinet meetings. Nonetheless, the cabinet minister to whom they have been appointed cannot unilaterally dismiss them. Thies finds that parties purposely assign their own junior ministers to ministries headed by their partners in Italy, Japan, and the Netherlands but not in Germany.

A second solution that helps to resolve Thies's "German anomaly" focuses on legislative committees. Martin and Vanberg (2004) show that the legislative committees in the Dutch and German parliaments scrutinize government bills more extensively when the ideological divergence between coalition partners on the issues addressed in the bill is large. Kim and Loewenberg (2005) examine the importance of legislative committees further and show that

government parties in the German Bundestag from 1961 to 1998 have appointed members of their own party to chair legislative committees that oversee ministries controlled by their coalition partners. In effect, German parties use legislative committees, and not junior ministers, to monitor the actions of their coalition partners.

The appointment of junior ministers and legislative committee chairs are both mechanisms

that can be used to help cope with the delegation problems that arise in the relationship between government parties, as principals, and members of the cabinet, as their agents. Why some countries choose to use both mechanisms, whereas others prefer to employ one rather than the other, is an open question that requires more research.

As you can imagine, the types of principal-agent, or delegation, problems that we have mentioned in the context of forming coalition governments are ubiquitous in political (and other) settings. For example, think about elections and the government formation process in parliamentary democracies more broadly for a moment. At election time, voters (principals) are delegating policymaking power to legislators (agents). Following elections, these legislators (principals) then delegate policymaking power to the prime minister and her cabinet (agents). When the cabinet is being constructed, each party in government (principals) delegates policymaking power in a particular ministry to a cabinet minister (agent), who may or may not be from the same party. This process of delegation continues, with cabinet ministers (principals) delegating policymaking and policy-implementing power to civil servants or bureaucrats (agents) within their gov-



Lawmakers in the German parliament in Berlin cast their ballots for a confidence vote on July 1, 2005. German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder called the confidence vote, which he intentionally lost, in order to enable early elections to be held that fall.

ernment departments. In effect, parliamentary democracy is, by its very nature, a long chain of delegation and accountability, from the voters to the ultimate policymakers in the cabinet (and civil service), in which, at each link, a principal (in whom authority is placed) delegates to an agent, whom the principal has conditionally authorized to act on her behalf (Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003). This chain of delegation is indirect in that voters (the original principal) get to directly elect only the legislators; all other agents are only indirectly elected and indirectly accountable to the voters.

Some form of delegation is required in any large political system. After all, citizens simply do not have the time or expertise to make all the necessary policy decisions in a country. Still,

although delegation allows principals to benefit from the expertise and abilities of others, it can also be perilous. This is because delegation involves a transfer of power, and there is always a danger that the people to whom power is transferred will abuse that power and not do as the principal wants (Lupia 2003, 34). One of the Founding Fathers in the United States, James Madison, famously recognized this problem in the *Federalist*, number 51, when he noted, "In framing a government to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself."

imagine, the fact that caretaker governments generally have no authority to take major policy initiatives can be problematic if the government formation process takes a long time. This is particularly the case if the government has collapsed as the result of some sort of political, economic, or military crisis. We will return to the issue of how long it takes to form a government a little later in the chapter.

A Simple Model of Government Formation

Now that we know more details about the government formation process in parliamentary democracies, we can return to our West German example from 1987. Remember that all of the potential governments are listed in Table 11.4. Given what you now know about the government formation process, ask yourself whether all of these governments are equally plausible. Who is likely to be the formateur? The leader of the CDU/CSU was appointed formateur because he controlled the largest party in the Bundestag at the time. As the leader of the largest party, Helmut Kohl (CDU/CSU) was given the first chance to form the government. If you were Helmut Kohl, would you form a government that did not include your own party? The obvious answer is no. As a result, you can immediately eliminate those potential governments in Table 11.4 that do not include the CDU/CSU.

Are any of the remaining potential governments more plausible than others? The fact that a government must control a legislative majority in order to come to power suggests that the government formation process may be easier if the proposed government actually controls a majority of legislative seats. As a result, you might think to eliminate those potential governments that do not have a positive number of surplus seats, that is, those governments that do not control a legislative majority.¹² Table 11.5 lists the remaining potential governments in boldface type. Which of the seven remaining possibilities do you think is most likely to become the government? To answer this question, you should start to think about the goals of the political actors engaged in the government formation process. What do they want?

12. As we'll see a little later, governments that do not explicitly control a legislative majority do sometimes come to power. You should start to think about how and why this might happen.

TABLE 11.5**Remaining Potential West German Governments, 1987**

Party	Seats	Percentage	Surplus seats
CDU/CSU + SPD + Greens + FDP	497	100.0	248
CDU/CSU + SPD + Greens	451	90.7	202
CDU/CSU + SPD + FDP	455	91.5	206
CDU/CSU + FDP + Greens	311	62.6	62
SPD + FDP + Greens	274	55.1	25
CDU/CSU + SPD	409	82.2	160
CDU/CSU + FDP	269	54.1	20
CDU/CSU + Greens	265	53.3	16
SPD + FDP	232	46.7	-17
SPD + Greens	228	45.9	-21
FDP + Greens	88	17.7	-161
SPD	186	37.4	-63
CDU/CSU	223	44.9	-26
Greens	42	8.5	-207
FDP	46	9.3	-203

Note: Entries that are not shown in boldface type either do not contain the CDU/CSU or do not control a majority of legislative seats.

Political scientists often divide politicians into those who are office seeking and those who are policy seeking. When forming a government, an office-seeking politician will want to secure as many ministerial portfolios as he can. After the position of prime minister, cabinet positions represent the highest political posts in a parliamentary regime. In effect, landing a cabinet portfolio is often a signal of a successful political career and is a prize that many politicians seek. Being in the cabinet brings power and fame. An **office-seeking politician** is interested in the “intrinsic” benefits of office. In contrast, a **policy-seeking politician** will, when

An **office-seeking politician** is interested in the intrinsic benefits of office; he wants as much office as possible. A **policy-seeking politician** only wants to shape policy.

forming a government, want to secure ministerial portfolios in order to be able to influence public policy. This type of politician is not interested in the “intrinsic” benefits of office; he does not want to be a minister simply for the sake of being a minister. Instead, a policy-seeking politician wants ministerial portfolios so that he can make a difference in how the country is run.

A Purely Office-Seeking World

Imagine again that you are Helmut Kohl, the CDU/CSU leader, in Germany in 1987. If you lived in a purely office-seeking world, what government would you propose? In order to control a legislative majority, you know that you must get the support of other party leaders because your party controls only a minority of legislative seats. Because you live in a purely office-seeking world, you can win their support only by giving them office. In effect, you say to them, “I will give you X ministerial posts in the government in exchange for your legislative support.” You will obviously want to give them as few portfolios as possible, however, so that you can keep the rest for yourself. In order to win their support you will probably have to give up more cabinet positions to a party leader who controls a large number of legislative seats than to a party leader who controls a small number of seats. In fact, there is quite strong empirical evidence that a prime minister must give portfolios to other parties in proportion to the number of seats that each party contributes to the government’s legislative majority. This apparent empirical regularity is known as **Gamson’s Law** (see Box 11.3).

Gamson’s Law states that cabinet portfolios will be distributed among government parties in strict proportion to the number of seats that each party contributes to the government’s legislative majority.

Box 11.3

PORTFOLIO ALLOCATION AND GAMSON’S LAW

Gamson’s Law: Cabinet portfolios will be distributed among government parties in strict proportion to the number of seats that each party contributes to the government’s legislative majority (Gamson 1961).

The allocation of cabinet seats in the Netherlands following the 1998 legislative elections is shown in Table 11.6. On the whole, the last two columns indicate that the distribution of cabinet portfolios is quite proportional to the relative size of each party in the government. Often, there is some evidence that the degree of proportionality declines as the parties become smaller. One reason for this is the “lumpy” nature of cabinet positions. Once a party is invited and agrees to join the government, it must get at least one cabinet seat irrespective of the number of legislative seats that it contributes to the government’s majority—it cannot receive half a cabinet portfolio or a third of one. The lumpy nature of cabinet portfolios means that small parties tend to be slightly overrepresented and large parties slightly underrepresented in the portfolio allocation process. There is some evidence for this in the 1998 Dutch government.

Several recent studies have questioned the extent to which Gamson’s Law holds in practice. For example, Druckman and Warwick (2001) point out that some ministerial portfolios are more important or more powerful than others. As a result, a party may agree to receive fewer cabinet positions than its size would indicate under Gamson’s Law in exchange for more powerful portfolios. The 1998 Dutch government provides some evidence for this. Both the PvdA and the VVD received a smaller percentage of cabinet portfolios than they could have

TABLE 11.6**Allocation of Cabinet Seats in the Netherlands, 1998**

Party	No. of legislative seats	No. of cabinet ministers	Proportion of government seats	Proportion of cabinet ministers
Social Democrats (PvdA)	45	6	46.4	42.9
Liberal Democrats (D66)	14	3	14.4	21.4
Liberals (VVD)	38	5	39.2	35.7

Note: 150 seats in legislature.

expected given their size. These parties did, however, get the more important portfolios, such as the prime minister and interior minister (PvdA) or the foreign minister, finance minister, and defense minister (VVD). Although the D66 appears to be overcompensated, one of its three cabinet appointments is a “minister without portfolio,” that is, a minister who has no specific responsibility. For further studies examining the applicability of Gamson’s Law, see Frechette, Kagel, and Morelli (2005); Druckman and Warwick (2006); Carroll and Cox (2007); and Laver, de Marchi, and Mutlu (2007).

One of the implications of the office-seeking logic that we have just outlined is that you will not want more parties in government than are strictly necessary for you to obtain a legislative majority. Thus, you will want to form a particular type of coalition government

called a **minimal winning coalition** (MWC). A minimal winning coalition is one in which there are just enough parties (and no more) to control a legislative majority. Of the seven remaining potential governments in Table 11.5,

A **minimal winning coalition** (MWC) is one in which there are no parties that are not required to control a legislative majority. A **least minimal winning coalition** is the MWC with the lowest number of surplus seats.

there are three MWCs: (CDU/CSU + SPD), (CDU/CSU + FDP), and (CDU/CSU + Greens). In none of these coalitions is it possible to remove a party without, at the same time, giving up your legislative majority. A second implication of the purely office-seeking logic is that you will choose the smallest MWC, or the **least minimal winning coalition**. The least MWC is the one with the lowest number of surplus seats. You want the least MWC because you do not want to “buy” more legislative seats with office than you strictly have to. This leads to the hypothesis that if the world is purely office seeking, then we should observe least minimal winning coalitions. In terms of our example of the 1987 German election, this means that we should expect the leader of the CDU/CSU to form a minimal winning coalition with the Greens because this MWC has the fewest surplus seats.

A Purely Policy-Seeking World

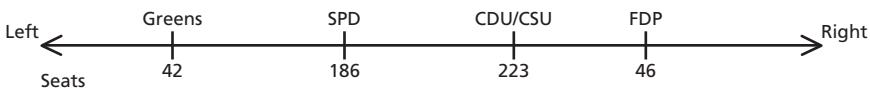
Imagine that you are Helmut Kohl again but that you now live in a purely policy-seeking world. Which of the remaining potential governments in Table 11.5 would you propose? To answer that question, you will need to know something about the policy positions of the parties along the salient issue dimensions in Germany in 1987. Figure 11.4 illustrates the policy positions or “ideal points” of the four German parties with legislative seats on the left-right dimension of economic policy. As the leader of the CDU/CSU, you know that you must get the support of other party leaders in order to control a legislative majority. Because you now live in a purely policy-seeking world, you can win their support only by giving them policy concessions. This means that instead of being able to implement policy at your own ideal point, you will have to implement a coalition policy that lies somewhere between the ideal points of all your coalition partners. It is likely that you will have to make more policy concessions to win the support of a party leader who controls a large number of legislative seats than you will to win the support of a party leader who controls a small number of legislative seats. In other words, large parties will tend to be able to pull policy more toward their ideal point than small parties.

One of the implications of this logic is that you will want to form governments with parties that are located close to you in the policy space. Political scientists often refer to this type of coalition as a “compact coalition,” or **connected coalition**. A connected coalition is one in which all members of the coalition are located next to each other in the policy space. For example, a coalition between the CDU/CSU and the FDP is a connected coalition. A coalition between the CDU/CSU and the Greens, however, is not a connected coalition because there is a noncoalition party (the SPD) that lies between them in the policy space. Of the seven remaining potential governments in Table 11.5, there are five connected coalitions: (CDU/CSU + SPD + Greens + FDP), (CDU/CSU + SPD + Greens), (CDU/CSU + SPD + FDP), (CDU/CSU + SPD), and (CDU/CSU + FDP). The parties in all of these coalitions are located directly next to each other in the policy space. A second implication of the purely policy-seeking logic is that you will choose the connected least minimal winning coalition. You want the connected least MWC because you do not want to “buy” more legislative seats with policy than you strictly have to. This leads to the hypothesis that if the world is purely policy seeking, then we should observe connected least minimal winning coalitions. In terms of our German example, this means that we should expect the leader of the CDU/CSU to form a coalition government with the FDP.

A **connected coalition** is one in which the member parties are located directly next to each other in the policy space.

FIGURE 11.4

German Party Positions on the Left-Right Economic Dimension, 1987



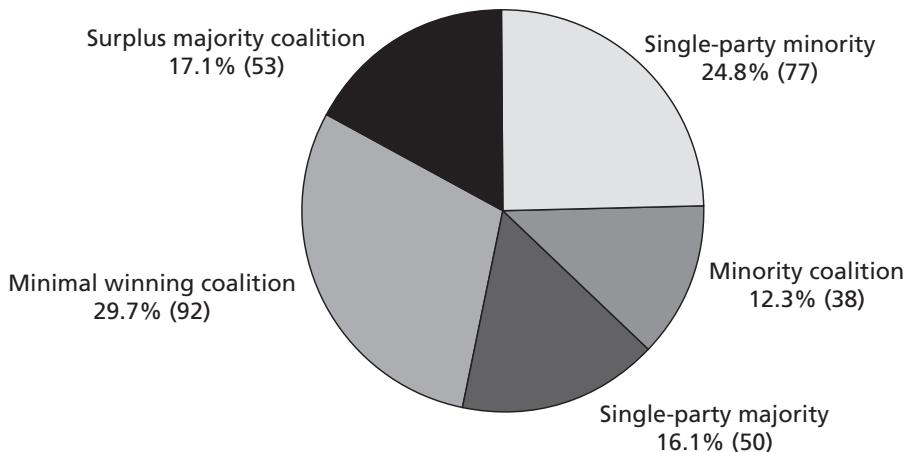
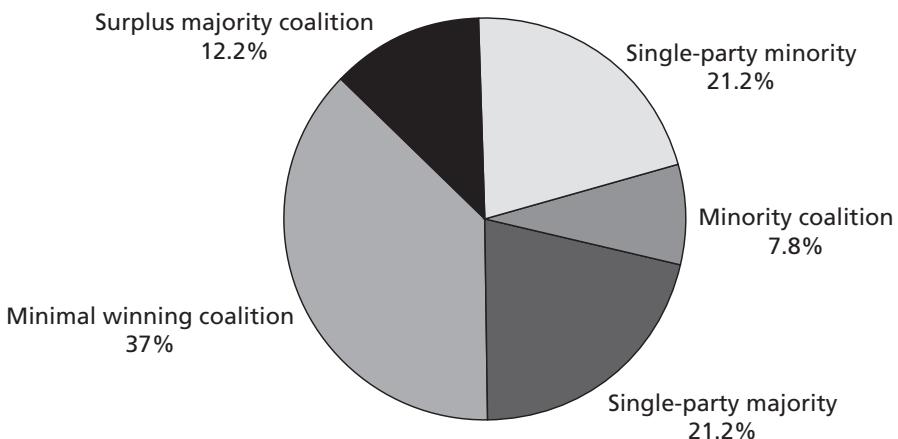
The Trade-off between Office and Policy

The actual government formed by Helmut Kohl in 1987 was a coalition between the CDU/CSU and the FDP. This was the prediction from the purely policy-seeking logic. Does this mean that policy seeking dominates office seeking in Germany? There is a vast literature in political science that seeks to answer questions like this, but we believe that this sort of question is hard, if not impossible, to answer empirically. Consider our example again. It is difficult to know if policy seeking really dominated office seeking in Germany, because the CDU/CSU did not have to give up too much extra office in order to get a coalition policy closer to its ideal point. In effect, the CDU/CSU preferred to give up slightly more office by forming a government coalition with the FDP (four extra surplus seats) in exchange for a coalition policy that was likely to be much closer to its ideal point than if it had formed a coalition with the Greens. In practice, we believe that politicians probably care about both office and policy and are, therefore, always making trade-offs. They are always asking how much extra office they should give up to get policy closer to their ideal point or how much policy they should give up to get more office. If this is the case, then it probably makes little sense to categorize real-world politicians into purely policy-seeking or purely office-seeking types.

Even if politicians were purely office seekers or purely policy seekers, we believe that the reality of political competition would force them to act *as if they cared about both policy and office*. For example, a politician who wishes to affect policy must win office in order to be in a position to change policy. As a result, a purely policy-seeking politician will have to care about office, if only as a means to affect policy. Similarly, an office-seeking politician will realize that voters are unlikely to elect or reelection him if he cares only about office and being famous. A consequence is that an office-seeking politician will have to care about policy, if only to make sure that he wins election. Ultimately, we see no way to distinguish between office-seeking and policy-seeking politicians simply by observing the world, because all politicians will act as if they care about both office and policy. If we are right, then it probably makes slightly more sense to think that government coalitions are likely to be connected least MWCs rather than just least MWCs.

Different Types of Government

We know that a government must control an implicit legislative majority in order to come to power and remain in office in a parliamentary democracy. Up to this point, we have assumed that governments must contain enough parties that they *explicitly* control a majority of legislative seats. In fact, the logic presented in the previous section suggests that governments should contain just enough parties to obtain this legislative majority and no more. It is for this reason that we have focused up to this point on single-party majority governments and various forms of minimal winning coalitions. When we look around the world, however, we sometimes observe other types of parliamentary government—minority governments and surplus majority governments. Table 11.7 provides information on 310 cabinets by country that formed in thirteen West European parliamentary democracies from 1945 to 1998. Figure 11.5 illustrates the percentage of cabinets of each government type and the percentage of time spent under each government type.

FIGURE 11.5**Government Types in Thirteen West European Parliamentary Democracies, 1945–1998****a: Proportion of Governments of Different Cabinet Types, 1945–1998****b: Proportion of Time under Different Cabinet Types, 1945–1998**

Source: Data are from the Constitutional Change and Parliamentary Democracies project. (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).

Note: Data do not include caretaker or nonpartisan governments. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of governments of different cabinet types.

TABLE 11.7**Government Types in Thirteen West European Parliamentary Democracies, 1945–1998**

Country	Single-party majority	Minimal winning coalition	Single-party minority	Minority coalition	Surplus majority	Total
Austria	4	14	1	0	3	22
Belgium	3	16	2	1	11	33
Denmark	0	4	14	13	0	31
Germany	1	17	3	0	5	26
Greece	7	1	1	0	1	10
Ireland	6	5	6	5	0	22
Italy	0	3	14	9	22	48
Luxembourg	0	15	0	0	1	16
Netherlands	0	9	0	3	10	22
Norway	6	3	12	5	0	26
Spain	2	0	6	0	0	8
Sweden	2	5	17	2	0	26
United Kingdom	19	0	1	0	0	20
Total	50	92	77	38	53	310

Source: Data are from the Constitutional Change and Parliamentary Democracies project. (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).

Note: Data do not include caretaker or nonpartisan governments.

Minority Governments

A **minority government** is one in which the governmental parties do not together command a majority of legislative seats.

A **minority government** is one in which the party or parties in power do not explicitly command a majority of legislative seats. Minority governments may be single-party minority governments or minority coalition governments.

You are probably wondering how a minority government could come to power and why it would stay in power in a parliamentary democracy. After all, the opposition in parliament controls enough seats that it could remove the government through a vote of no confidence whenever it agrees to do so. A minority government can exist only as long as the opposition chooses not to bring it down. This means that whenever we observe a minority government, we know that there must be an implicit majority in the legislature that supports it. Every day that a government is not defeated in a vote of no confidence, it implicitly enjoys the support of a legislative majority.

In some countries, we know precisely who makes up this implicit majority because some nongovernmental party or parties publicly state that they will sustain the government against votes to overthrow it but do not want to be in the cabinet (Powell 2000, 102). In exchange, the

government usually agrees to consult these “support parties” on various policy matters. This occurred in Britain in 1977 when the Liberals agreed to support the Labour Party when it lost its majority. This also occurred more recently after the 2005 legislative elections in New Zealand when two minor parties—the Progressive Party and United Future—publicly agreed to support a minority coalition government made up of the Labour Party and New Zealand First. In other countries, the government does not rely on specific support parties but builds legislative majorities on an ad hoc basis. In effect, the government builds different majorities for each piece of legislation that it wants to pass. For example, the minority Socialist government in France in 1988 formed legislative majorities with the Communists on their left to pass some policies and with the UDF on their right to pass other policies (Powell 2000, 105). In these countries, it is not always easy to figure out exactly who in the legislature is keeping the minority government in power; all we know is that at least one of the nongovernmental parties must be helping it at any given point in time. One consequence of this is that it becomes difficult for voters to know who is responsible for policy and to hold them accountable for it.

For a long time, minority governments were seen as undemocratic and an unfortunate anomaly. They were seen as something that should occur only infrequently and something that, if they did occur, should be short-lived. Strøm (1984, 1990) was one of the first political scientists to challenge this accepted wisdom. He argued that minority governments should be seen as a normal and “democratic” outcome of party competition in parliamentary regimes. One thing that he illustrated was the frequency with which minority governments formed in West European democracies and the relative stability that characterized these cabinets. As Figure 11.5a indicates, over a third (37.1 percent) of all governments that formed in West European parliamentary democracies from 1945 to 1998 were minority governments. In countries like Denmark (82 percent), Sweden (81 percent), and Norway (65 percent), minority governments were the norm in this period. In addition to their numerical frequency, minority governments have also been in power for long stretches of time. For example, minority cabinets have ruled in West European parliamentary democracies for well over a quarter (29 percent) of the postwar period (Figure 11.5b). Each minority government that formed remained in power for well over a year (513 days) on average.

Several theories have been proposed to explain the apparent puzzle of why minority governments exist. All of these theories point to the importance of policy in the government formation process. If politicians cared only about office, then it is hard to understand why any nongovernmental party would ever choose not to be in the cabinet when it has the power to force its way into it. In other words, why would nongovernmental parties ever allow a minority government to enjoy all the benefits of office without controlling a legislative majority? The simple answer is that they wouldn’t. If politicians care about policy, however, then we can think of situations in which a party might decide that it can better achieve its policy objectives by remaining outside the cabinet.

Strøm (1984, 1990) claims that minority governments are more likely in countries in which nongovernmental (opposition) parties have a strong say over policy. The strength of

the opposition typically depends on the structure of the legislative committee system in each country. All legislatures have committee systems to help them carry out their work. In some countries, the opposition has little influence over policy because the committee system largely accepts whatever the government proposes. The opposition is in a much stronger position in those countries in which the committee system is specifically designed to facilitate the dispersal of policymaking influence to many groups, including nongovernmental parties. The extent to which policy is made in parliamentary committees and the degree to which opposition parties can exert influence in these committees obviously varies from country to country.¹³ Strøm hypothesizes that the more powerful a country's committee system and the greater the influence of the opposition in it, the lower the incentive for opposition parties to enter government, because they can shape policy without actually being in the cabinet. As a result, we should expect to see more minority governments in these countries. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Opposition strength hypothesis: Minority governments will be more likely when opposition influence is strong.

Of course, you might be wondering why a party would ever choose to influence policy from outside the government rather than from inside it. Although all countries typically allow some degree of opposition influence over policy, this influence is never stronger than that of the government itself. So, why not influence policy from within the cabinet? In fact, why not enjoy the benefits of office while shaping policy? There are several reasons, most having to do with future electoral prospects, why a party might choose not to be in the cabinet despite the loss of office benefits and the decreased ability to shape policy. First, parties may be reluctant to take responsibility for the policy that will be implemented. Governing parties are much more likely to be held responsible for failed policies than opposition parties. Indeed, there is strong evidence that incumbent parties tend to lose votes in subsequent elections. In a study of twenty democracies over twenty-five years, Powell (2000, 47–48) finds that incumbent governments lose about 2 percent of their vote on average. By remaining in the opposition, parties can often achieve some of their policy objectives while being held less accountable if things go wrong. Second, a party may have made a preelection pledge not to go into government with certain parties. Breaking this promise might be electoral suicide at the next election. Third, opposition parties have much more flexibility in choosing their campaign strategies in future elections because they do not have a past record in office to constrain them. These are all possible reasons why parties might choose not to be in government in countries that allow them to influence policy from the opposition benches.

Luebbert (1984) provides a related, but slightly different, explanation for the existence of minority governments. Like Strøm, he claims that minority governments are more likely in

13. The committees in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden are very influential in the policymaking process. Moreover, committee chairs are allocated in strict proportion to the size of each party in the legislature (subject to some minimal size requirement) irrespective of whether these parties are in the government or in opposition. In contrast, the legislative committees in France, Greece, Ireland, and the United Kingdom are quite weak and opposition parties are almost never allowed to chair them (Powell 2000; Döring 1995).

countries in which nongovernmental parties have a strong say over policy. Rather than focusing on a country's legislative committee system, though, Luebbert argues that the ability of opposition groups to influence policy depends heavily on whether a country has **corporatist or pluralist interest group relations**. A pluralist country is one in which interest groups compete in the political marketplace outside of the formal policymaking process. In contrast, a corporatist country is one in which key social and economic actors have a formal institutional role in making policy. In these countries, interest groups are organized into national, specialized, hierarchical, and monopolistic peak organizations that sit down with each other and the government to hammer out public policy. As Luebbert (1984, 235) notes, corporatism "allows, indeed guarantees, access to policymaking by a variety of groups." For example, ministries in Norway and Sweden that contemplate legislative or administrative action that might affect a particular interest group are obliged to consult that interest group before proceeding. In Austria the formal representation of labor, business, and agricultural interests is guaranteed by the existence of "chambers," which have a formal right to be consulted on a wide range of policy matters and to which all working citizens are obliged by law to belong. Thus, the cabinet is only one of the sites in which fundamental social and economic decisions are made in corporatist countries. Interest groups, and political parties that represent these groups, have a range of alternatives for the expression of their concerns beyond the cabinet. As a result, we should expect to see more minority governments in corporatist countries because of the lower incentive for opposition parties to enter government. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Corporatist hypothesis: Minority governments will be more likely in corporatist countries.

Strøm has also argued that minority governments are less likely in countries that require a formal investiture vote because potential minority governments face a higher hurdle to taking office than in countries in which no investiture vote is required. If a formal investiture vote is required, then opposition parties must choose to openly support a minority government. Some parties who would not necessarily support a particular minority government in a public vote, however, may find it acceptable to tacitly lend their support to a government if no investiture vote is required. Bergman (1993) distinguishes between "positive" and "negative" government formation rules. He notes that when rules are positive (investiture votes are required), then the onus is on the government to demonstrate that it is supported by a legislative majority. In contrast, when rules are negative (no investiture votes are required), the onus is on the parliament to show that the government is not tolerated. This distinction between being *supported* and *tolerated* suggests that investiture votes might pose particular difficulties for minority governments.

Investiture hypothesis: Minority governments will be less likely when there is a formal investiture vote.

Corporatist interest group relations occur when key social and economic actors, such as labor, business, and agriculture groups, are integrated into the formal policy-making process. **Pluralist interest group relations** occur when interest groups compete in the political marketplace outside of the formal policy-making process.

Another explanation for the existence of minority governments focuses on policy divisions within the opposition. In effect, a minority government can survive and be relatively stable if opposition parties cannot reach an agreement on whom to replace it with. For example, the Congress Party was able to dominate Indian politics as a minority government for many years because the opposition parties on each side of it could not agree on a suitable replacement.¹⁴ A similar situation occurred with the Social Democrats in Sweden and the Christian Democrats in Italy. These parties were consistently able to form minority governments by being relatively large parties located in the middle of the ideological spectrum with opposition parties on either side. These parties, often referred to as “strong” parties, could credibly demand to govern alone because their ideological opponents could not agree on an alternative government to replace them with. This has led Laver and Shepsle (1996) to hypothesize that minority governments should be more likely when there is a strong party.

Strong party hypothesis: Minority governments are more likely when there is a “strong” party.

As good political scientists, you should be wondering if these hypotheses are supported by the empirical evidence. In Table 11.8, we present the results from a statistical analysis in which we examine the effect of opposition strength, corporatism, investiture votes, and strong parties on the probability that a government will be a minority (single party or coalition) government. Our sample includes all governments that formed in thirteen West European parliamentary democracies from 1945 to 1998. We omit nonpartisan governments and those that formed in the presence of a majority party (Strøm 1990, 75). Majority situations are excluded because minority governments are not a feasible option, and nonpartisan governments are omitted because they cannot be assigned a majority or minority status by their very nature. If the theories that we have presented are correct, then we should observe that higher levels of opposition strength, corporatism, and the existence of strong parties make minority governments more likely and that investiture vote requirements make them less likely.

Opposition strength ranges from 1 (low) to 9 (high) and comes from a survey of country experts who were asked to rate their country in regard to the potential impact the opposition has on policy (Laver and Hunt 1992). *Corporatism* ranges from 0 (low) to 5 (high) and captures both the proportion of unionized workers in the workforce and the overall number of unions—a country is more corporatist when it has only a few unions but a high proportion of unionized workers (Garrett 1998). *Investiture* captures whether there is a formal investiture vote or not. *Strong party* indicates whether a “merely strong” or a “very strong” party exists.¹⁵ According to theory, the existence of a strong party should make the formation of a minority government more likely. This is particularly the case if the party is “very strong” rather than just “merely strong” (Laver and Shepsle 1996). Our upcoming results do not depend on whether we treat these two types of strong party separately or together as we do here.

14. It was only when the opposition parties decided to fight the Congress Party on an anticorruption platform rather than an ideological platform that they were able to unite to defeat it (Andersen 1990, 528–530).

15. This measure comes from Martin and Stevenson (2001). It was originally created by Paul Warwick using Laver and Shepsle’s WINSET program.

TABLE 11.8**Testing Theories of Minority Governments**

Dependent Variable: Did a Minority Government Form? 1 = Yes, 0 = No

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Opposition strength</i>	0.31*** (0.05)				0.39*** (0.11)
<i>Corporatism</i>		0.57** (0.22)			0.60* (0.31)
<i>Investiture vote</i>			-0.54*** (0.16)		-0.84** (0.34)
<i>Strong party</i>				-0.52** (0.21)	-0.08 (0.33)
Constant	-1.63*** (0.28)	-2.06*** (0.79)	0.20 (0.12)	0.29* (0.17)	-3.86*** (1.42)
N	251	106	251	155	85
Log likelihood	-152.46	-69.53	-167.55	-104.28	-39.66

Source: Data are from the Constitutional Change and Parliamentary Democracies project. (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).

Note: Cells show coefficients from a probit model with robust standard errors in parentheses.

* = greater than 90% significant.

** = greater than 95% significant.

*** = greater than 99% significant.

So what do the results in Table 11.8 reveal? Remember that next to each variable is a “coefficient,” and beneath this is a “standard error.” The coefficient indicates the direction in which the variable affects the probability of forming a minority government. Thus, a positive coefficient indicates that an increase in the variable makes it more likely that a minority government will form and a negative coefficient indicates that an increase in the variable makes it less likely. The standard error beneath the coefficient essentially tells us how confident we are in our results; we tend to be more confident the smaller the standard error relative to the coefficient. To help indicate how confident we are in our results, we use stars, next to the coefficient. In Table 11.8, one star indicates that we are over 90 percent confident in our results; two stars that we are over 95 percent confident; and three stars that we are over 99 percent confident in our results. A coefficient with no stars indicates that we cannot be very confident that this variable has any effect on the probability that a minority government will form.

As you can see, there is very strong evidence to support the claims made by Luebbert and Strøm that countries with high levels of corporatism and opposition strength are more likely to have minority governments. This is because the coefficients associated with *Opposition strength* and *Corporatism* are always positive and significant. To see the substantive effect of these variables, imagine a country with no strong parties, no investiture votes, and a mean level of corporatism (3.5). If we increased the strength of opposition parties in this country from 2.2 (Greece) to 5.2 (Sweden), then the results from Model 5 indicate that we would

increase the probability of a minority government by 438 percent.¹⁶ Now imagine a country with no strong parties, no investiture votes, and a mean level of opposition strength (4.9). If we increased the degree of corporatism in this country from 1.7 (United Kingdom in 1990) to 3.0 (Italy in 1990), then the results from Model 5 indicate that we would increase the probability of a minority government by 446 percent. There is also very strong evidence to support Strøm's conjecture that countries with formal investiture votes are much less likely to have minority governments. This is because the coefficient associated with *Investiture* is always negative and significant. If a country without a strong party and with mean levels of opposition strength and corporatism decided to adopt formal investiture requirements, then the results from Model 5 indicate that it could expect to cut the probability of minority governments in half (53 percent). These are all very large substantive effects.

In stark contrast to these results, there is no compelling evidence for Laver and Shepsle's (1996) claim that the existence of strong parties makes minority governments more likely. In fact, the coefficient on *Strong party* is always negative. This is the exact opposite of what their theory predicts and suggests that, if anything, the presence of strong parties reduces the likelihood of minority governments. These results are consistent with the findings of a more detailed and complicated analysis conducted by Golder (2006). Thus, although it seems entirely plausible that the existence of parties located in the middle of the ideological spectrum with opposition parties on either side might increase the likelihood of minority governments, there is no systematic evidence, as yet, to support this hypothesis.¹⁷ In sum, we have presented evidence that minority governments are more likely in countries where (a) opposition parties are able to strongly influence policy, (b) interest group relations are organized along corporatist lines, and (c) there are no formal investiture vote requirements.

Surplus Majority Governments

Although governments that appear “too small” (minority) often form, cabinets that appear

A **surplus majority government** is one in which the cabinet includes more parties than are strictly necessary to control a majority of legislative seats.

“too large” (surplus majority or oversized) also emerge from time to time. A **surplus majority government** is one in which the cabinet contains more parties than are strictly necessary to

control a legislative majority. In effect, the government could lose or remove a party and still control a majority of the seats in the legislature. Like minority governments, surplus majority cabinets have often been considered peculiar and uncommon forms of government in parliamentary democracies. The data do not support this view, however. As Figure 11.5a

16. We do not show exactly how to make these calculations here because they are beyond the methodological scope of this book. Students who are interested in how to make these types of calculations are encouraged to take classes in statistics.

17. Martin and Stevenson (2001, 46) present results consistent with the claim that minority governments are more likely when there are strong parties. Specifically, they find that strong parties “tend to get into government and, even more, to rule alone.” Golder (2006), however, shows that Martin and Stevenson’s results come from a slightly misspecified model. Once corrected, their model provides no evidence that minority governments are more common in the presence of strong parties.

indicates, a little under a fifth (17.1 percent) of all governments that formed in West European parliamentary democracies from 1945 to 1998 were surplus majority governments. In fact, surplus majority governments have made up almost half the governments in Italy (46 percent) and the Netherlands (45 percent). In addition to their numerical frequency, surplus majority governments have also been in power for reasonably long stretches of time. For example, surplus majority cabinets have ruled in Western Europe for about 12.2 percent of the postwar period (Figure 11.5b). Moreover, each surplus majority government remained in power for well over a year (536 days) on average.

Several arguments have been proposed to explain the apparent puzzle as to why surplus majority governments form. Just as with minority governments, these arguments emphasize the importance of policy in the government formation process. If politicians were purely office seekers, then it is hard to see why surplus majority governments would ever form, because they require political actors to give up office when they do not have to. This implies that the very existence of surplus majority governments must be a signal that policy matters.

Surplus majority governments have often formed in times of political, economic, or military crisis. These crisis governments are sometimes referred to as “national unity” governments. For example, national unity governments formed in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands immediately after World War II. They also formed in several East European countries following the collapse of communism in 1989. A national unity government formed in Iraq following the 2006 legislative elections. The belief is that only by bringing together parties from across the ideological spectrum and giving them a reason to be invested in the existing political system is it possible to resolve whatever crisis is afflicting the country. The goal is to put the everyday partisan, ethnic, or religious nature of politics on hold for the sake of the country’s immediate future. Although governments of national unity often have strong popular support, this particular type of surplus majority government tends to be short-lived in practice. Political parties that are not required to sustain a legislative majority are often quickly pushed into opposition. The reason is that the desire on the part of politicians to enjoy as much office and policy influence as possible often overrides the wishes of the electorate that parties work together to rescue a country from whatever ails it.

In some circumstances, the formation of a surplus majority government may actually be necessary to pass particular pieces of legislation. For example, constitutional amendments often require “supermajorities,” which are made up of more than a legislative majority. If a government wants to pass a constitutional amendment that requires a supermajority, then it might choose to have more parties in the cabinet than are strictly necessary just to remain in power. Of course, the surplus majority government in this case does not actually contain more parties than are strictly necessary to pass the constitutional amendment. In fact, you might say that this type of government is “oversized” in name only and that in practice it is no different from a minimal winning coalition, given its policy objectives. A country that produces this type of surplus majority government is Belgium (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006, 392). The Belgian constitution requires that laws affecting the relationship between

different language groups in the country require the support of two-thirds of the legislators and a majority of each language group. This has led to several surplus majority governments in Belgium.

Another explanation for the formation of surplus majority governments focuses on the strategic interaction between coalition partners or between actors within parties. If a minimal winning coalition takes office, any party in the cabinet, no matter how small, can bring the government down simply by resigning. This situation allows for the possibility of blackmail by a single dissatisfied party (Luebbert 1984, 254). In particular, it allows a small party to extract significant policy concessions from its coalition partners in vast disproportion to its size simply because its votes are critical to the government's continuing existence. To prevent this scenario, larger parties in the coalition may decide to form surplus majority coalitions so that the government is not automatically brought down if a single party decides to resign. Parties that lack party discipline and suffer from high levels of internal dissent may also choose to form surplus majority governments for similar reasons. In effect, parties that cannot guarantee that their own legislators will always vote the party line might agree to share office and policy influence with other parties in return for the legislative support necessary to remain in power. Finally, the fact that parties typically agree on a set of coalition policies prior to forming the government but ultimately have to implement these policies in some order also creates incentives for surplus majority governments (Carruba and Volden 2000). Consider two parties that agree on a set of coalition policies prior to coming to power. As soon as one of the parties has managed to implement the policies that it wants, it will have an incentive to defect from the government and bring it down if it does not like any of the policies still to be introduced. This incentive is reduced with a surplus majority coalition, because the defection of one party will not prevent the government from implementing the remaining policies.

Preelectoral Coalitions

So far we have assumed that parties in parliamentary democracies wait until after elections before thinking about what government to form. This is certainly how most political scientists have thought about the government formation process. This, however, is not always the case. The fact that single parties are unable to command a majority of support in the legislature in most democracies typically means that parties who wish to be in the government have to form some sort of coalition. In effect, parties can either form a **preelectoral coalition**

A **preelectoral coalition** is a collection of parties that do not compete independently at election time. A **government coalition** is one that forms after the election.

with another party (or parties) prior to election in the hope of governing together afterward if successful at the polls, or they can compete independently and hope to form a

government coalition after the election. Most scholars have focused almost exclusively on the government coalitions that form after elections and ignored preelectoral coalitions. An exception is Golder (2006). In an analysis of twenty-three advanced industrial democracies, she shows that preelectoral coalitions are not only common but also that they affect election

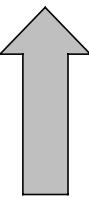
outcomes, have a strong impact on the government formation process, and have significant policy and normative implications.¹⁸

A preelectoral coalition is a collection of parties that do not compete independently at election time either because they publicly agree to coordinate their campaigns, run joint candidates or joint lists, or enter government together following the election. Preelectoral coalitions come in various types that differ in the extent to which parties coordinate their electoral strategies. These types are shown in Table 11.9.

Nomination agreements between parties represent a relatively high level of electoral coordination because the parties agree to present a coalition candidate in each district rather than each party putting up their own candidate. Nomination agreements are a typical form of electoral coordination in countries with single-member districts. For example, parties in France often choose to nominate a single coalition candidate in each district before the first round of elections or they agree to withdraw their respective candidates in favor of a coalition candidate prior to the second round of voting. The Liberal Party and the newly formed Social Democratic Party also reached nomination agreements in the United Kingdom during the 1980s. The two parties “recognized that competition between them would be mutually destructive . . . [and] they quickly worked out an electoral pact in which constituencies were allocated between the two parties, so that nowhere would they oppose each other” (Rasmussen 1991, 168). Joint lists also represent a relatively high level of electoral coordination because they involve parties agreeing to a single list of coalition candidates. Joint party lists are quite common in Israel, where parties run under a new coalition name. They also occur in Greece, the Netherlands, and Portugal.

A slightly lower level of electoral coordination often occurs in countries where individuals get to cast two votes in different electoral tiers. In these countries, electoral coalitions often take the form of party leaders’ telling their supporters to cast one vote for their party and the second vote for their coalition partner (dual ballot instructions). This type of elec-

TABLE 11.9**Different Types of Preelectoral Coalition**

Preelectoral coalition type	Degree of electoral coordination
Nomination agreement	
Joint lists	
Dual ballot instructions	
Vote transfer instructions	
Public commitment to govern together	

18. Other recent studies examining preelectoral coalitions include Ferrara and Herron (2005); Blais and Indriðason (2007); and Carroll and Cox (2007).

toral coalition occurs quite frequently in Germany, where individuals cast one vote for a constituency candidate elected by plurality rule and a second vote for a party list in a multi-member (regional) district. In Germany it is usually understood that the constituency vote will go to the candidate from the larger coalition member, whereas the list vote will go to the smaller partner to ensure that the small party passes the 5 percent electoral threshold. In countries in which voters get to rank their preferences over candidates and preferences are transferable, electoral coalitions often take the form of party leaders' telling their supporters to rank their own party first and a coalition partner second. For example, parties in Australia often give individuals "how-to-vote" cards outside polling stations with clear instructions on how to rank candidates so that the flow of preferences will benefit the party if it is running separately or the coalition if a preelectoral agreement is in place. Similar instructions are provided by party leaders to their supporters in Ireland.

Publicly stating an intention to govern together if successful at the polls represents the lowest level of electoral coordination.¹⁹ This type of electoral coalition occurs in many countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. For example, the Alliance and Labour Party in New Zealand formed a loose electoral coalition in 1999 stating that they would govern together if they won the elections. Some parties actually make public commitments to *not* govern with certain other parties in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway, thereby effectively ruling out certain cabinet configurations (Strøm, Budge and Laver 1994; Müller and Strøm 2000). For example, all parties in Germany publicly rejected the possibility of forming a government with the Party of Democratic Socialism (the former Communist Party in East Germany) prior to the 1990, 1994, and 1998 elections.

Preelectoral coalitions are quite common. Table 11.10 provides information on 240 preelectoral coalitions at the national level in twenty-three advanced industrialized democracies from 1946 to 2002. Only Canada and Malta have no experience with preelectoral coalitions at the national level. Although some countries, such as Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom have had few electoral coalitions, others, such as Australia, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, and Portugal have had many. Preelectoral coalitions have competed in all Australian elections, 93.3 percent of Germany's elections, and 90 percent of Portugal's elections. About a third (29.2 percent) of the 240 preelectoral coalitions that formed made it into government. Indeed, about two-thirds of all the governments in Australia and France

19. Publicly stating that you will form a government if successful at the polls is another explanation for the formation of surplus majority governments. When coalition partners make a public statement such as this, they do not know if all of them will be needed to control a majority of the legislative seats. For example, it may turn out that one of the coalition partners can be jettisoned after the elections without losing the government's legislative majority. This situation occurred when the Socialists and Communists agreed to enter government together if they won the French legislative elections in 1981. Although the elections resulted in a majority for the Socialists, both parties honored their agreement and entered office as a surplus majority government. Why didn't the Socialists renege on their preelectoral pact and form a government on their own? It turns out that there is quite strong empirical evidence that public commitments to form governments are nearly always honored (Laver and Schofield 1998; Martin and Stevenson 2001). One explanation for this has to do with reputational effects—other parties may not agree to form preelectoral coalitions with parties that have reneged on such pacts in the past.

TABLE 11.10**Summary Information on National-Level Preelectoral Coalitions, 1946–2002**

Country	Election years	Elections (no.)	PECs (no.)	Elections with PECs (%)	Governments based on PECs	
					(no.)	(%)
Australia	1946–2001	23	25	100.0	15	65.2
Austria	1949–2002	17	12	58.8	9	52.9
Belgium	1946–1999	18	14	61.1	1	5.6
Canada	1949–2000	17	0	0.0	0	0.0
Denmark	1947–2001	22	8	36.4	1	4.5
Finland	1948–1999	15	3	20.0	1	6.7
France	1946–2002	15	23	73.3	10	66.7
Germany	1949–2002	15	19	93.3	8	53.3
Greece ^a	1946–2000	19	25	73.7	4	21.1
Iceland	1946–1999	17	8	47.1	0	0.0
Ireland	1948–2002	17	9	47.1	5	29.4
Israel	1949–1999	15	26	86.7	0	0.0
Italy	1948–2001	14	9	35.7	2	14.3
Japan	1947–2000	20	2	5.0	0	0.0
Luxembourg	1954–1999	10	3	30.0	0	0.0
Malta	1966–1998	8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Netherlands	1946–2002	17	8	35.3	3	17.6
New Zealand	1946–2002	20	2	10.0	1	5.0
Norway	1949–2001	14	9	64.3	5	35.7
Portugal	1976–2002	10	14	90.0	2	20.0
Spain	1977–2000	8	11	87.5	1	12.5
Sweden	1948–2002	18	8	38.9	2	11.1
United Kingdom	1950–2001	15	2	13.3	0	0.0
Total		364	240		70	

Source: Data are from Golder (2006).

^aThe years 1968–1973 are not included.

during this time period, and one-half of German governments, have been based on preelectoral alliances. These data serve to demonstrate that coalition bargaining often occurs prior to elections in a wide range of countries and that a large proportion of government coalitions that ultimately form are based on preelectoral agreements. Golder (2006) finds that

potential government coalitions are 123 times more likely to become the actual government if they are based on a preelectoral pact than if they are not.

As with the governments that form after elections, the emergence of preelectoral coalitions is the result of a bargaining process among party leaders. For example, party leaders who wish to form a preelectoral coalition must reach agreement over a joint electoral strategy and the distribution of office benefits that might accrue to them. This may involve outlining a common coalition platform, deciding which party gets to run the more powerful ministerial posts, choosing which party's candidates should step down in favor of candidates from their coalition partners in particular districts, or determining which leader is to become prime minister. Clearly, the preelectoral coalition bargaining process involves a similar set of thorny distributional and ideological issues as the postelection government coalition bargaining process. One difference, though, between the preelectoral coalition formation process and the government coalition formation process is that there are electoral advantages from competing as a coalition at election time that are no longer relevant in the postelection context. This is particularly the case in countries with disproportional electoral systems that punish small parties. Ultimately, electoral coalitions can influence the probability of electoral victory, whereas government coalitions can't. It is largely for this reason that political parties sometimes choose to form a coalition prior to an election rather than wait until afterward.

In the simple model of government formation that we presented earlier, we suggested that government coalitions are more likely to form between ideologically similar parties. This led to the prediction that we should observe "connected" coalitions. There is good reason to believe that governments based on preelectoral coalitions will be even more ideologically compatible than government coalitions that are not based on electoral pacts. The reason for this is that the "ideological compatibility constraint" facing potential coalitions is likely to be stronger prior to elections than afterward, because voters might be unwilling to vote for electoral coalitions made up of parties with incompatible or incoherent policy preferences; after the election, parties have more leeway to enter into these types of government coalitions because voters are no longer such an immediate constraint on politicians' actions.²⁰ Of course, parties do feel constrained to some extent in their coalition choices even after an election because voters could potentially punish ideologically incompatible governments at subsequent elections. If party leaders think that a particular incompatible coalition is likely to be successful in office, however, then they may gamble that voters will not punish them at the next election. Party leaders may also prefer to get the benefits of office and the ability to make policy today even though they know that they will be punished in the future.

20. The fact that party leaders often invest considerable resources to explicitly measure the expected electoral consequences of a coalition indicates that they are fully aware of the dangers of forming an ideologically incompatible coalition (Kaminski 2002). Some parties employ private polling companies to carry out surveys asking voters whether they would support particular coalition arrangements (Kaminski 2001). Others engage in coalition experiments at the regional level to evaluate the performance of particular combinations of parties. Based on these local experiences, party leaders then decide whether these coalitions should be implemented at the national level (Downs 1998).

The Manifesto Research Group provides estimates of the ideological position of parties on the traditional left-right policy dimension by examining the manifestos of political parties in numerous countries around the world (Budge et al. 2001). From these data it is possible to create a measure of a government's ideological spread—the distance between the left-most and right-most government party. Using such a measure, Golder (2006) finds that governments based on preelectoral coalitions are, indeed, more ideologically compatible than government coalitions that are not based on electoral pacts. She also finds that these governments are significantly more likely to be connected coalitions as well. One of the implications of her analysis is that the policy position of a government based on an electoral pact is likely to be more congruent with the preferences of its electorate than the policy position of governments that are not constrained by a preelectoral agreement.

Preelectoral coalitions can have quite significant effects on election outcomes and government policies. Consider the following simple example. Imagine a legislative election with single-member districts in which there are two blocs of parties, one on the left and one on the right. The left-wing bloc has more electoral support than the right. Suppose that the parties on the right form an electoral coalition and field a common candidate in each district but the parties on the left compete independently. The left would most likely lose in this situation. In this example, the possibility arises that a majority of voters could vote for a group of politicians who support similar policies and that these politicians might still lose the election by failing to coordinate sufficiently. The result is that a right-wing party is elected to implement policies that a majority of the voters do not want. In other words, the absence of a preelectoral coalition on the left can have a significant impact on the election outcome, the government that forms, and the policies that are likely to be implemented. If you believe that the candidate with the most support among the electorate should be elected to implement policy, it matters whether political elites choose electoral strategies and coalitions that make them more or less likely to win elections.

The simple example that we just outlined might be considered a good description of what happened in the French presidential elections in 2002. It had widely been expected that Jacques Chirac, the president and leader of the mainstream right, would make it through to the second round of voting along with Lionel Jospin, the Socialist prime minister and leader of the mainstream left. The real question for months had been which of the two men would win the second round. Then, unexpectedly, the left vote was split among so many candidates in the first round that the Socialist leader came in third, behind the extreme-right politician Jean-Marie Le Pen. The French press described the event as an earthquake, and the French elections were for a couple of weeks the subject of world-wide speculation. In reality, there was little chance that Le Pen would be elected president, and Chirac easily won the runoff election two weeks later. Most analyses of this particular election focus on the disturbing success of the extreme right. This political “earthquake,” however, had as much to do with the inability of the French left to form a coherent preelectoral coalition as it did with an increase in the strength of the extreme right. The result of the left’s failure to form a pre-electoral coalition was that the French electorate got a right-wing government implement-

ing right-wing policies even though there was good reason to think that a relative majority of the voters wanted a left-wing cabinet—opinion polls at the time suggested that Jospin may well have won a head-to-head contest with Chirac if he could have just made it to the second round. Ironically, the popularity of left-wing parties among the voters may have emboldened their leaders to run alone rather than in coalition—a decision that, in the end, led to their electoral failure.



A voter compares the campaign manifestos of Jacques Chirac and Jean-Marie Le Pen ahead of the second round of voting in the French presidential elections, held on May 5, 2002.

185). Voters often end up voting for a single, unaligned party, not knowing what, if any, government it would join. This disconnect between the voters and the government formation process in these countries is a problem, because it is not always clear whether the final coalition that takes office has the support of the electorate in a meaningful sense. Preelectoral coalitions can help to alleviate this problem by helping voters to identify government alternatives and register their support for one of them (Powell 2000). In fact, party leaders in Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands have made this type of argument publicly to appeal to voters. Arguably, electoral coalitions also increase democratic transparency and provide coalitions with as much of a mandate as single parties. By providing a direct link between the voters and the cabinet that proposes and implements policy, preelectoral coalitions help to undermine the criticism of parliamentary democracies that employ proportional representation electoral rules, namely, that governments lack a convincing mandate from the voters and that the quality of representative democracy is thereby diminished. We return to some of these normative issues in Chapter 15.

Duration of Governments: Formation and Survival

As we have illustrated, the government formation process in parliamentary democracies can be very complicated and quite complex. Even if parties agree to go into government together, they still have to haggle over who gets which portfolio and what the government policy should be. This bargaining process can sometimes last a long time. Table 11.11 presents

TABLE 11.11**Duration of Government Formation Process after Elections, 1945–1998 (days)**

Country	Minimum	Maximum	Average	N
Austria	23	129	52.1	15
Belgium	2	148	59.7	17
Denmark	0	35	9.5	21
Finland	25	80	54.7	14
France (5th Republic)	1	11	3.5	11
Germany	23	73	36.4	14
Iceland	1	76	30.6	16
Ireland	7	48	18.7	16
Italy	11	126	47.3	14
Luxembourg	19	52	32.0	9
Netherlands	31	208	85.7	16
Norway	0	16	2.50	13
Portugal	1	45	24.0	7
Spain	2	58	28.6	7
Sweden	0	25	5.7	17
United Kingdom	1	18	7.8	14
All	0	208	31.8	221

Source: Data are from the Constitutional Change and Parliamentary Democracies project. (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).

Note: Bargaining duration measures the number of days between the election and the day on which the new government is officially inaugurated.

information about the length of time in days that it typically takes governments to form after an election in sixteen West European countries from 1945 to 1998.²¹

As Table 11.11 illustrates, there is considerable cross-national variation in the length of time that it takes to form a government following an election. If a single party obtains a majority of the legislative seats, then it is normally understood that this party will form a cabinet on its own and the only question is who from this party will get which portfolio. This explains why it takes only about a week (7.8 days) on average for a cabinet to form in the United Kingdom. In countries in which many parties gain legislative representation, it can

21. The data in Table 11.11 refer only to governments that form after elections. However, governments also form in interelection periods after an incumbent cabinet falls. The average length of time that it takes to form a government in an interelection period is only 13.5 days. This is a statistically significantly shorter period of time than the government formation process that follows an election. Only in Norway and Spain do interelection cabinets take longer to form on average.

take much longer to form a cabinet, because it is not always obvious which combination of parties will be able to form the government, how these parties will allocate portfolios among themselves, and what the coalition policy will be.²² For example, the average length of the government formation process in the Netherlands is about three months (85.7 days). In fact, the longest delay in government formation in this sample of countries occurred in the Netherlands at almost seven months, or 208 days. It is not uncommon for a formateur to fail to form a coalition on the first or even the second attempt in some countries without single-party majorities. For instance, it took seven different government coalition proposals more than 106 days for a government to finally form after the 1979 Belgian legislative elections. Overall, the average length of time that it takes to form a government after an election in Western Europe is about a month (31.8 days).

The first democratic elections in Iraq occurred on January 30, 2005. It was not until April 28, however, fully 88 days later, that an Iraqi government actually took office. This delay in the Iraqi government formation process was a cause of some concern around the world. Much of the world's media, along with the American government, blamed the delay on the lack of democratic experience among Iraqi politicians—they simply did not have any experience with democracy or putting a government coalition together. Although the Iraqis were certainly faced with some additional difficulties not present in most other parliamentary systems, it should be noted that the length of time that it took them to form a government was about the same as the average length of time it takes the Dutch to form a government after elections. In fact, there are at least sixteen instances in which cabinet negotiations in Western Europe lasted longer than 88 days—in some cases much longer. The Iraqis did not come close to matching the 208 days that it took to form the Dutch government in 1977. The point here is that we do not argue that such delays in Austria, Belgium, Iceland, Italy, or the Netherlands were caused by unfamiliarity with democratic politics. It is simply part and parcel of most parliamentary systems that election results do not regularly determine the identity of the government. Instead, elections usher in what can be quite a long period of negotiations in which party leaders bargain over the composition of the government cabinet. Delays of several months are not infrequent, even in highly established democracies with considerable experience in building coalition governments.

Delays in the government formation process can have important implications for governance. You may recall that caretaker governments, which administer the affairs of state while negotiations are proceeding, do not generally have the authority to make major policy initiatives. This means that delays in the government formation process can be quite problematic, particularly if the previous cabinet has fallen because of some sort of crisis. Until a cabinet is finally formed, the identity of government parties, the allocation of portfolios to

22. In addition, nonpolitical factors such as holidays affect the length of time between the election and the date the new government takes office. For instance, forming the German government at the end of the year in 1990 took extra time because of the Christmas holidays.

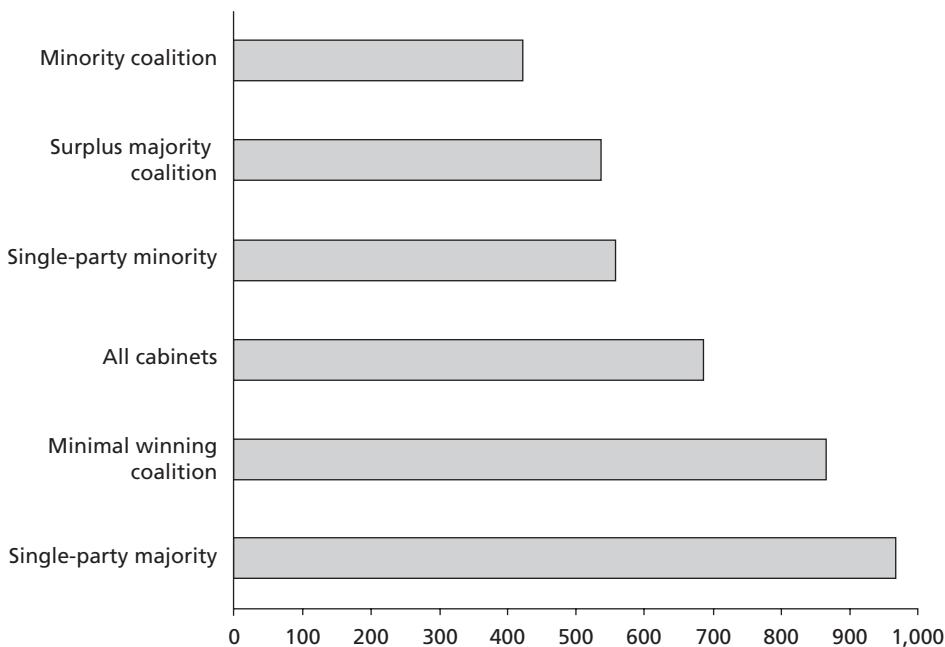
particular politicians, and the content of policy compromises among coalition partners have yet to be determined. The uncertainty that surrounds the future direction of government policy can have serious consequences on the behavior of economic and political actors, both domestic and international (Martin and Vanberg 2003, 323–324). For example, consider the seven-month delay in forming a government that followed the June 2006 elections in the Czech Republic. By August, the Czech media were already reporting on the deleterious consequences of the prolonged period under a caretaker government. The *Prague Post Online* (August 24, 2006) wrote, “Lawmakers are getting nothing done, while legislation and important reforms rest in a state of limbo, including long awaited pension reform, the privatization of many state-owned companies, an overhaul of the country’s Criminal Code, and the fate of the controversial flat tax. A nonfunctioning parliament costs taxpayers as much as 3 million Kč (\$136,500) a day.” A number of recent empirical studies paint a similar picture, finding that uncertainty over the government formation process affects exchange rate markets (Leblang 2002), stock market volatility (Leblang and Mukherjee 2006), and the types of assets that market actors choose to invest in (Bernhard and Leblang 2006). Delays in government formation have real consequences for many people.

Only limited research has been conducted on the factors that affect the length of bargaining delays in forming governments. Diermeier and van Roozendaal (1998) argue that delays are caused by uncertainty regarding the preferences of the parties involved in the formation process. For example, it may take time to figure out the best offer of policy and portfolio allocation that would be acceptable to the party leaders involved in the coalition negotiations—the greater the uncertainty regarding the relevant bargaining parameters, the longer the formation time. Martin and Vanberg (2003) argue that delays are caused by complexity in the bargaining environment. The more complex the bargaining situation, the longer the bargaining delays.

More recently, Golder (2007) has argued that uncertainty and bargaining complexity both matter. Using data on sixteen countries from 1946 to 1998, she finds that governments take longer to form after elections (increased uncertainty) than during interelection periods and when there are many ideologically diverse parties in the legislature (increased complexity). Following an election, the party composition in the legislature is different, parties may have new platforms, and there may be membership turnover within the parties. Party leaders are likely to learn about what policies are feasible for potential government cabinets and which would likely lead to their breakup through their day-to-day negotiations over legislative proposals. As a result, policy leaders will be less certain about which potential cabinets are acceptable to a legislative majority right after an election than after an extended period of legislative interaction. This increased uncertainty after elections leads to delays in the government formation process. Having many ideologically diverse parties increases the complexity of the bargaining environment facing formateurs. For example, the formateur will likely have to negotiate with many potential coalition partners and make many offers and counteroffers if there are many parties. If the parties in the legislature are also ideologically diverse, then it is likely that the formateur will have to bargain with at least one party that

does not hold similar positions on several different types of policy as well. In effect, bargaining complexity leads to delays in the formation of governments because it makes it difficult for the formateur to gather the information that the formateur is uncertain about, that is, the parameters of the best offer that would be acceptable to potential government partners.

Not only is there considerable variation in the length of time that it takes to form governments, but there are also large differences in the amount of time that various governments survive in power. Of the governments that formed in thirteen West European parliamentary democracies from 1945 to 1998, only 20 percent actually stayed in office for their maximum permitted term. On average, governments lasted only 60 percent of their permitted time in office; this average ranged from 84 percent in the Netherlands to 33 percent in Italy. In Figure 11.6, we illustrate the average duration of governments in days by cabinet type in thirteen parliamentary democracies in Western Europe from 1945 to 1998. Single-party majority governments last the longest at 967 days on average. Minimal winning coalitions last only slightly less time at 864 days. Both of these types of government last considerably longer (about a year in all) than minority or surplus majority governments.

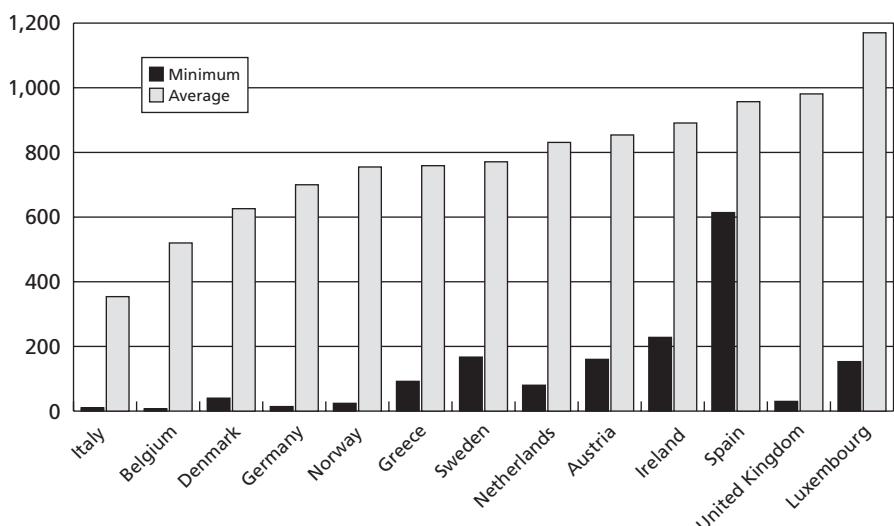
FIGURE 11.6**Average Government Duration by Cabinet Type,
1945–1998 (days)**

Source: Data are from the Constitutional Change and Parliamentary Democracies project. (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).

Note: Data cover thirteen West European parliamentary democracies.

In Figure 11.7, we illustrate the minimum and average duration of governments by country in days. As you can see, there is considerable cross-national variation in the length of time a government stays in office. Governments last longest on average in Luxembourg (1,170 days), the United Kingdom (981 days), and Spain (957 days). They last much less time in Italy (354 days) and Belgium (520 days).

You might think that all political scientists measure government duration in the same way. How hard can it be to measure how long a government lasts? Unfortunately, scholars measure government duration in many different ways. All agree that a government ends if the party composition of the cabinet changes either because an incumbent party leaves or a new party joins. But that's about it. What's the problem? Ask yourself whether we should classify a government as new if the same parties are in power after an election as before the election. Would you consider it a new government if the same parties are in power but completely different individuals fill the ministerial portfolios (cabinet reshuffle)? What if the prime minister changes? What if the party composition of the cabinet changes slightly but virtually all the incumbent ministers get to keep their old positions? Measuring government duration is a surprisingly difficult issue (Golder and Ryals 2008). The data that we present on government duration in this chapter define the end of a government as occurring if (a) there is any change in the set of parties holding cabinet membership, (b) there is any change in the identity of the prime minister, or (c) there has been a general election.

FIGURE 11.7**Minimum and Average Duration of Governments, 1945–1998 (days)**

Source: Data are from the Constitutional Change and Parliamentary Democracies project. (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).

Governments end for both “technical” and “discretionary” reasons (Müller and Strøm 2000, 25–27). Technical reasons are things that are beyond the control of the government. For example, a government might end because the prime minister dies or resigns due to ill health, or because there is a constitutionally mandated election. In our sample of thirteen West European parliamentary democracies from 1945 to 1998, 37 percent of governments ended for technical reasons. Discretionary reasons are political acts on the part of the government or opposition. For instance, a government might end because the government dissolves the parliament and calls early elections, because the opposition defeats the government in a vote of no confidence, or because conflicts between or within the coalition parties force the government to resign. These discretionary reasons are obviously not mutually exclusive. Of the governments in our sample, 63 percent ended for discretionary reasons. We indicate how many governments fell for particular technical and discretionary reasons in Table 11.12. Over a quarter of the cabinets ended because the government called early elections. The ability of governments to choose when to have an election is known as endogenous election timing (see Box 11.4). Only thirty-four governments ended as a result of a parliamentary defeat. Still, not too much should be read into this relatively low number, because governments often resign in order to avoid being defeated in a vote of no confidence.

TABLE 11.12
Number of Governments That Fell for Technical and Discretionary Reasons in Thirteen West European Parliamentary Democracies, 1945–1998

	Specific reason	No.
Technical		
	Constitutionally mandated election	81
	Other constitutional reason	25
	Death of PM	6
Discretionary		
	Early election	91
	Enlargement of government	13
	Parliamentary defeat	34
	Intercoalition conflict over policy	62
	Intercoalition conflict not related to policy	20
	Intraparty conflict	51
Technical		111
Discretionary		191
Total		302

Source: Data are from the Constitutional Change and Parliamentary Democracies project. (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).

Note: The different technical and discretionary reasons for why governments fall are not mutually exclusive. In other words, governments can fall, within the technical or discretionary categories, for more than one reason. This explains why the numbers shown above do not sum exactly to the total number of governments that end because of technical (111) or discretionary (191) reasons.

Box 11.4**ENDOGENOUS ELECTION TIMING**

In some countries, the government gets to choose when it wants to hold elections. For example, the government in the United Kingdom is constrained to hold an election at least once every five years but can choose exactly when to hold the election in this five-year window. We refer to this possibility as endogenous election timing. Three different stories have been proposed to explain the timing of elections. All three stories assume that politicians want to win elections and that voters hold governments accountable for their past economic performance.

1. *Political surfing*: The government waits until the economic conditions are right before calling an election. The government does not actively manipulate the economy but waits until the economy, for whatever reason, is at a high point before announcing the election (Kayser 2005).
2. *Political business cycle*: The government actively manipulates the economy to engineer a short-term economic high and then calls an election. The election is then followed by an economic decline. Thus, the economy goes through cycles of boom and bust that are politically driven (Clark 2003).
3. *Signaling*: The government is better informed about future economic performance than the voters and so can time elections to occur prior to any expected economic decline. In other words, the government calls early elections in order to cash in on its past successes by censoring the public's ability to observe the future decline. The very act of calling an early election, however, effectively sends a signal to voters that the future performance of the economy looks bad. If voters are naive or have short-term memories, or if the opposition is unprepared, the government may prefer to call an early election. Otherwise, governments might be reluctant to take advantage of good economic times by calling an early election because they want to avoid sending voters a signal that they don't expect the good times to last (Smith 2003).

Several different predictions can be derived from these stories. First, let's consider predictions about economic performance. Both the political surfing and political business cycle stories predict that elections are called when the economy is doing well, whereas the signaling story says that current economic conditions should not matter. Both the political business cycle and signaling stories predict that calls for early elections should be followed by economic declines (if for different reasons), but the political surfing story makes no prediction about future economic performance. The signaling story predicts that the support of the government in the opinion polls will fall if it calls early elections because voters learn that the government is about to produce bad economic outcomes; the other stories have nothing to say about the electoral support of the government. The signaling story predicts that the earlier an election is called, the greater the economic decline to come—why else risk losing office? The other stories make no such prediction.

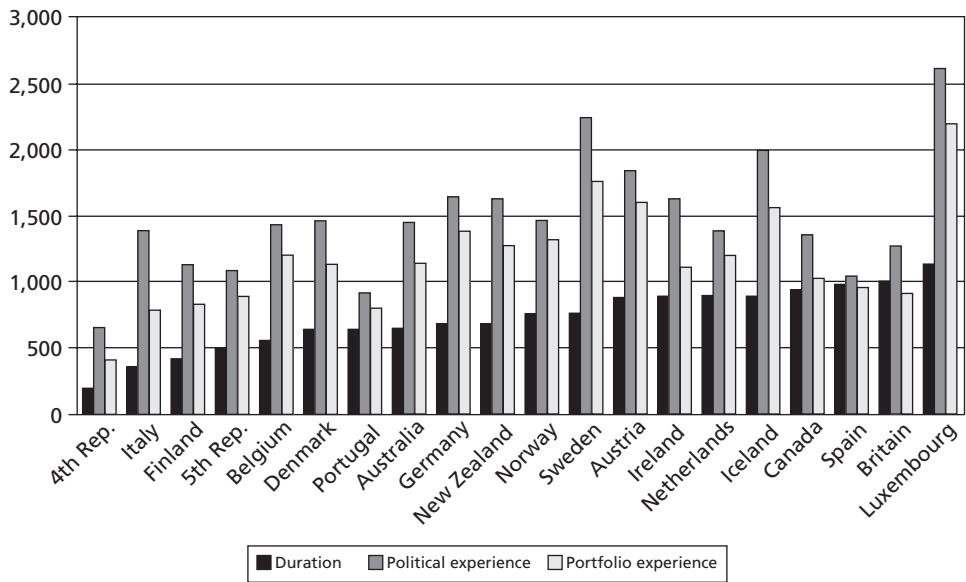
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Smith (2004) has tested these predictions on data from the United Kingdom and finds strongest support for the signaling story. He finds that when elections are called early relative to expectations, then the support for the government declines, postelection outcomes decline, electoral campaigns are short, and stock market indexes decline. When elections are called especially early, he finds that the economy later performs particularly badly. There was little evidence that the current performance of the economy affected the likelihood that a government would call an early election. All of these findings are consistent with the signaling story but not the other stories.

Over the past few decades, there have been numerous studies of government duration (King et al. 1990; Warwick 1994; Lupia and Strøm 1995; Diermeier and Stevenson 1999). They have examined how various attributes of the government, the legislature, and the country affect the survival of governments. In regard to government attributes, it has been found that cabinets last longer if they are majority governments (rather than minority governments), if they are single-party governments (rather than coalition governments), and if the government exhibits low ideological diversity in its party membership. In regard to legislative attributes, it has been found that more legislative parties lead to a reduction in government duration. In regard to country attributes, some have found that investiture vote requirements diminish average government duration (King et al. 1990; Warwick 1994).

How and why does it matter whether or not a government survives for a long time? It is perhaps a natural reaction to think that cabinet instability is a bad thing, but why exactly might this be the case? You might think that governments that do not survive long result in policy instability and cabinet ministers who lack portfolio experience and political experience more generally. It has long been known, however, that cabinet instability does not automatically imply ministerial instability. For example, Allum (1973, 119) found that a set of politicians had been “in office almost continuously for over twenty years” during the heyday of cabinet instability in Italy. In a recent study, Huber and Martinez-Gallardo (2004) also show that cabinet instability does not necessarily lead to high levels of turnover in cabinet membership. Huber and Martinez-Gallardo measured cabinet duration, portfolio experience, and political experience in nineteen democracies from 1945 to 1999. Portfolio experience is measured as the average amount of experience in days that ministers have in the specific cabinet portfolio that they hold. Political experience is measured as the average amount of experience in days that ministers have in *any* significant cabinet portfolio. The results of their analysis are shown in Figure 11.8.²³

23. The average cabinet duration shown in Figure 11.8 may differ slightly from that in Figure 11.7 because Huber and Martinez-Gallardo use a different source and measure: Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge 1998.

FIGURE 11.8**Average Cabinet Duration, Political Experience, and Portfolio Experience, 1945–1999 (days)**

Source: Huber and Martinez-Gallardo (2004, 38).

Note: "4th Rep[ublic]" refers to France in 1946–1958; "5th Rep[ublic]" refers to France in 1958.

As Figure 11.8 clearly illustrates, cabinet duration is not necessarily the same thing as political or portfolio experience. For example, cabinets in Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands last quite a long time but have low levels of portfolio and political experience because of the frequent cabinet reshuffles in these countries (Allum 1973; Indriðason and Kam 2005). In contrast, cabinets in Germany, Sweden, and Belgium do not last a long time but they have relatively high levels of portfolio and political experience because the same individuals are often returned to the cabinet and their former ministries. Huber and Martinez-Gallardo's analysis suggests that we should, perhaps, be less concerned about what affects cabinet duration and more interested in discovering what influences the degree of portfolio and political experience in a country. As yet, little research has been done in this area.

MAKING AND BREAKING GOVERNMENTS: PRESIDENTIAL DEMOCRACIES

As you can see, the literature on the government formation process in parliamentary democracies is vast and much has been learned. In contrast, relatively little is known about government formation in presidential regimes. One reason for this has been a lack of data. This situation has recently begun to change. With the emergence of new data has come a promising

and ambitious research agenda examining various aspects of governments in presidential democracies (Cheibub and Limongi 2002; Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh 2004; Amorim Neto 2006; Amorim Neto and Samuels 2006; Amorim Neto and Strøm 2006; Cheibub 2007). In this section we summarize some of the principal lines of research that have been followed so far.

Government Formation Process

The **government in a presidential democracy** comprises the president and the cabinet. The **president** is the political chief executive in a presidential democracy; he is also the head of state. In a presidential democracy, the executive branch and the government are the same thing.

Government formation process in presidential democracies is different in many important ways from that in parliamentary ones. First, and most fundamentally, legislative responsibility does not exist in presidential democracies. As a result, governments in presidential systems do not have to maintain majority legislative support as cabinets do in order to remain in office in parliamentary systems. Second, there is no uncertainty about the identity of the formateur in presidential democracies unlike in most parliamentary systems. This is because the president is always the formateur, irrespective of whether his party does well or poorly in legislative elections. Coupled with the absence of legislative responsibility, this means that the president appoints whomever he wants to the cabinet (and dismisses them as he wishes).²⁴ Third, the fact that the president is always the formateur means that the president's party must be included in each cabinet regardless of its legislative size. Note that this does not necessarily mean that the cabinet will exclude all other parties, just that it must include the president's party.

Finally, the “reversion point” of the government formation process is different in presidential democracies from that in parliamentary ones. A “reversion point” here refers to what happens when a minority formateur fails to form a coalition. In a parliamentary system, the failure of a minority prime minister to obtain an implicit legislative majority results in—or causes the actors to “revert” to—an early election, a new round of bargaining, or a caretaker government. In a presidential system, though, the failure of a minority president to win the support of opposition parties simply results in the president's party ruling alone. As a consequence, members of the legislative delegation of a government party can often vote against cabinet-sponsored bills without the fear of forcing new elections (which they may lose). Consequently, a **portfolio coalition** does not imply a **legislative coalition** in presidential democracies to the extent that it does in parliamentary democracies.

A **portfolio coalition** is composed of those legislators belonging to parties in the cabinet. A **legislative coalition** is a voting bloc composed of legislators who support a piece of legislation.

The **government in a presidential democracy** is essentially made up of the president and his cabinet. The **president** is the political chief executive and head of the government in a presidential system; he is also the head of state. The government formation process in pres-

24. Although it is true that presidents in the United States require senatorial consent to appoint each of their cabinet secretaries, this rarely prevents them from obtaining a cabinet of their own choosing.

These differences create particular incentives and opportunities that help to distinguish presidential governments from parliamentary ones. We will focus here on differences in the size and composition of governments.

The Size of Presidential Cabinets

In a parliamentary system, the prime minister must appoint a cabinet that enjoys an implicit legislative majority. We have seen that this does not necessarily imply that she must appoint a cabinet that controls a majority of legislative seats—opposition parties in the legislature may be willing to support minority cabinets on policy grounds. Clearly, presidents will form majority cabinets whenever their party controls a majority of the legislative seats. But what happens when the president's party is not a majority party? Presidents have no constitutional imperative to form majority cabinets—they are free to form minority cabinets whenever they want. Some of these minority presidential governments will rule with the support of an implicit legislative majority, just like minority governments in parliamentary systems; that is, some opposition party or parties in the legislature will support the government without receiving posts in the cabinet. Other minority presidential governments, however, will rule without this kind of support. This second type of minority government is not possible in a parliamentary system because of the existence of legislative responsibility. This difference suggests that, all things being equal, minority governments will be more frequent in presidential systems than in parliamentary systems.

The empirical evidence supports this claim. It is widely recognized that about a third of all parliamentary governments are minority governments (Strøm 1990). In contrast, Amorim Neto (2006) finds that 46 percent (49) of the governments in presidential regimes in Latin America from the late 1970s to 2000 were minority governments. This information is shown in Table 11.13. This difference in the frequency of minority governments in presidential and parliamentary systems is even more marked if we focus explicitly on minority situations, that is, situations in which the party of the president or prime minister does not control a majority of legislative seats. Data from Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh (2004, 574) on minority situations in the world from 1946 to 1999 indicate that 65 percent of these situations resulted in minority governments in presidential democracies compared with just 35 percent in parliamentary ones.

The fact that presidents can appoint whomever they like to the cabinet might lead you to think that they would rarely form coalition governments. Indeed, Linz (1994, 19) claims that coalition governments in presidential democracies are “exceptional.” Coalition governments would certainly be unexpected if political actors lived in a purely office-seeking world—why would they form a coalition and give up cabinet seats if they didn’t have to? As we noted earlier, however, political actors are likely to care to some extent about policy or, at least, to act as if they care about policy. If this is the case, then it is easy to see why presidents might have an incentive to form coalition governments. The extent to which this incentive is felt will depend to a large extent on the legislative powers of the president.

TABLE 11.13

Government Types in Presidential Systems, late 1970s–2000

Country	Single-party majority	Majority coalition	Single-party minority	Minority coalition	Total
Argentina	1	0	3	2	6
Bolivia	0	4	1	3	8
Brazil	0	11	0	4	15
Chile	0	5	0	0	5
Colombia	0	10	1	0	11
Costa Rica	3	0	3	0	6
Ecuador	0	1	4	15	20
Mexico	2	0	0	0	2
Panama	0	3	0	4	7
Peru	2	4	1	2	9
United States	2	1	2	0	5
Uruguay	0	6	0	0	6
Venezuela	1	1	3	1	6
Total	11	46	18	31	106

Source: Data are from Amorim Neto (2006).

A presidential **decree** is an order by the president that has the force of law. The scope and extent of these decrees vary from country to country.

All presidents have the ability to issue a **decree**—a presidential order that has the force of law. The scope and strength of these decrees, however, vary from country to country

(Shugart and Carey 1992). For example, decrees in the United States, known as executive orders, allow the president only to regulate and interpret statutes already enacted by the legislature and give orders to the public administration; the president cannot enact *new* laws. In other countries, though, presidents can issue “decree-laws”—decrees that immediately become law—even when faced with a hostile legislature. Presidents who have relatively weak decree power and whose party does not control a majority of legislative seats need support from other parties if they are to achieve any of their policy goals. As a result, these presidents will have an incentive to try to form coalitions. The bottom line is that coalition governments should not be exceptional in presidential systems for this reason. In fact, the empirical evidence suggests that coalition governments occur quite frequently in presidential democracies. As Table 11.13 indicates, fully 73 percent (77) of the governments studied by Amorim Neto (2006) were coalition governments.

The frequency with which coalition governments form in presidential systems has led some scholars to conclude that “it is not true that incentives for coalition formation are any different in presidential than in parliamentary democracies” (Cheibub and Limongi 2002, 18). This

conclusion is probably premature, however. Why? Much has to do with the “reversion point” that we mentioned earlier. If negotiations over the formation of a coalition government break down in a presidential regime, the result is that the president’s party gets to rule on its own. This implies that the president ultimately has the last word over policy in a way that is not true of a prime minister (Samuels 2007). In a parliamentary system, we have seen that the prime minister may have to concede control over particular ministries to her cabinet partners in order to be able to form a government (Laver and Shepsle 1996). In a presidential system, the president does not face the same need to make such policy concessions. This is particularly the case if he can use presidential decrees or vetoes to achieve his policy goals. Even if the president does make policy concessions in order to get opposition parties to join his cabinet, these policy promises lack a certain amount of credibility, because the president has the right to dismiss these parties without losing office whenever he wants. The ability of some presidents to use decrees and the inability of opposition parties to bring the government down, therefore, reduces the expected benefits (in regard to both office and policy) of opposition parties that are thinking about joining the government. The fact that legislators belonging to coalition parties can vote against government-sponsored bills without running the risk of causing the government to fall, however, implies that the costs (in regard to committing support to the government’s legislative agenda) of belonging to a coalition may also be lower. Thus, although presidents may want to form coalition governments in some circumstances, it is not clear that they will always find willing coalition partners; if they do find coalition partners, they are likely to be less reliable.

Two implications follow from this logic. First, although coalition governments should not be exceptional in presidential democracies, they should definitely be less common than in parliamentary ones. Again, there is some empirical evidence to support this. When examining minority situations in the world between 1946 and 1999, Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh (2004) found that coalitions formed 78 percent of the time in parliamentary democracies but only 54 percent of the time in presidential ones. The second implication is that coalition governments in presidential systems may be more unstable and survive a shorter amount of time, all things being equal, than coalition governments in parliamentary countries. Alternatively, coalitions in presidential regimes may survive as long as coalitions in parliamentary regimes, but they may not govern as effectively because it is possible for a portfolio coalition to outlive the legislative coalition implied by its membership. To our knowledge, these last two hypotheses are yet to be tested. Can you think of how someone might test them?

The Composition of Presidential Cabinets

We have just illustrated that presidential democracies tend to be characterized by more minority governments and fewer coalition governments than parliamentary ones. It turns out that the composition of presidential cabinets also differs systematically from parliamentary cabinets. On average, presidents appoint cabinets that contain a higher proportion of nonpartisan ministers. A nonpartisan minister is someone who does not come from the legislature; he might be someone like a technocrat, a crony, or a representative of an interest group. On average, presidents also allocate cabinet portfolios in a less proportional way than

prime ministers (Amorim Neto and Samuels 2006). Table 11.14 provides empirical evidence in support of these claims from thirty parliamentary and thirteen presidential democracies from 1980 to 2000.

To a large extent, the composition of cabinets in any type of democracy will reflect the extent to which formateurs must negotiate with political parties. Although political parties exert a relatively strong impact over the allocation of cabinet seats in parliamentary systems, this is not necessarily the case in presidential democracies. Prime ministers almost always appoint partisan ministers—individuals from political parties in the legislature—to the cabinet as a way of building the legislative majority that they need to stay in power. As we saw earlier, it is for precisely the same reason that prime ministers tend to allocate cabinet seats in proportion to the seats each party provides to the government coalition. Recall that this was the basis for Gamson's Law. Because presidents do not depend on having a legislative majority to stay in office, they do not have to negotiate with political parties to the same extent as prime ministers. As a result, they are much freer to vary both the partisan nature and proportionality of their cabinets.

On the whole, presidential democracies will have fewer partisan ministers and lower cabinet proportionality than parliamentary ones. Some presidential cabinets, however, will look more like parliamentary ones than others. This is because of the variation in the legislative powers of presidents that we mentioned earlier. Presidents can choose to achieve their policy goals either through the legislature or through decrees. Those presidents who have relatively weak decree power, whose parties in the legislature are quite small, and whose parties exhibit low levels of party discipline are likely to appoint cabinets that look more like those from parliamentary democracies—more partisan ministers and a more proportional allocation of cabinet portfolios—because they rely on winning the support of opposition parties to pass their policies. As Table 11.15 illustrates, there is considerable variation in the extent to which presidents appoint partisan and proportional cabinets. Cabinets tend to be very partisan and highly proportional in countries like Costa Rica, Mexico, and the United States but much less so in countries like Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela. Amorim Neto (2006) has shown that this variation is systematically related to the need of presidents to negotiate with opposition parties to achieve their policy objectives.

TABLE 11.14**Government Composition in Thirteen Presidential and Thirty Parliamentary Democracies, 1980–2000**

Democratic system	Average percentage of nonpartisan ministers	Average proportionality of cabinet portfolio allocation
Parliamentary	2.12	0.90
Presidential	29.17	0.65

Source: Numbers are based on data from Amorim Neto and Samuels (2006).

Note: Proportionality is measured from 0 to 1, with 1 being perfect proportionality.

TABLE 11.15**Government Composition in Presidential Systems,
late 1970s–2000**

Country	Average percentage of nonpartisan ministers	Average proportionality of cabinet portfolio allocation
Argentina	7.2	0.89
Bolivia	20.5	0.73
Brazil	46.9	0.50
Chile	6.7	0.85
Colombia	5.6	0.87
Costa Rica	1.8	0.98
Ecuador	65.3	0.27
Mexico	3.6	0.96
Panama	17.8	0.71
Peru	40.8	0.54
United States	0.0	0.91
Uruguay	1.5	0.77
Venezuela	43.7	0.56
Total	29.2	0.64

Source: Data are from Amorim Neto (2006).

Note: The proportionality of cabinet portfolio allocation refers to the extent to which government parties receive the same percentage of cabinet posts as the percentage of seats they provide to the government majority.

MAKING AND BREAKING GOVERNMENTS: MIXED DEMOCRACIES

A mixed democracy is one in which the government depends on both the legislature and president to stay in power. Relatively little research has been conducted on government formation in presidential democracies, but even less has been done on mixed democracies. This is likely to change with the growing number of countries that have become mixed democracies in recent years. In Eastern Europe, Armenia, Croatia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, and the Ukraine all adopted mixed forms of democracy following their democratic transitions in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The **government in a mixed democracy** comprises a prime minister and a cabinet, as in a parliamentary democracy. Whereas the executive branch and the government are the same thing in a parliamentary democracy, however, this is not the case in a mixed democracy. In a mixed democracy, the executive branch comprises the government *and* a president—the

The **government in a mixed democracy** comprises a prime minister and a cabinet. In a mixed democracy, the executive branch comprises the government and a president—the president is part of the executive branch but not part of the government.

president is part of the executive branch but not part of the government. Both the president and prime minister are involved in the day-to-day administration of the state. The precise way in which executive power is divided between the president and the prime minister varies from one mixed democracy to another. It is often the case, however, that the president has more influence in matters of foreign policy, whereas the prime minister is more powerful in domestic politics. For example, a political convention has evolved to some extent in France that the president is responsible for foreign policy and the prime minister for domestic policy. In other countries, this type of division of power is more clearly stated in the constitution.

In mixed democracies, there is nothing to guarantee that the president and the prime minister will come from the same political party. Periods in which politicians from different political parties or blocs hold the positions of the president and prime minister are often

Cohabitation—a president from one political bloc and a prime minister from another—occurs when the party of the president does not control a majority in the legislature.

referred to as **cohabitation**. Because the president nearly always gets to appoint the prime minister in mixed democracies, why would the president ever appoint a prime minister from

an opposing political party? The answer has to do with the fact that the government (prime minister and cabinet) must enjoy the support of a legislative majority to remain in office. Thus, a president may need to appoint a prime minister from an opposition party when the president's party or political bloc does not control a majority of legislative seats. In effect, the potential for cohabitation results from the duality of the executive—an independently elected president, and a prime minister who must enjoy a legislative majority.

At first glance, cohabitation sounds very similar to divided government in the context of presidential democracies. Still, even though presidential democracies such as the United States have seen power shared between a president and a legislature of different political blocs, cohabitation is not a characteristic of such democracies. The main reason for this is that unlike in a mixed democracy, a president in a presidential system is free to appoint whomever he likes to the cabinet (and the legislature is able to appoint whomever it wants as its presiding officers). To make things a little clearer, consider the United States in 2006 after the Democrats had regained control of the House of Representatives from the Republicans. If the United States had allowed for cohabitation, then the new Democratic speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, would have been able to remove the cabinet appointed by the Republican president, George W. Bush, and replace it with a cabinet of her own choosing. This was not possible, though. The United States of 2006 had divided government, not cohabitation.

France has experienced three periods of cohabitation since 1986. Cohabitation could have occurred even earlier, in 1981, when a Socialist president, François Mitterrand, was voted into office (for a seven-year term) by the French electorate; at that time the legislature was controlled by a right-wing coalition. On coming to office, though, Mitterrand used his constitutional power to dissolve the legislature and call new legislative elections. In these elections, Mitterrand's Socialist Party won an absolute majority of seats, thereby preempting a period of cohabitation. France's first experience with cohabitation came just five years later when a right-wing coalition won a two-seat majority in the constitutionally mandated legislative elections in 1986. Despite the small size of the legislative majority, Mitterrand was

forced to appoint Jacques Chirac, the leader of the right-wing Gaullist RPR party, as prime minister because a left-wing prime minister would have been unacceptable to the right-wing majority in the legislature. An uneasy two-year period of cohabitation ensued in which each leader felt constrained by the powers of the other. This initial period of cohabitation came to an end in 1988 when Mitterrand defeated Chirac in presidential elections. Mitterrand immediately dissolved the legislature, and the Socialist Party won a sufficient number of legislative seats for him to be able, with the help of some centrist legislators, to appoint a left-wing prime minister.

In 1993 President Mitterrand found himself in a similar position to that in 1986, when a right-wing coalition won an 80 percent majority in the legislative elections. Mitterrand was again forced to appoint a right-wing politician, Edouard Balladur, to be prime minister. This second period of cohabitation ended when the right-wing candidate Jacques Chirac was elected president in 1995. Because the right already controlled a legislative majority, Chirac was able to appoint the right-wing's Alain Juppé as prime minister. This alignment of a right-wing president and a right-wing legislature should have lasted until the normally scheduled legislative elections in 1998. President Chirac made the ill-fated decision, however, to dissolve the legislature and call early elections in a strategic attempt to build more support for his reform policies. Chirac's plan backfired and the left won the 1997 legislative elections. As a result, Chirac was forced to appoint the leader of the Socialist Party, Lionel Jospin, as prime minister. Jospin remained prime minister until 2002, when Chirac was reelected president. On winning the presidential elections, Chirac immediately dissolved the legislature. Chirac's right-wing party, the UMP, won an overwhelming majority in the legislative elections that followed, allowing Chirac to appoint a right-wing prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, and to end France's third period of cohabitation after five years.

For much of the history of the French Fifth Republic, it was thought that the president was the dominant political figure in French politics. The constitution provides the president with significant powers, such as the power to appoint the prime minister, the authority to dissolve the legislature (not more than once a year), and the ability to take on emergency powers if the integrity of France's territory is under threat. From 1958 to 1986, the president seemed to dominate both domestic and foreign policy in France. To all intents and purposes, France appeared to function like a presidential democracy during this period. The first period of cohabitation, though, quickly revealed that the dominance of the French president prior to 1986 was not automatic but was, in fact, contingent on the president's controlling a majority in the legislature. Without a legislative majority, the president is forced to defer on domestic politics and, to some extent, on foreign policy, to the prime minister.²⁵ In periods

25. The French constitution is somewhat ambiguous about the relative roles of the president and prime minister in regard to foreign policy. For example, although the president is the commander in chief of the armed forces and is authorized to negotiate and ratify international treaties (articles 14 and 15), the prime minister is responsible for national defense (article 21) and only the legislature is able to declare war (article 35). Over time a convention has emerged that foreign policy is a "reserved domain" of the president. However, this is occasionally challenged during periods of cohabitation. For example, both President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Chirac turned up at the 1986 G7 meeting in Tokyo. Unfortunately for Chirac, G7 protocol allowed only heads of state (Mitterrand) to attend the most important meetings and Chirac was able to attend only the plenary sessions (Giesbert 1996, 498).

of cohabitation, France functions very much like a parliamentary democracy with executive power lying in the hands of the prime minister and the cabinet. This has led some to claim that mixed democracy, at least in the case of France, is really just an alternation between presidential and parliamentary forms of government, depending on whether the president controls a legislative majority or not (Duverger 1980).

Other mixed democracies, such as Sri Lanka and the Ukraine, have also experienced cohabitation. In 2001 Sri Lanka experienced a bitter episode of cohabitation when President Chandrika Kumaratunga of the People's Alliance (PA) was forced to appoint her political opponent, Ranil Wickremasinghe of the United National Party (UNP), as prime minister following the success of the UNP in legislative elections. These two politicians held starkly different positions regarding the need to negotiate with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), or Tamil Tigers, to end the decades-long civil war. President Kumaratunga had taken a staunchly militaristic approach to dealing with the LTTE prior to 2001, but Wickremasinghe immediately opened negotiations and eventually signed a permanent ceasefire with the LTTE in 2002. After indicating that she was willing to sack the prime minister if too many concessions were made, President Kumaratunga suspended the parliament and deployed troops to take control of the country when Wickremasinghe was away visiting the United States in 2003. The period of cohabitation that had started in 2001, therefore, ended with the president's putting Sri Lanka under a state of emergency.

Ukraine has also experienced cohabitation; in 2006 President Viktor Yuschenko was forced to appoint his political rival, Viktor Yanukovych, as prime minister. The rivalry between these two men dates back at least as far as the 2004 presidential elections, when the pro-Western Yuschenko eventually defeated the pro-Russian Yanukovych in rather controversial circumstances. During the bitter and often violent presidential electoral campaign, Yuschenko became extremely ill, and it was later alleged that he had been poisoned with dioxin, possibly by elements associated with the Security Service of the Ukraine (SBU) or the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB). Neither candidate won the required majority in the first round of voting to be elected president: Yuschenko obtained 39.87 percent of the vote just ahead of Yanukovych with 39.32 percent. The second round of voting, which was marred by significant electoral fraud, saw Yanukovych declared president. Due to the electoral irregularities, Yuschenko and his supporters refused to recognize the results. Following thirteen days of protest that became known as the Orange Revolution, the Ukrainian Supreme Court overturned the election results and ordered a rerun of the second round runoff, which Yuschenko eventually won with 51.99 percent of the vote. A year and a half later, the Party of Regions, led by Yanukovych, won the most seats in the 2006 legislative elections. Despite the obvious personal hostility between the two men, the legislative election results forced Yuschenko and Yanukovych to reach a compromise. Yuschenko eventually appointed Yanukovych to be prime minister in a coalition government that included both men's parties. Relations between the president and prime minister have not been smooth since this government formed, with both actors involved in an apparent power struggle. In April 2007, President Yuschenko dissolved parliament and called for new elections that he hoped would reduce the power of Yanukovych. This decision plunged Ukraine into a political crisis, with

legislators calling it a coup d'état and refusing to recognize it until the constitutional court ruled it legal. Eventually, both the president and prime minister agreed to hold new elections in an attempt to end weeks of political deadlock. For many, periods of cohabitation in mixed democracies can be characterized as an effective system of checks and balances. As these examples from Sri Lanka and the Ukraine illustrate, however, cohabitation can also be characterized by bitter and violent conflict when the political actors involved share starkly different ideologies and goals.



Viktor Yushchenko, a Western-leaning reformer (on the right), and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych, seen as an ally of Russia (on the left), appear in a television debate in Ukraine's capital, Kiev, on Monday, November 15, 2004, between the first and second rounds of the presidential elections. Due to allegations of voter fraud following the second round, an unprecedented third round was held, and Yushchenko eventually took office in January 2005.

Very few studies have examined the composition of governments in mixed democracies. The most recent study, though, comes from Amorim Neto and Strøm (2006). They argue that, although the government formation process varies across mixed democracies, it is perhaps appropriate to think that both the president and the prime minister have de facto vetoes over cabinet appointments. Thus, the president is not as strong as he would be in a presidential regime and the prime minister is not as strong as she would be in a parliamentary regime. This suggests that we might expect mixed democracies to possess both parliamentary and presidential characteristics when it comes to the composition of cabinets. An implication of this is that cabinets in mixed democracies should

be characterized by fewer partisan ministers and a lower proportionality in the allocation of portfolios than in parliamentary regimes but more partisan ministers and a higher proportionality in the allocation of portfolios than in presidential regimes. In fact, this is precisely what Amorim Neto and Strøm find in their study of twelve parliamentary and twelve mixed democracies in Europe during the 1990s. As with presidential democracies, we would expect there to be variation in cabinet partisanship and proportionality across different mixed democracies. For example, when the president's party controls a legislative majority, we should expect cabinets in a mixed democracy to look more like those commonly found in a presidential democracy. In contrast, when the president is faced by a legislature dominated by an opposition party, we should expect cabinets in a mixed democracy to look more like those commonly found in a parliamentary democracy. The historical experience of the government formation process in France seems to bear this out (Duverger 1980).

CONCLUSION

One way to classify democracies is in terms of whether they are parliamentary, presidential, or mixed. As we have seen, whether a democracy is parliamentary, presidential, or mixed

basically depends on the relationship between three “actors”—the president, the government, and the legislature. In effect, the different institutional forms of democracy examined in this chapter represent three alternative ways to structure the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government.

The defining feature of presidentialism is the absence of legislative responsibility—the government serves at the pleasure of the president, not the legislature. Consequently, even when members of the president’s own party call for the resignation of one of his cabinet appointees, the most the legislature can do when faced with a president who fails to heed its council by asking for the resignation of the cabinet member is to hold a *symbolic* “no confidence vote” to register its disapproval. These forms of symbolic no confidence votes are rare in presidential systems, in part because they are not binding. At the time of writing this chapter, a Democrat-led Senate in the United States had scheduled a no confidence vote to register its disapproval of the activities of the Attorney General Alberto Gonzales (*New York Times*, May 17, 2007).²⁶ Although such a measure might convey the “sense of the Senate,” any successful vote would have no legal status to compel Gonzales’s removal from the government. For example, the Senate passed a similar vote in 1950 when it determined that Secretary of State Dean Acheson was not doing enough to combat the spread of communism; despite the vote, Acheson retained his post for the remainder of the Truman administration.²⁷ The ability of a cabinet member to stay in office despite the explicit disapproval of a legislative majority demonstrates a key feature of presidential systems—a separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches.

In stark contrast, the defining feature of parliamentary systems is that the composition of the government is directly controlled by the legislature. In this chapter we have outlined the negotiations among party elites that result in the appointment of prime ministers and cabinets in parliamentary systems in some detail. The prime minister—typically the head of the largest legislative party—will, *de facto*, play a central role in the appointment of the heads of the ministries. Nevertheless, the members of the cabinet—including the prime minister herself—ultimately serve at the pleasure of the legislature in parliamentary systems. Consequently, in 1990 when the United Kingdom’s Margaret Thatcher—who had been elected prime minister three times, most recently in 1987 with a 102-seat majority for the Conservative Party—lost the support of party members in the cabinet and in the House of Commons, she stepped down, thereby avoiding a vote of no confidence that had been proposed by Neil Kinnock, the leader of the opposition Labour Party. Before a vote of no confidence occurred, Thatcher was subjected to a leadership challenge from within her own party. After Thatcher’s long-time supporter Deputy Prime Minister Sir Geoffrey Howe

26. The Democrat-led Senate eventually failed in its attempt to hold a vote of no confidence in Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. Although the vote on June 11, 2007, in the U.S. Senate was 53 to 38 in favor of holding such a vote, the Democrats did not obtain the sixty votes necessary to prevent a Republican filibuster. As a result, there was no vote of no confidence.

27. “Vote of No Consequence,” *Slate*, May 21, 2007.

resigned in frustration with her opposition to agreeing to a single European currency, Michael Heseltine (who had resigned from the cabinet four years earlier to return to the “backbench”) challenged her in a Conservative Party leadership vote. Although Thatcher managed to win more votes than Heseltine, she fell short of the supermajority needed under Conservative Party rules to prevent a second-round election. She agreed to step down before the second ballot, which was eventually won by John Major.

Although the intricacies of party leadership elections vary from country to country and from party to party, this dramatic episode highlights important characteristics of parliamentary systems. Ministers serve at the pleasure of the legislature. Shifts in opinion or circumstances in the legislature can remove the head of government—oftentimes without recourse to the voting public. Margaret Thatcher was elected to the House of Commons as a representative of a London suburb and was elevated to the head of the government by a vote of her fellow Conservative members of Parliament. Eleven years later a similar vote, in which she garnered support from 204 of the 362 valid votes cast by Conservative members of Parliament, led to her removal from the position of prime minister. For students familiar with the working of the United States government, a simple (but fairly accurate) way to think about parliamentary government is to imagine a U.S. government in which the Speaker of the House, rather than the president, is the head of government.

Mixed systems are as they sound. Cabinets can be formed and reformed by either presidential or legislative initiative. Earlier in the chapter, we described how France’s Socialist president François Mitterrand decided to dismiss the right-wing-dominated cabinet in 1981 by dissolving the legislature to which it was responsible. The ensuing election returned a Socialist majority in the National Assembly and, as a result, Mitterrand was free to appoint a Socialist, Pierre Mauroy, as prime minister. The 1986 legislative elections, however, produced a slight majority for a coalition of right-wing parties and as a consequence, the cabinet was changed to reflect the new parliamentary reality—most visibly in the form of a new right-wing prime minister—Jacques Chirac. In mixed systems, therefore, governments can be said to have two masters—the president and the legislature. Which one dictates at any given time, though, depends on the electoral fortunes of the political parties involved.

Thus, the relationship between the country’s chief executive officer (whatever his title), the cabinet, and the legislature is fundamentally different in presidential and parliamentary democracies. Some political scientists have used these differences to conclude that presidentialism is a system of governance based on the division of executive and legislative powers, whereas parliamentarism is a system based on the fusion of these powers. There is, indeed, a good deal of truth in Stepan and Skach’s (1993) assertion that the essence of parliamentarism is “mutual dependence” and that the essence of presidentialism is “mutual independence.” In Chapter 15, we will examine the strategic dynamic between the executive and legislative branches in more detail when we explore how the decision to adopt parliamentary or presidential systems of government affects the survival of democracy.

KEY CONCEPTS

- cabinet, 402
caretaker government, 410
cohabitation, 450
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PROBLEMS

The problems that follow address some of the more important concepts and ideas introduced in this chapter.

Classifying Democracies

1. In this chapter, we discussed the rules for classifying democracies as parliamentary, presidential, or mixed. Look at the information from the following constitutions and decide whether these democracies are parliamentary, presidential, or mixed. Explain your decision.
 - a. 1919 Weimar Constitution in Germany
 - Article 25: The Reich president has the right to dissolve the Reichstag, but only once for the same reason. New elections are held no later than sixty days after the dissolution.
 - Article 53: The Reich chancellor, and, at his request, the Reich ministers, are appointed and dismissed by the Reich President.
 - Article 54: The Reich chancellor and the Reich ministers, in order to exercise their mandates, require the confidence of the Reichstag. Any one of them must resign if the Reichstag votes by explicit decision to withdraw its confidence.
 - Article 55: The Reich chancellor presides over the Reich government and conducts its affairs according to the rules of procedure, to be decided upon by the Reich government and to be approved by the Reich president.

- Article 56: The Reich chancellor determines the political guidelines and is responsible for them to the Reichstag. Within these guidelines every Reich minister leads his portfolio independently and is responsible to the Reichstag.

b. 1937 Irish Constitution

- Article 12: There shall be a President of Ireland (Uachtaráin na hÉireann), hereinafter called the President, who shall take precedence over all other persons in the State and who shall exercise and perform the powers and functions conferred on the President by this Constitution and by law. The President shall be elected by direct vote of the people.
- Article 13: The President shall, on the nomination of the Dáil Éireann, appoint the Taoiseach, that is, the head of the Government or Prime Minister. The president shall, on the nomination of the Taoiseach with the previous approval of Dáil Éireann, appoint the other members of the Government. The President shall, on the advice of the Taoiseach, accept the resignation or terminate the appointment of any member of the Government. Dáil Éireann shall be summoned and dissolved by the President on the advice of the Taoiseach. The President may in his absolute discretion refuse to dissolve Dáil Éireann on the advice of a Taoiseach who has ceased to retain the support of a majority in Dáil Éireann. . . . The President shall not be answerable to either House of the Oireachtas or to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and functions of his office or for any act done or purporting to be done by him in the exercise and performance of these powers and functions.
- Article 15: The National Parliament shall be called and known, and is in this Constitution generally referred to, as the Oireachtas. The Oireachtas shall consist of the President and two Houses, viz.: a House of Representatives to be called Dáil Éireann and a Senate to be called Seanad Éireann.
- Article 28: The Government shall consist of not less than seven and not more than fifteen members who shall be appointed by the President in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. . . . The Government shall be responsible to the Dáil Éireann. The head of the government, or Prime Minister, shall be called, and is in this Constitution referred to as, the Taoiseach.

c. 1980 Chilean Constitution

- Article 4: Chile is a democratic republic.
- Article 24: The government and administration of the State are vested in the President of the Republic, who is the Chief of the State.
- Article 25: The President of the Republic shall hold office for a term of eight years and may not be reelected for the consecutive period.
- Article 26: The President shall be elected by direct ballot, with an absolute majority of the votes validly cast.
- Article 32: The special powers vested in the President of the Republic are the following: . . . To appoint, and remove at will Ministers of State, Undersecretaries, Intendants, Governors and Mayors appointed by him.

- Article 33: The Ministers of State are the direct and immediate collaborators of the President of the Republic in governing and administering the State.
- d. 1947 Japanese Constitution
- Article 1: The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unit of the People, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power.
 - Article 4: The Emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided in the Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government.
 - Article 6: The Emperor shall appoint the Prime Minister as designated by the Diet.
 - Article 41: The Diet shall be the highest organ of state power, and shall be the sole law-making organ of the State.
 - Article 42: The Diet shall consist of two Houses, namely the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors.
 - Article 65: Executive power shall be vested in the Cabinet.
 - Article 66: The Cabinet shall consist of the Prime Minister, who shall be its head, and other Ministers of State, as provided for by law. The Prime Minister and other Ministers of State must be civilians. The Cabinet, in the exercise of executive power, shall be collectively responsible to the Diet.
 - Article 69: If the House of Representatives passes a non-confidence resolution, or rejects a confidence resolution, the Cabinet shall resign en masse, unless the House of Representatives is dissolved within ten (10) days.
2. Canada held an early general election on January 23, 2006, after the Liberal Party's minority government was toppled in a no-confidence vote on November 28, 2005. Canada does not have an independently elected president. Based on these two pieces of information, is Canada a presidential, parliamentary, or mixed democracy? Explain your answer.
3. If a democracy has an independently (directly or indirectly) elected president, then we automatically consider it to be a presidential democracy. True or false?

Institutions

4. A constructive vote of no confidence is essentially a vote of no confidence and an investiture vote rolled into one. What does this mean?
5. Which of the following statements best describe a vote of confidence?
 - a. A new government must pass a vote (on the cabinet's composition and proposed policies) in the legislature before it can take office.
 - b. A government declares that a vote on a particular piece of legislation is also a vote on support for the government itself; if the legislators do not support the legislation, then the government will resign (and new elections might result).
 - c. A group of legislators propose a vote on support for the incumbent government. If the government passes the vote, then it stays in office. If it fails the vote, then it must resign (and new elections might result).

6. The March 2007 “unity” or “grand coalition” cabinet of the Palestinian Territories has twelve Hamas members and six Fatah members (The other seven members are nonpartisan or from much smaller parties). Of the legislative seats controlled by the government parties, Hamas controls about 59 percent. Hamas received 48 percent of the government positions. Is this a good example of Gamson’s Law? Explain.

Government Formation

7. A story in the *International Herald Tribune* from 2006 stated the following: “Dutch political parties began the complicated task of forming a new government on Thursday, one day after national elections thrust the Netherlands into the same kind of inconclusive terrain that Austria and Germany experienced in their votes. Austria has yet to form a government after its election two months ago, and in Germany last year, it took six weeks of grueling negotiations to form a coalition government under Angela Merkel.” How would you explain what this means to a roommate or family member who has no idea what a parliamentary government is? Your explanation should include what the government is, how it forms, what factors affect how long this formation process takes, and who gets into government, and so on.
8. Legislative elections were held in Finland on March 18, 2007. Eight parties won seats in parliament. Based on what you have learned in this chapter and the information in Table 11.16, the leader of which party is likely to be appointed formateur? Explain.

TABLE 11.16**Legislative Election Results in Finland, 2007**

Party	Seats (no.)	Seats (%)
Centre Party	51	25.5
National Coalition Party	50	25.0
Social Democratic Party	45	22.5
Left Alliance	17	8.5
Green League	15	7.5
Christian Democrats	7	3.5
Swedish People's Party	9	4.5
True Finns	5	2.5
Other	1 ^a	0.5
Total	200	100

^aProvince of Åland representative.

9. Legislative elections were held in Sweden on September 17, 2006, and seven parties won seats. Although the left-wing Social Democratic Party won more seats than any other party, the leader of the largest right-wing party was appointed to be the first formateur. Which of the following statements might explain this choice?
- The choice of formateur is random. As a result, the leader of the largest right-wing party had the same chance of being chosen as did each of the other party leaders.
 - In this particular election, four right-wing parties ran as a preelectoral coalition and together won a majority of the seats. Because they had pledged to govern together if successful, it made sense to give the leader of the largest coalition party the position of formateur.
 - The position of formateur is always offered first to a party on the right; if the first attempt to form a government fails, the second formateur will be chosen from a left-wing party, and so on.

10. In Table 11.17, we show the results from the 1996 legislative elections in Ecuador.

TABLE 11.17**Legislative Election Results in Ecuador, 1996**

Party	Seats (no.)	Seats (%)
Social Christian Party (PSC)	28	34.1
Ecuadorian Roldosista Party (PRE)	19	23.2
Popular Democracy (DP)	12	14.6
New Country Movement	8	9.6
Democratic Left (ID)	4	4.9
Alfarist Radical Front (FRA)	3	3.7
Ecuadorian Popular Revolutionary Action (APRE)	2	2.4
Democratic Popular Movement (MPD)	2	2.4
Ecuadorian Conservative Party (PCE)	2	2.4
Concentration of Popular Forces (CFP)	1	1.2
Independents	1	1.2
Total	82	100

- Based on the results in Table 11.17, from which party would you expect the formateur to come if Ecuador were a parliamentary democracy?
- Ecuador is in fact a presidential democracy. In the 1996 presidential elections, Abdalá Bucaram Ortiz of the Ecuadorian Roldosista Party (PRE) was elected president ahead of Jaime Nebot Saadi of the Social Christian Party (PSC). Based on this new information, from which party would you now expect the formateur to come? Why is this?

11. A new government took office on October 6, 2006, in Sweden. A couple of weeks later, two ministers in the government (in charge of commerce and culture, respectively) had to resign as a result of revelations in the press regarding personal financial improprieties. Because two cabinet ministers had changed, would most political scientists consider that the government had ended?

Government Types

12. Look back at the information about the 2006 Finnish elections in Table 11.16. Based on the information in this table, indicate at least five of the possible minimal winning coalitions that could form. What is the least minimal winning coalition out of this set of five MWC?
13. In Table 11.18, we show the results from the 2002 legislative elections in Germany. Answer the following questions.

TABLE 11.18**Legislative Election Results in Germany, 2002**

Party	Seats	Ideology
Party of Democratic Socialism	2	Most left
Greens	55	
Social Democratic Party	251	
Christian Democratic Party	248	
Free Democratic Party	47	Most right
Total	603	

- a. If a government formed between the Christian Democratic Party and the Free Democratic Party, what type of government would it be?
- b. If a government formed between the Social Democratic Party and the Greens, what type of government would it be?
- c. If a government formed between the Social Democratic Party, the Greens, and the Party of Democratic Socialism, what type of government would it be?
14. Minority governments are more likely to form in parliamentary democracies when opposition parties have a significant role in the policymaking process. True or false? Explain your answer.
15. Explain why minority governments should be more frequent on average in presidential democracies than parliamentary ones.

CHAPTER 11

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CHAPTER

4

ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

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Elections and Electoral Systems

It's not the voting that's democracy; it's the counting.

Tom Stoppard, *Jumpers*

The most important choice facing constitution writers is that of a legislative electoral system.

Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies"

- Almost every country in the world, whether democratic or authoritarian, has had some experience with holding elections. Although elections play a minimal role in choosing who rules in dictatorships, evidence suggests that authoritarian elections are not merely forms of institutional window dressing; they can be useful tools for stabilizing dictatorial rule. In contrast, elections are one of the defining characteristics of democracies and provide the primary mechanism by which democratic governments obtain the authority to rule.
- Although there is a great deal of variety in the types of electoral systems that are employed around the world, most political scientists categorize them into three main families based on the electoral formula that is used to translate votes into seats: majoritarian, proportional, and mixed.
- We illustrate how each of the different electoral systems used for national-level legislative and presidential elections works in practice. We also discuss their effect on things like proportionality, ethnic accommodation, accountability, minority representation, and the revelation of sincere preferences. Finally, we provide an overview of electoral systems by geographic region and regime type.

In the previous chapter, we described how political scientists often classify democracies in terms of the form of government that they have: parliamentary, presidential, or mixed. We also noted, however, that there are many other ways that one can distinguish between different types of democracy. As you will no doubt remember from our discussion of the different ways of defining democracy in Chapter 5, one of the key elements of any democracy is the use of elections. It is perhaps no surprise then that political scientists sometimes distinguish between democracies by the type of electoral system employed in these elections. An **electoral system**

An **electoral system** is a set of laws that regulate electoral competition between candidates or parties or both. An **electoral formula** determines how votes are translated into seats. The **ballot structure** is how electoral choices are presented on the ballot paper. **District magnitude** is the number of representatives elected in a district.

system is a set of laws and regulations that govern the electoral competition between candidates or parties or both (Cox 1997, 38). As we will see, these laws and regulations include a whole host of things, such as the **electoral formula** (how votes are translated into seats), the **ballot structure** (whether individuals vote for

candidates or parties or both and whether they cast a single vote or express a series of preferences), and the **district magnitude** (the number of representatives elected in a district). They also include various administrative rules dealing with things like the nomination of candidates, the registration of voters, and the distribution of polling places (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005). Despite the different dimensions along which electoral systems can vary, most political scientists categorize electoral systems into three main families based on the electoral formula that they use to translate votes into seats: majoritarian, proportional, and mixed. It is partly on this basis that some political scientists talk of majoritarian and proportional democracies (Lijphart 1999; Powell 2000; Golder and Stramski 2007).

In this chapter, we explore how various forms of majoritarian, proportional, and mixed electoral systems work in some detail. We also discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages associated with each of these systems. Before we address these issues, though, we briefly provide an overview of elections around the world. Elections are frequently used to select people for a wide range of offices. For example, they are used in various countries to fill offices in the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary, as well as in a whole variety of private and business organizations, ranging from clubs and voluntary associations to corporations and school boards. In what follows, we focus on national-level legislative and presidential elections.

ELECTIONS: AN OVERVIEW

All modern democracies, by their very nature, hold regular elections.¹ This does not mean, however, that all elections are held in democracies; as we noted in Chapter 8, elections are

1. If you recall from Chapter 5, citizens in older “democracies,” such as that in ancient Athens, selected their representatives by lot (for instance, by drawing names out of a hat) rather than by election.



A Qatari woman places her vote in the ballot box in Doha, Qatar, Sunday, April 1, 2007. About 28,000 Qataris had a chance to vote in these municipal elections, which were seen as the last democratic test, a practice run, before parliamentary elections scheduled for 2008. Vying for seats on Qatar's Central Municipal Council—a 29-member chamber with limited, advisory powers—were 3 women and 122 men. Although some Qataris complained that the municipal vote was meaningless because of the council's limited powers, government officials said it was watched closely to see how the women candidates fared. One of the three female candidates, Shaikha Al Jufairi, was elected with the highest amount of votes of all 125 candidates.

quite common in dictatorships as well. In fact, about half of the legislative and presidential elections that occurred in the world between 1946 and 2000 took place in dictatorships (Golder 2005, 106). Indeed, virtually every independent country in the world, whether democratic or dictatorial, has held national-level elections at one time or another. As of early 2007, only six countries—Bhutan, Brunei, China, Eritrea, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia—have failed to hold national-level elections in the postwar period. Arguably, there has been considerable experience with, or interest in, electoral politics even among these six countries. For example, Bhutan regularly experiences something akin to legislative elections when village heads and family representatives gather to nominate members of the legislature in village-level meetings (Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 2001). Although elections do not occur at regional, provincial, or national levels in China, Chinese voters have the opportunity to cast their ballots in township and county elections. Saudi Arabia held its first elections at the municipal level in 2005. Local and regional elections have taken place in Eritrea, most recently in 2004. In April 2003, Qataris overwhelmingly voted in favor of a referendum on a new constitution that would allow them to vote for a partially elected legislature.² The new Qatar constitution went into effect in June 2005. An electoral law was finally passed in May 2008 and legislative elections are planned for later

2. The legislature would have forty-five seats, of which thirty would be filled by direct elections and the remaining fifteen would be appointed by the emir.

in the year, although no precise date has yet been set. In sum, it is only in Brunei that electoral politics has failed to put down any roots at all.³

Elections in dictatorships vary quite a lot, both in their level of competitiveness and their inclusiveness (Blaydes 2006b). Some elections, like those in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, are little more than referenda in which voters are able to vote only yes or no on the incumbent. In contrast, some dictatorships allow elections in which voters are able to choose between multiple candidates from a single party. In the 1960s, for example, two ruling-party candidates were allowed to compete for the voters' mandate in each single-member district in Tanzania; similar elections were held in Kenya and Zambia during periods of one-party rule. Other dictatorships, like Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda in the 1970s, actually allowed voters to choose between competing candidates from multiple parties (Nohlen, Krennerich, and Thibaut 1999, 6). In contrast to most contemporary democracies, in which all adult citizens are generally eligible to vote, the rules on who can vote in dictatorships vary quite a lot. Some dictatorships, like the former Soviet Union, basically allow all adult citizens to vote, but others place strong restrictions on who can vote. For example, in December 2006, in the first legislative elections held in the United Arab Emirates, only 6,689 people, or just 1 percent of the population, were allowed to vote; indeed, all of the eligible voters were handpicked by the rulers of the seven emirates (*Gulf Times*, December 21, 2006).

In most dictatorships, elections have a predetermined outcome, whether this is victory for the incumbent or some other candidate(s) supported by the ruling elite. Ultimately, voters in dictatorships have little or no say in who rules them. The predetermined outcome of elections is often the result of voter coercion, vote rigging, or simply some official making up arbitrary vote totals.⁴ In Chapter 9 we presented an example from the 1989 legislative elections in Kenya, where the Returning Officer simply reported false election results to ensure the victory of the incumbent party's preferred candidate. Many election results reported in dictatorships are ridiculously one-sided. For example, Saddam Hussein was declared the winner of the 2002 elections in Iraq just before the second Gulf War after polling 100 percent of the votes with a 100 percent turnout; he had won only 99.96 percent of the votes in the previous elections in 1995 (CNN.com, October 16, 2002). The predetermined nature of dictatorial elections has led some to refer to them as "show" or "sham" elections. These terms can be somewhat misleading, however, because they suggest that these elections are merely forms of institutional window dressing with few political consequences. Ask yourself, though, why so many dictatorships bother to hold elections if this is the case.

Although elections rarely offer citizens the opportunity to change the existing leadership in dictatorships, as they do in democracies, it is becoming increasingly clear to many politi-

3. Brunei is a small country on the island of Borneo in Southeast Asia that obtained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1984. Brunei did hold one legislative election in January 1962, when all ten of the elected seats in the twenty-one-seat legislature were won by the Brunei People's Party (BPP). Before the BPP could take power, though, the sultan annulled the results and banned the BPP, leading to a five-month-long insurrection. No legislative elections have been held since.

4. Some elections in dictatorships are manipulated in less obvious ways. For example, thousands of candidates, including virtually all reformist ones, hoping to run in the 2004 legislative elections in Iran were deemed "unfit" by the religiously conservative Council of Guardians, primarily on the grounds that they were enemies of the Islamic Revolution.

cal scientists that authoritarian elections do have substantively meaningful consequences. To a large extent, dictatorships hold elections because they think that it is somehow in their interest to do this. For example, some dictatorships hold elections because they have come under pressure from the United States and international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, to democratize. In effect, the holding of elections is an attempt to maintain the *appearance* of democratic competition in these countries and keep international goodwill and monetary funds flowing.

Elections can be a force for stability in dictatorial regimes in several ways. For instance, they can provide a mechanism for resolving intra-elite conflicts, an arena for patronage distribution, a means of recruiting and rewarding local political elites, and a way for leaders to obtain information about the performance of local officials (Geddes 2005; Blaydes 2006a; Lust-Okar 2006). Elections can also help to institutionalize the dominance of a single party in one-party dictatorships and provide a relatively stable mechanism for dictatorial succession (Blaydes 2006b). Elections may also provide information to the regime about the relative strengths of supporters and opponents (Magaloni 2006). Indeed, one-sided elections—even when the outcome is known to be fixed—can undermine the willingness of opposition groups to challenge the dictatorship, because these groups have no way of knowing the true level of opposition in society; all public evidence points to an overwhelming level of support for the dictatorship (Geddes 2005). There is also evidence that elections provide a way for dictatorships to co-opt opposition groups, or at least to divide and control them (Przeworski 1991; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006). By allowing some opposition groups but not others to legitimately compete in elections, dictators can sow the seeds of division within the opposition, thereby making it harder for opposition groups to overthrow them (Lust-Okar 2005).

Finally, dictatorial elections offer citizens an opportunity to register their dissatisfaction with the ruling regime. As Blaydes (2006b) notes, acts of voter abstention or ballot nullification can provide meaningful signals of discontent and voter preference. For example, studies of voting in the former Soviet Union suggest that nonvoting can be seen and, indeed, was interpreted at the time, as an act of protest whereby relatively well-educated individuals consciously decided to ignore mandatory voting laws or spoil their ballots (Karklins 1986; Roeder 1989). Blank and spoiled ballots were similarly interpreted as a form of protest against military rule in Brazil from 1964 to 1985 (Powers and Roberts 1995). By offering this controlled opening for citizens to register their discontent, dictatorships may be attempting to channel citizen dissatisfaction with the regime into the electoral process instead of other more destabilizing activities. In sum, elections appear to be an important strategy for survival in authoritarian regimes. Empirical evidence in support of this comes from Gandhi (2003). Using data on 512 dictators between 1946 and 1996 in 138 countries, she finds that dictators who hold elections stay in power longer than those who do not hold elections.

Although elections play a meaningful role in dictatorships, they are not a defining characteristic of authoritarian regimes. In contrast, elections are seen as central to the very nature of contemporary democratic rule. In democracies, elections serve both a practical and a symbolic role. In a practical sense, elections provide the primary means by which citizens select their representatives. As such, they provide citizens with an opportunity to influence

the government formation process, to reward or punish politicians for their time in power, and to shape the direction of future policy. In a symbolic sense, the legitimacy of a democratic government comes from the fact that it was chosen through an electoral process—citizens have an equal and relatively low-cost opportunity to participate in selecting the people who rule over them and, hence, the types of policy that should be implemented. The bottom line is that it is recognized in democracies that the authority of governments to rule comes solely from the consent of the governed; elections provide the primary mechanism by which this consent is translated into the authority to rule.

We now provide some summary statistics on the legislative and presidential elections that have taken place in democracies around the world from 1946 to 2000. In this time period, 125 countries experienced at least one democratic election. Table 12.1 illustrates that roughly one-third of the democratic legislative and presidential elections that took place between 1950 and 2000 occurred in the 1990s. The number of legislative and presidential elections remained fairly constant until the end of the 1980s. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the return of multiparty elections in Africa in the 1990s, however, led to a large increase in the number of democratic countries and, hence, democratic elections. As Table 12.2 illustrates, almost half of the world's democratic presidential elections between 1946 and 2000 occurred in Latin America; a third of the world's legislative elections took place in Western Europe.

Elections always involve citizens casting votes for candidates or political parties or both, but there is a great deal of variation in the precise set of rules employed by the world's electoral sys-

Suffrage is the civil right to vote and is sometimes referred to as the franchise. **Universal suffrage** is when the right to vote is not restricted by race, gender, belief, or social status.

tems. Consider the rules on who is eligible to vote. Although all contemporary democracies allow for **universal suffrage**—the right to vote is not restricted by race, gender, belief, or social

status—they still place differing restrictions of one kind or another on who can vote. For example, democracies vary in regard to whether they restrict felons, noncitizens, the mentally ill, nonresidents, and so on from voting (see Box 12.1, titled “Who Can Vote in Democracies?”).

TABLE 12.1 **Democratic Elections by Decade**

Decade	Average number of democracies	Number of elections	
		Legislative	Presidential
1950s	36.5	111	33
1960s	42.3	121	37
1970s	42.7	127	35
1980s	58.6	162	48
1990s	100.7	281	114

Source: Data are from Golder 2005.

TABLE 12.2**Democratic Elections by Geographical Region,
1946–2000**

Region	Number of countries	Number of legislative elections	Number of presidential elections
Sub-Saharan Africa	52	49	26
Eastern Europe	31	50	31
Middle East/North Africa	21	33	0
Latin America	19	164	133
Asia	23	86	18
Western Europe	25	285	60
Pacific Islands/Oceania	13	83	8
Caribbean/Non-Iberic America	16	117	18
Total	199	867	294

Source: Data are from Golder 2005.

Electoral systems vary in many other ways as well. Some allow citizens to vote for candidates, whereas others allow them to vote only for political parties; some allow citizens to cast only one vote, whereas others allow them to cast multiple votes; some allow for only one round of voting, whereas others allow for two or more; some involve electing only one representative in each district, whereas others involve electing many. The list of differences could go on and on. Despite the many different ways in which one might think to distinguish among the world's electoral systems, most political scientists categorize electoral systems into the three main families mentioned earlier—majoritarian, proportional, and mixed; they base these categories on the electoral formula they use to translate votes into seats.

Box 12.1**WHO CAN VOTE IN DEMOCRACIES?**

If you recall from our discussion in Chapter 5, Dahl (1971) argues that two dimensions are important for classifying democracies: contestation and inclusion. Contestation is largely concerned with the procedures of democratic competition. In contrast, inclusion has to do with who gets to participate in the democratic process; that is, who can vote. To classify a country as democratic, it should be characterized by high levels of both contestation and inclusion. As Dahl (1989, 233) notes, it is a requirement that "practically all adults have the right to vote" for a country to be considered democratic. In the real world, though, "no country allows all adults to vote.... Although the basic trend over the last 200 years has been to remove one barrier after another, many restrictions remain" (Katz 1997, 216).

Historically, many groups of people have been excluded from the right to vote. For example, many countries did not allow women to vote. The first country to give unrestricted voting rights to women was New Zealand in 1893. In contrast, it was not until 1984 that Liechtenstein finally gave women the right to vote. Some countries excluded people from the right to vote based on religion. For instance, Roman Catholics were not allowed to vote in the United Kingdom until 1788. A more common basis on which to exclude various groups was social class. Indeed, most countries employed some sort of property qualification for people to vote until the nineteenth century. Other countries have prevented people from voting based on race. For example, indigenous Australians were barred from voting in Australia until 1967, African Americans were effectively barred from voting in the southern United States until 1964, and blacks were unable to vote in apartheid South Africa from 1948 to 1993. Much of electoral history is about the efforts to extend the suffrage, or franchise, to these various excluded groups.

Today, virtually all democracies allow for universal suffrage, under which the right to vote is not restricted by race, gender, religious belief, or social status. The United States does not quite enjoy universal suffrage because there are limitations on the voting rights of citizens in the District of Columbia (DC); citizens in DC are subject to federal laws and taxation, but their only congressional representative is a nonvoting delegate. Although all democracies generally enjoy universal suffrage, this does not mean that everyone in contemporary democracies can vote; many restrictions remain. For example, various countries restrict the right to vote based on issues having to do with age, mental health, citizenship, residency (district, country, citizens abroad), and prison sentences (Blais, Massicotte, and Yoshinaka 2001).

Age

Most countries exclude nonadults on the ground that only mature people can make reasoned choices. These countries typically use age as a proxy for maturity. Almost all democracies use eighteen years of age as the point at which individuals obtain the right to vote. For example, Blais, Massicotte, and Yoshinaka (2001) find that fifty-nine out of sixty-one democracies in their sample do not allow individuals under eighteen to vote. If we look at all countries (democracies and dictatorships), the minimum age requirement ranges from a low of sixteen in Brazil to a high of twenty-one in Malaysia, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Singapore. Historically, there have been circumstances in which the minimum age requirement depended on the married status of the individuals (Katz 1997, 218–229). For example, until 1995, Bolivia allowed people to vote at eighteen if they were married and twenty-one if they were not.

Mental Health

Most countries have voting restrictions for individuals who suffer from mental health problems. Indeed, some countries, like Bulgaria, Chile, and the Netherlands, have these restrictions explicitly written into their constitutions. Of course, the criteria for determining mental health vary across both time and space. Many countries require judicial courts to rule whether indi-

viduals are incompetent before their right to vote is removed. Only four countries—Canada, Ireland, Italy, and Sweden—have no mental health requirements for voting.

Citizenship

Some people argue that the right to vote should be given only to citizens of a country because only citizens have the interests of the national community at heart. Others counter that immigrants should be able to vote if they pay taxes and obey the laws of the country. Blais, Massicotte, and Yoshinaka (2001) find that forty-eight out of sixty-one democracies in their sample restrict the right to vote to citizens. A few countries allow noncitizens to vote but impose certain residency requirements. For example, Chile allows noncitizens to vote as long as they have been residents for five years. Several other countries allow noncitizens to vote but only if these noncitizens come from specific countries. For instance, several former British colonies, such as Barbados, Belize, and Trinidad and Tobago allow members of various British Commonwealth countries to vote. In Ireland, British citizens can vote in legislative elections but not presidential ones. Any member of a European Union country residing in Portugal can vote there.

District Residency

A small number of democracies have district residency requirements. The justification for these requirements is that individuals should be informed about local issues if they are to vote. Of course, this raises the issue of what happens when people have recently moved to an area. The length of district residency requirements varies from a low of one month in Australia and New Zealand to a high of six months in France, Mali, and the Philippines.

Country Residency

A few countries allow only those individuals who have resided within their borders for a certain amount of time to vote. In these countries, the minimum amount of residency time before an individual can vote ranges from a low of three months in Germany to a high of seven years in Malawi and St. Lucia.

Citizens Abroad

Historically, citizens who reside in foreign countries have been unable to vote in their home countries. This restriction was initially removed for soldiers fighting abroad; it was later removed for civil servants and diplomats working abroad. Blais, Massicotte, and Yoshinaka (2001) find that forty of the sixty-one democracies in their sample allow citizens who reside abroad to vote. Thirty of these countries, including France, Mali, and Venezuela, allow these citizens to vote indefinitely; others allow these citizens to vote only for a certain period of time, ranging from three years in New Zealand to twenty years in the United Kingdom. Several

democracies, however, such as Barbados, the Czech Republic, Italy, Malta, and Slovakia, require individuals to return to their home country to cast their vote, so the right to vote for these citizens is more symbolic than practical.

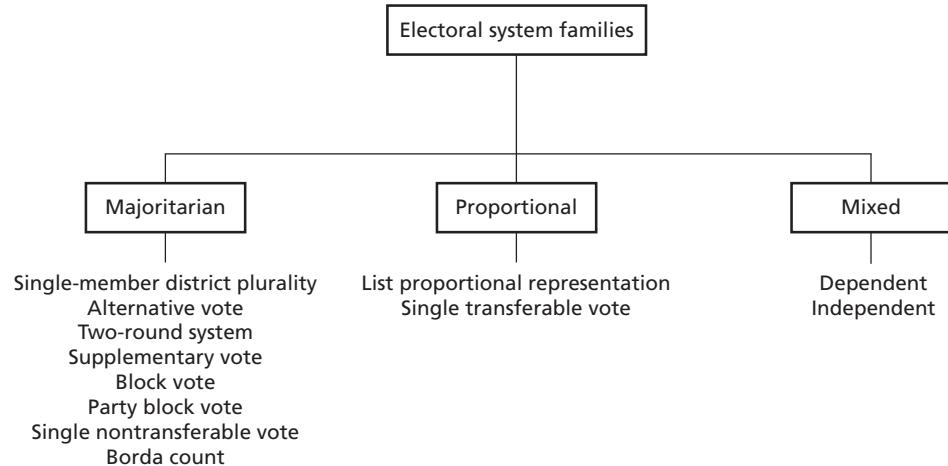
Prison Sentences

Some people argue that citizens who are convicted of breaking laws have broken some kind of “social contract” with the rest of society and should, therefore, be barred from voting. At one end of the spectrum are democracies such as Brazil, India, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela, which do not allow individuals convicted of any crime to vote while in prison. At the other end of the spectrum are countries like Germany, Namibia, and Sweden, which allow all prisoners to vote. In between are countries that allow some prisoners to vote, depending on the length of their prison sentence and the type of crime that they committed. In some countries, individuals lose the right to vote for periods beyond the length of their prison sentence. For example, prisoners in Belgium lose the right to vote for five years beyond the end of their prison sentence. In Iowa, Kentucky, and Virginia in the United States, individuals convicted of a felony lose the right to vote for life (unless the governor or state legislature intervenes).

Registration

In all democracies, only those who are registered are able to vote. In many countries, voter registration is done by the local or national government. Until 1992, for example, Elections Canada hired temporary employees from the public to go to each residence in order to determine all the eligible voters. This system was ultimately abandoned as being too costly. In some countries, all eligible voters must legally register themselves. For instance, voter registration is compulsory in the United Kingdom and Australia. In other democracies, like the United States, it is up to the eligible voters whether they choose to register to vote.

You may be wondering why political scientists focus on the electoral formula when there are so many other ways to distinguish between electoral systems. To be honest, there is no really good answer—it has just become an established convention. The closest thing to an answer that we can come up with is that political scientists have found that the electoral formula strongly influences the proportionality of the electoral system and the type of government that forms (Rae 1967; Powell 1982; Blais and Carty 1987; Lijphart 1994). For example, majoritarian electoral systems tend to produce a more disproportional translation of votes into seats and to increase the probability of single-party majority governments. In contrast, proportional electoral systems tend to produce more proportional results—as the name “proportional representation” would suggest—and to lower the probability of single-party majority governments. Given that most political scientists think that the proportionality of an electoral system

FIGURE 12.1**Electoral System Families**

Note: These are all of the electoral systems used in contemporary national-level legislative and presidential elections in independent countries.

and the type of government that forms are important, it is perhaps not surprising that they typically distinguish electoral system families on the basis of their electoral formulas. We illustrate these electoral system families in Figure 12.1 along with the names of the various electoral systems they include. The electoral systems shown are all those that are employed in contemporary national-level legislative and presidential elections around the world.⁵

MAJORITARIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

A **majoritarian electoral system** is one in which the candidates or parties that receive the most votes win. We should note that the word

A **majoritarian electoral system** is one in which the candidates or parties that receive the most votes win.

“majoritarian” is somewhat misleading. Although some majoritarian electoral systems require the winning candidate or party to obtain an absolute majority of the votes (absolute majority systems), others require only that they win more votes than anyone else (relative majority or plurality systems). In other words, not all majoritarian electoral systems actually require the winning candidates or parties to obtain an absolute majority of the votes. Probably the main reason why majoritarian electoral systems are referred to as “majoritarian” is, as we will see, that they frequently produce outcomes in which the largest party wins an absolute majority of the legislative seats even if the party does not win an absolute majority of the votes. In effect, majoritarian electoral systems tend to help the largest party obtain a leg-

5. There are, of course, numerous other electoral systems, such as approval voting (Brams and Fishburn 1978), that are used for different types of elections.

islative majority. Eight different varieties of majoritarian electoral systems are used for national-level elections around the world: single-member-district plurality (SMDP), alternative vote (AV), Borda Count (BC), two-round systems (TRS), single nontransferable vote (SNTV), block vote (BV), party block vote (PBV), and supplementary vote (SV).

Single-Member District Plurality System

A **single-member district plurality system** is one in which individuals cast a single vote for a candidate in a single-member district. The candidate with the most votes is elected.

A **single-member district plurality system** is the simplest and most commonly used majoritarian electoral system in the world. It is employed primarily in the United Kingdom and

in former British colonies, such as Belize, Canada, India, Nepal, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States. An SMDP system involves individuals voting for candidates in single-member districts. On being presented with a list of the nominated candidates in the district, each individual votes for one, and only one, candidate; they typically do this by placing an X next to their chosen candidate. The candidate with the most votes, even if this is not a majority of the votes, is elected from the district. SMDP systems are sometimes referred to as “first-past-the-post” systems in an analogy to horse racing. This analogy is misleading, however, because there is no particular “post” that a candidate must move beyond before he or she can win; all a candidate needs to win is to get more votes than anyone else. In theory, a candidate can win in an SMDP system with as few as two votes if all the other candidates win only one vote each. An example of the operation of an SMDP system in the Kettering constituency in the United Kingdom in the 2005 legislative elections is shown in Table 12.3. Philip Hollobone of the Conservative Party won the most votes and was, therefore, elected as the member of Parliament for this district.

SMDP electoral systems have both advantages and disadvantages. Perhaps the greatest strength of SMDP systems is their relative simplicity. This means that they are easy to explain to voters and easy for them to understand. It also suggests that they are easy to administer and, hence, relatively low in cost. A second advantage of SMDP systems has to do with the fact that only one representative is elected in each district. Having only one representative per constituency means that responsibility for what happens in the district lies squarely with

TABLE 12.3

**Election Results from the Kettering Constituency,
UK Legislative Elections, 2005**

Candidate	Party	Votes	Percentage
Philip Hollobone	Conservatives	25,401	45.6
Phil Sawford	Labour	22,100	39.7
Roger Aron	Liberal Democrats	6,882	12.4
Rosemarie Clarke	United Kingdom Independence Party	1,263	2.3

that person. In other words, SMDP systems make it easy for voters to identify who is responsible for policies in their district and, therefore, to hold them accountable in the next election. By making it easier for voters to hold representatives accountable, SMDP systems create incentives for representatives to perform well in office. This helps to explain why political scientists often link SMDP electoral systems with high levels of constituency service and close bonds between constituents and representatives. For some scholars, a third advantage of SMDP systems is that these electoral systems are associated with single-party majority governments (Blais and Carty 1987). As we'll see in more detail in Chapter 15, single-party majority governments increase the ability of voters to identify who is responsible for national policy and hold them accountable; we already saw in the previous chapter that single-party majority governments are more stable than other forms of government.

Despite these advantages, SMDP electoral systems have many critics. Some critics point to the fact that SMDP systems have the potential to produce extremely unrepresentative outcomes. As our example in Table 12.3 illustrates, it is possible for a candidate to win without obtaining a majority of the votes; in fact, 54.4 percent of the Kettering constituents who voted did not vote for the winning candidate. Although it is true that the winning candidate did not obtain a majority of the votes in the Kettering constituency, one could argue that he came quite close (45.6 percent). Still, it is important to note that candidates can win in SMDP systems with a much lower vote share than that obtained by the winning candidate in Kettering. As an example, the winning candidate in the Kerowagi constituency in Papua New Guinea won with just 7.9 percent of the vote in the 1987 legislative elections; fully 92.1 percent of the constituents voted for someone else (Cox 1997, 85). That this can happen helps to explain why SMDP systems are often criticized for leading to the election of legislators who are not representative of the voters' wishes.

Not only are SMDP systems criticized for being able to produce unrepresentative outcomes at the district level, they are also frequently criticized for their potential to produce unrepresentative outcomes at the national level as well. Under an SMDP system, it is entirely possible for a party that wins a significant percentage of the overall national vote to obtain very few legislative seats because it fails to come first in many constituencies. For instance, consider the 1983 legislative elections in the United Kingdom. In these elections, the coalition between the Social Democratic Party and the Liberal Party, which was known as the Alliance, won 25.4 percent of the national vote but received just 3.5 percent of the seats. In fact, the Alliance won only 675,985 votes (out of 30,661,309 votes) fewer than the Labour Party but received 186 fewer legislative seats. In stark contrast to the Alliance, the Conservative Party won 61.1 percent of the seats and formed a single-party government in the 1983 elections even though it had only won 42.4 percent of the votes. As this example demonstrates, SMDP systems can produce a highly disproportionate translation of votes into seats that tends to favor larger parties at the expense of smaller ones. We should note, though, that the level of disproportionality seen in SMDP systems is sometimes not as high as was the case in the 1983 elections in the United Kingdom. One reason for this is that some parties may finish second and fail to win seats in some districts but come in first and win

seats in others. This situation can translate into a fairly proportional outcome at the national level even if the outcomes at the local level are not proportional (Barkan 1995). For example, the 1994 legislative elections in Malawi saw the United Democratic Front win 48 percent of the seats with 46 percent of the votes, the Malawian Congress Party win 32 percent of the seats with 34 percent of the votes, and the Alliance for Democracy win 20 percent of the seats with 19 percent of the votes.

SMDP systems are also criticized by some for encouraging individuals to vote strategically rather than in accordance with their true preferences. Sincere voting means voting for your most preferred candidate or party. In contrast, strategic voting means voting for your most preferred candidate *who has a realistic chance of winning*.⁶ To see how the SMDP system creates an incentive to vote strategically, consider the Kettering example again. Imagine an individual who prefers the Liberal Democrat candidate to the Labour Candidate and the Labour Candidate to the Conservative candidate, that is, LD \succ L \succ C. If this individual votes for the Liberal Democrat candidate, she will be voting sincerely. However, this individual has an incentive to vote strategically because opinion polls are likely to show that the Liberal Democrat candidate is going to finish in third place and has little to no chance of coming in first. Thus, a vote for the Liberal Democrat candidate is likely to be “wasted”; that is, it will not affect the outcome of the election. As a result, the individual may decide to vote strategically for the Labour candidate (who has a more realistic chance of winning) in an attempt to stop the Conservative candidate (the least-preferred candidate) from winning. Clearly, we prefer democratic electoral systems that encourage voters to express their sincere preferences. Unfortunately, though, scholars have shown that *all* reasonable electoral systems create incentives for individuals to act strategically; there are no “strategy-proof” systems (Gibbard 1973; Satterthwaite 1975). Nonetheless, some electoral systems, such as SMDP, create stronger incentives to act strategically than others. We address these incentives to vote strategically and their effects in more detail in the next chapter.

Another criticism of SMDP systems is that they can encourage the creation of ethnic or clan-based parties in countries in which ethnic groups and clans are regionally concentrated. This can result in regional fiefdoms or party strongholds in which there is little electoral competition, the party of the majority ethnic group is dominant, and minorities have little sway over public policy or the allocation of private goods. This type of situation frequently occurs in African countries like Malawi and Kenya, where ethnic groups are geographically concentrated in particular regions (Barkan 1995; Posner 2005). In effect, the use of SMDP electoral systems in Africa has helped produce countries that are “divided into geographically separate party strongholds, with little incentive for parties to make appeals outside their home region and cultural-political base” (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005, 43). Similarly, the use of SMDP probably helped segregationist Democrats maintain single-party dominance in the southern United States for almost a century (Mickey, forthcoming).

6. For more detailed definitions of sincere and strategic voting, see Chapter 10.

Alternative Vote

One of the criticisms of SMDP systems is that they allow candidates to win without obtaining a majority of the votes. One simple way to avoid this possibility involves having individuals rank order the candidates on the ballot rather than simply vote for one of them. When voters rank order candidates in this way, they are engaging in what is called **preference**, or **preferential, voting**. A majoritarian electoral system that involves preferential voting is called the **alternative vote** (AV).

In the alternative vote system, a candidate-centered system used in single-member districts, voters are required to rank at least one candidate in order of preference. Voters typically do this by placing numbers next to the names of the candidates to indicate whether each is the voter's first choice, second choice, third choice, and so on. AV systems in which voters have to rank order all of the candidates are called "full preferential" systems, whereas AV systems in which voters have to rank order only some candidates are called "optional preferential" systems. If a candidate wins an absolute majority of first-preference votes, he is immediately elected. If no candidate wins an absolute majority, then the candidate with the lowest number of first-preference votes is eliminated and his ballots are examined for their second-preference votes. Each ballot from the eliminated candidate is then reallocated among the remaining candidates according to these second preferences. This process is repeated until one candidate has obtained an absolute majority of the votes cast (full preferential system) or an absolute majority of the valid votes remaining (optional preferential system). The alternative vote is sometimes referred to as an instant-runoff vote (IRV) because it is much like holding a series of runoff elections in which the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated in each round until someone receives an absolute majority of the vote.

Australia is perhaps the most famous country to use the AV system.⁷ The alternative vote was first introduced in Queensland, Australia, in 1893 and soon spread to the other Australian colonies after 1901. The AV system has been used to elect the Australian House of Representatives since 1919. Australian voters must rank order all of the candidates on the ballot because they employ a full preferential AV system. An example of the operation of an AV system in the Richmond constituency of New South Wales in the 1990 Australian legislative elections is shown in Table 12.5. When the first-preference votes from all the voters were initially tallied up, Charles Blunt came first with 40.9 percent of the vote. Because no candidate won an absolute majority, the candidate with the lowest number of votes (Gavin Baillie) was eliminated. As Table 12.5 illustrates, Baillie was ranked first on 187 ballots. These

Preference, or preferential, voting involves voters ranking one or more candidates or parties in order of preference on the ballots.

The **alternative vote**, used in single-member districts, is an electoral system in which voters mark their preferences by rank ordering the candidates. A candidate who receives an absolute majority is elected. If no candidate wins an absolute majority, then the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and her votes are reallocated until one candidate has an absolute majority of the valid votes remaining.

7. Australians refer to the AV system as "preferential voting." This term, however, is slightly ambiguous, because there are several different types of preferential voting, as we will see.

Box 12.2**THE BORDA COUNT IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC**

The **Borda Count** is a candidate-centered electoral system used in either single- or multimember districts in which voters must use numbers to mark their preferences for all of the nominated candidates. These preferences are then assigned a value using equal steps to reflect the voter's preference ordering. These values are then summed and the candidate(s) with the most "valuable" votes is (are) elected.

preference ordering. For example, if there are ten candidates, a voter's first preference might be worth one, his second preference 0.9, his third preference 0.8, and so on until his tenth preference, which would be worth 0.1. These values are then summed and the candidate(s) with the most "valuable" votes is (are) elected. Although the Borda Count was officially designed by a French scientist, Charles de Borda, in the eighteenth century, the history of this particular voting method goes back even further, because a variant of it was used after 105 AD to make decisions in the Roman Senate. The BC is the forerunner of more recent and more common preferential-voting systems, such as the alternative vote that we are discussing in the main text. The BC is currently used to select presidential candidates from among the members of parliament on the Pacific island of Kiribati (Reilly 2002a). It is also used to elect two ethnic minority members to the legislature in Slovenia and by major league baseball to choose its Most Valuable Player.

Although it is otherwise rarely employed, the BC is "often advocated as an 'ideal' electoral system by voting theorists" (Reilly 2002a, 357). The BC tends to favor candidates with broadly based support rather than candidates who are supported by the majority. In some sense, it favors what you might think of as the least-unpopular candidates. Although this might seem anti-democratic to some, others like this feature because it encourages consensus-based politics. It can be particularly attractive in a highly divided society in which the majority candidate is strongly opposed by a large minority of the electorate. It is on these grounds that scholars have advocated the use of the BC for divided countries in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere (Emerson 1998). The BC also tends to elect candidates that are close to the center of the distribution of citizen preferences (Cox 1987). As Dummett (1997, 161–162) puts it, the BC "will be far more favourable to candidates occupying moderate positions than will the plurality system [SMDP] or AV, and will likewise be unfavourable to those representing extreme positions."

As with all electoral systems, though, the BC creates incentives for voters to act strategically. In particular, it encourages voters to engage in what is termed "compromising" and "burying." Imagine that there are five candidates in a single-member district and your sincere preference ordering between them is $A \succ B \succ C \succ D \succ E$. Suppose that opinion polls prior to the elec-

Another majoritarian electoral system that involves preferential voting is the **Borda Count** (BC).¹ The BC is a candidate-centered electoral system used in either single- or multimember districts in which voters must use numbers to mark their preferences for all of the nominated candidates. These preferences are then assigned a value using equal steps to reflect the voter's

1. Recall that we briefly mentioned the Borda Count in Chapter 10.

tion indicate that only candidates B and C have a realistic chance of winning. Because you have a clear preference for whether B or C wins, you may want to vote strategically by ranking B first. This is called “compromising,” because you are ranking candidate B higher than your sincere preferences would imply in an attempt to stop C from winning. You may also want to vote strategically by ranking C last. This is called “burying,” because you are placing candidate C lower than your sincere preferences would imply in an attempt to help B get elected.

A slightly different electoral system, called the **modified Borda Count**, has been employed to elect members of parliament on the Pacific island of Nauru since 1971 (Reilly 2002a). The modified BC is different in that each of the voter's preferences are assigned a value calculated by using a series of divisors—1, 2, 3, 4, and so on. For example, if there were ten candidates, then a voter's first preference would be worth 1, his second preference 0.5, his third preference 0.33, his fourth preference 0.25, and so on until his tenth preference, which would be worth 0.1. These values are then summed and the candidate(s) with the most valuable votes is (are) elected. Note that the value of each preference no longer declines in equal steps as with the normal BC. As a result, the modified BC assumes that voters care more about their higher-ranked candidates than their lower ones. This makes the electoral system more majoritarian, because candidates need to attract more lower-order preferences to overtake a leading candidate.

Table 12.4 illustrates how votes are translated into seats using the modified BC by presenting the results in the two-seat Buada district from the 2004 legislative elections in Nauru. As you can see, Table 12.4 does not list the “number” of votes won by each candidate; instead, it lists the “value” of the votes won by each candidate. Roland Kun and Lyn Terangi Adam were elected as the representatives for this district because the values of their votes were the two highest.

The **modified Borda Count** is essentially the same as the Borda Count except that the value of each preference no longer declines in equal steps; it assumes that voters care more about higher-ranked candidates than lower-ranked ones.

TABLE 12.4**Buada District, Nauru Legislative Elections, 2004**

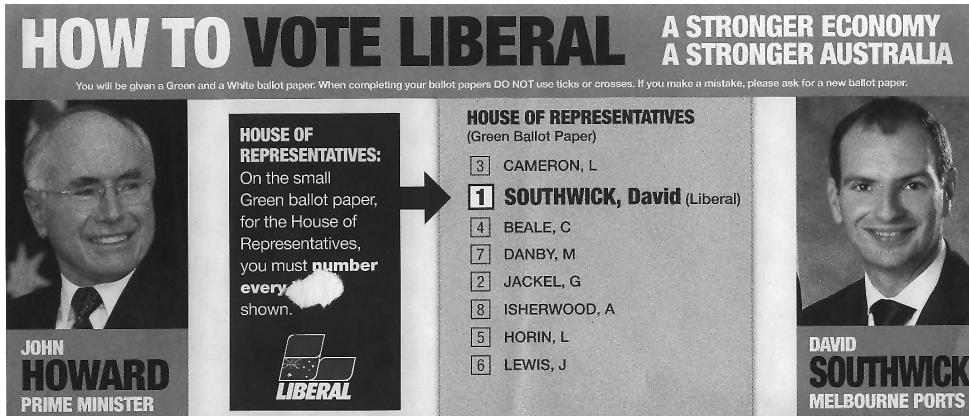
Candidate	Value of votes cast	
Lyn Terangi Adam	131.967	Elected second
Palik Agir	109.110	
Manfred Depaune	84.890	
Vinson Detenamo	122.610	
Roland Kun	145.324	Elected first
Thomas Star	123.243	
Nelson Tamakin	104.793	

Source: Adam Carr's Election Archive, <http://psephos.adam-carr.net>.

TABLE 12.5 Richmond Constituency, New South Wales, Australian Legislative Elections, 1990

Candidate	First count (no.)	Second count (%)	Third count (no.)	Fourth count (%)	Fifth count (no.)	Sixth count (no.)	Seventh count (no.)	(%)
Stan Gibbs	4,346	6.3	4,380	6.3	4,420	6.4	4,504	6.5
Neville Newell	18,423	26.7	18,467	26.7	18,484	26.8	18,544	26.9
Gavin Baillie	187	0.3						
Alan Sims	1,032	1.5	1,053	1.5	1,059	1.5	1,116	1.6
Ian Paterson	445	0.6	480	0.7	530	0.8		
Dudley Leggett	279	0.4	294	0.4				
Charles Blunt	28,257	40.9	28,274	41.0	28,303	41.0	28,416	41.2
Helen Caldicott	16,072	23.3	16,091	23.3	16,237	23.5	16,438	23.8
							16,658	24.1
							18,903	27.4

Note: Blank cells indicate that a candidate was eliminated.

FIGURE 12.2**Australian "How-to-Vote" Card from the 2004 Legislative Elections**

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Liberalhtv.jpg>

187 ballots were then reallocated to whichever of the remaining candidates the voters ranked second after Gavin Baillie. For example, the fact that Ian Paterson received 445 votes in the first count but 480 votes in the second count indicates that 35 of the people who had listed Gavin Baillie as their most preferred candidate listed Ian Paterson as their second-choice candidate. Because there was still no candidate with an absolute majority after this second count, the new candidate with the lowest number of votes (Dudley Leggett) was eliminated and his ballots were reallocated among the remaining candidates in the same manner as before. This process continued until the seventh round of counting, when Neville Newell became the first candidate to finally obtain an absolute majority of the votes. The overall result, then, was that Neville Newell became the representative elected from the Richmond constituency of New South Wales.

It is worth noting that Charles Blunt had won by far the most votes in the first round and had been leading on all of the counts up until the very last one. It was only when the last votes were reallocated according to the preferences of the voters that it became clear that an absolute majority of those who voted in Richmond preferred Neville Newell to Charles Blunt. As this example illustrates, the reallocation of votes from eliminated candidates to remaining candidates can play an important role in determining the outcome of elections in AV systems. It is for this reason that political parties in Australia often give voters "how-to-vote" cards outside polling stations with clear instructions on how to rank candidates so that the flow of preferences will benefit them either directly or, by helping any allied parties, indirectly. An example of a how-to-vote card for the Liberal Party is illustrated in Figure 12.2.

Fiji also employs a full-preferential AV system to elect its House of Representatives. The Fijian system is somewhat unusual, though, in that it allows for "default preferences" speci-

fied by the political parties and “custom preferences” specified by the voter. In effect, each political party or candidate ranks all of the competing candidates according to their own preferences. Voters who are happy with this ranking simply vote for their preferred party, and voter preferences are automatically reallocated according to the ranking chosen by their preferred party. Voters who do not like the ranking provided by their preferred party can opt to rank the candidates themselves. To see how this works, examine the ballot paper for the Tailevu constituency in the 2001 Fijian legislative elections shown in Figure 12.3. As you can see, the Fijian ballot paper is divided by a thick black line. If the voter checks one of the boxes above the black line (default preferences), then he is opting for the rank ordering of the candidates chosen by one of the eleven political parties shown. In many ways, the upper portion of the Fijian ballot paper is the equivalent of a how-to-vote card handed out to voters by political parties in Australia. If the voter does not like these default preferences, then he must

FIGURE 12.3**Fijian AV Ballot Paper for the Tailevu Constituency in the 2001 Legislative Elections**

<p>You may vote in one of two ways</p> <p>Do NOT do both</p> <p>EITHER</p> <p>By placing a single tick in one and only one of these boxes to indicate which party's or candidate's preference you wish to adopt as your vote</p>																
		<p>OR</p> <p>Number the boxes from 1 to 4 in the squares next to the symbols of each of the candidates in your order of preference</p> <p>In this case number every box to make your vote count</p>														
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Epeli Gavidi GANILAU</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Jone DAKUVULA</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Rakuita Saurara VAKALALABURE</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Epeli LIGAMAMADA</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			Epeli Gavidi GANILAU			Jone DAKUVULA			Rakuita Saurara VAKALALABURE			Epeli LIGAMAMADA		
Epeli Gavidi GANILAU																
Jone DAKUVULA																
Rakuita Saurara VAKALALABURE																
Epeli LIGAMAMADA																

Source: www.unc.edu/~asreynol/ballot_pages/fiji.html

rank order all of the candidates that are listed below the line (custom preferences) by putting numbers next to each candidate's name. In the 2001 elections, less than 10 percent of Fijian voters chose to fill out the custom preferences; the vast majority preferred to simply go along with the rank ordering of their preferred political party. It is worth noting in this particular district that there are more party options above the line than there are actual candidates. For example, several parties—FAP, FLP, NVTLP, DNT, PANU, and VLV—do not have any candidates competing in the Tailevu district. What this illustrates is that political parties often have an incentive to tell their supporters how to rank order the competing candidates even if they do not necessarily have their own candidate in the race. By doing this, they can try to influence the outcome of elections in specific districts and, hence, the outcome of the national election.

Several other countries also employ AV systems. For example, Ireland uses a full-preferential AV system to elect its president.⁸ In 2003 the legislature in Papua New Guinea voted to reintroduce an AV system for its legislative elections. Papua New Guinea had used an AV system between 1964 and 1975, when it was an Australian territory. In June 2007, Papua New Guinea elected its first legislature using an optional-preferential AV system in which voters have to rank only their top three preferences.

To a large extent, AV systems retain many of the advantages associated with SMDP electoral systems. For example, the fact that there is only one representative elected per constituency means that it is easy for voters to identify who is responsible for district policy and hold them accountable. As a result, we can expect high levels of constituency service and strong bonds between citizens and their representatives. AV systems have several additional advantages, though. One is that voters have a greater opportunity to convey information about their preferences than they have under an SMDP system. This is because they get to rank order the candidates rather than simply vote yes and no for one (or more) of them. Another advantage is that there is less of an incentive for voters to engage in strategic voting because they know that their vote will not be wasted if the candidate they most prefer is unpopular and unlikely to win; their vote is simply transferred to the candidate they prefer next. We should note, though, that strategic incentives do not disappear entirely. For example, voters may decide not to rank the candidates according to their sincere preferences in an attempt to influence the order in which candidates are eliminated and, hence, who ultimately wins in a district. That this type of strategic concern matters is one explanation for why Australian parties hand out how-to-vote cards at the polling stations.

A third advantage is that AV systems encourage candidates and parties to win not only the votes from their base supporters but also the “second preferences” of others. This is because these second preferences may end up being crucial to their election. To attract these votes,

8. The Irish Constitution states that the president is elected by means of the single transferable vote (Article 12-2.3). This is technically incorrect, because the single transferable vote is used only in multimember districts, whereas the alternative vote is only used in single-member districts. Nonetheless, the Irish still refer to their presidential electoral system as the single transferable vote.

candidates are likely to have to make broadly based centrist appeals to all interests rather than focus on narrow sectarian or extremist issues. Some evidence for this comes from Australia, where the major parties frequently attempt to negotiate deals with smaller parties for their second preferences prior to an election in a process known as “preference swapping” (Reilly 2001, 45). The incentive to build broadly based support helps to explain why the AV system is often advocated for elections in deeply divided societies, such as the ethnically fragmented Bosnia-Herzegovina, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and South Africa (Horowitz 1991; Reilly 2001).

Recall that one of the most common criticisms with SMDP electoral systems was that they allow candidates to win who do not obtain majority support. This problem is addressed by AV systems because candidates are eliminated one at a time until one has an overall majority. Although this would appear to be one of the main advantages of AV systems, some critics claim that the winning candidate does not necessarily obtain a “genuine” majority. By this, they mean that it is possible for a majority of the voters in a district to prefer some other candidate to the one who actually wins. The reason why this possibility exists is that a candidate who is preferred to all the other candidates in a series of head-to-head races can be eliminated early on in an AV system because they receive an insufficient number of first-place votes. A clear disadvantage of the AV system is that it is rather complicated. From the point of view of the voters, it requires a reasonable degree of literacy and numeracy; from the point of view of the authorities, the counting process can be costly and drawn out.

Two-Round Systems

A **two-round system** (TRS) is a majoritarian electoral system that, as its name would suggest,

A **two-round system** has the potential for two rounds of elections. Candidates or parties are automatically elected in the first round if they obtain a specified level of votes, typically an absolute majority. Those candidates or parties that win the most votes in the second round are elected.

suggest, has the potential for two rounds of elections.⁹ In TRSs, candidates or parties are automatically elected in the first round if they obtain a specified level of votes, nearly always an absolute majority. If no candidate or party wins this level of votes, then a second round of

elections takes place, normally one or two weeks later. Although the precise details of how this second round of elections is conducted vary from country to country, the candidates or parties with the most votes in the second round are elected. TRSs are sometimes referred to as “runoff” or “double-ballot” electoral systems in recognition of their potential for two rounds of elections. Although TRSs are quite diverse, they can be divided into two main types: the majority-runoff TRS and the majority-plurality TRS.

Majority-Runoff Two-Round Systems

Most majority-runoff TRSs are candidate-centered electoral systems in single-member districts in which voters have a single vote. Each voter chooses his most preferred candidate.

9. Although highly unusual, some TRSs can require more than two rounds of voting to determine the winner. Thus, it might be more descriptively accurate to call this electoral system a multiple-round system (MRS).

Any candidate who obtains an absolute majority of the votes in the first round is automatically elected. If no candidate obtains an absolute majority, then the top two vote winners go on to compete in a runoff election one or two weeks later. Whoever wins the most votes in this runoff election is elected. Given that there are only two candidates in this second election, the winner necessarily has the support of an absolute majority of the voters (as long as there is not an exact tie). This type of majority-runoff TRS is used to elect the president in many countries, such as France, Mali, and most Latin American countries. In fact, the majority-runoff TRS is the most common method for electing presidents around the world today (Golder 2005). The majority-runoff TRS is also used for legislative elections in several countries, such as the Central African Republic, Comoros, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine.

Although extremely unusual, majority-runoff TRSs are sometimes employed in multi-member districts. For example, Mali employs a party-centered majority-runoff system in its multimember districts. Malian voters cast a single vote for their preferred party. Any party that obtains an absolute majority of the votes wins all of the seats in the district. If no party wins an absolute majority, however, then the top two parties are placed on a second ballot and compete in a runoff election. Whichever party obtains the most votes wins all of the district seats.

Majority-Plurality Two-Round Systems

Almost all majority-plurality TRSs are candidate-centered electoral systems in single-member districts in which voters have a single vote. As in the majority-runoff TRSs, a candidate who receives an absolute majority of the vote in the first round is automatically elected. The difference is that now if no candidate obtains an absolute majority, then *all* candidates who overcome some preordained threshold of votes can contest the second round. Whichever candidate obtains the most votes in this second round, whether it is an absolute majority or not, is duly elected.

Perhaps the most famous country to employ a majority-plurality TRS for its legislative elections is France. All candidates who obtain more than 12.5 percent of the registered electorate in the first round of French legislative elections are eligible to compete in any second round that might be necessary.¹⁰ Table 12.6 illustrates how the French majority-plurality TRS operated in the fourth district in the Puy-de-Dôme during the 2002 French legislative elections. No candidate won an absolute majority in the first round. Of the two candidates who received more than the 12.5 percent of the registered electorate required to compete in the second round, J. Paul Bacquet of the Socialist Party won the most votes and was elected. In France it is often the case that only two candidates will compete in the second round of elections even if more candidates are eligible to do so. The reason for this is that parties on the left or right often agree to withdraw the least popular of their eligible candidates and support the best-placed candidate from their side of the political spectrum. By doing this, they

10. A candidate who wishes to compete in the second round of French legislative elections must win 12.5 percent of the registered electorate, not 12.5 percent of the actual vote. In effect, this often means that a candidate must win about 17 percent of the actual vote to be eligible to run in the second round.

TABLE 12.6**Fourth District in the Puy-de-Dôme, French Legislative Elections, 2002**

First Round		
Candidate	Party	Vote share (%)
J. Paul Bacquet	Socialist Party	42.8
Pierre Pascallon	Union for a Presidential Majority	38.1
Christophe Picard	National Republican Movement	0.9
M. Germaine Wilwertz	National Front	6.3
Marie Savre	Workers' Struggle	1.3
Laura Artusi	Communist Party	2.8
Rémi Aufrere	Republican Pole	1.3
J. Paul Russier	Green Party	2.8
Nicolas Bagel	Rally for Independence from Europe	0.0
Bernard Bouzon	Hunting, Fishing, Nature, and Tradition Party	1.4
Patrick Goyeau	Communist Revolutionary League (100% Left)	2.4
Second Round		
J. Paul Bacquet	Socialist Party	56.1
Pierre Pascallon	Union for a Presidential Majority	43.9

are hoping to increase the chance that their side of the political spectrum will win the second round by preventing their electorate from splitting its support among multiple candidates. In fact, no more than two candidates competed in all of the second-round elections in the 2007 legislative elections in France.

In one country—the Pacific island of Kiribati—a majority-plurality TRS is used in multi-member districts. Kiribati's voters have as many votes as there are seats available. Although they can use as many or as few of their votes as they wish, they can give at most only one vote to any particular candidate. Any candidate that receives a vote on an absolute majority of the ballots is automatically elected. If a sufficient number of candidates do not receive a vote on more than 50 percent of the ballots, then a second round of elections takes place. In three-member districts with no first-round victors, the top five candidates contest the second round; in two-member districts, the top four candidates contest it. Those candidates with the most votes in this second round are elected (Brechtenfeld 1993, 44).

In both types of TRS systems that we have examined so far, a candidate who obtains an absolute majority of votes in the first round is automatically elected. There are, however, some TRSs in which a candidate can be elected in the first round without an absolute majority. We might want to call these qualified-majority TRSs. The precise threshold of votes that needs to be overcome to win in the first round varies quite considerably in these systems. For example, a candidate had to come first and win more than 33 percent of the votes to be elected in the first round of the 1956 and 1963 presidential elections in Peru. In contrast, a

candidate currently has to win more than 55 percent of the vote to be elected in the first round of presidential elections in Sierra Leone. The threshold employed in the first round can be quite complicated in some countries. For instance, a candidate can be declared president in Argentina today without the need for a second round if he either (a) comes first and wins more than 40 percent of the votes or (b) if he wins 35 percent of the votes and 5 percent more than the nearest competitor. Qualified-majority TRSs are not restricted to presidential elections. For example, the first-placed candidate in Mongolian legislative elections has to win 25 percent of the district vote in order to avoid a second round. Although the voting procedure employed in the second round of these TRSs varies from country to country, most employ a runoff between the top two vote winners. This is the procedure used for presidential elections in Argentina, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Sierra Leone.

TRSs have many attractive features, particularly when compared with SMDP electoral systems. One is that TRSs give voters more choice than they enjoy in SMDP systems. For example, individuals who vote for a candidate who “loses” in the first round get a second opportunity to influence who gets elected in the second round. TRSs also allow voters to change their mind and switch their votes even if the candidate they supported in the first round actually makes it into the second round. Voters might want to change their mind as a result of new information that emerges between the first and second rounds. It is worth noting that changing one’s ranking of candidates in this way is not possible in preferential voting systems such as the alternative vote that we examined earlier.

A second attractive feature of TRSs is that voters have less incentive to behave strategically than they do in SMDP systems because they have a second opportunity to affect the election outcome. Individuals can vote for their most preferred candidate in the first round even if this candidate has little chance of winning in the end and then switch their support to a more well-placed candidate in the second round. Of course, strategic incentives do not disappear entirely and things can go wrong if individuals vote sincerely in this way. Voters need to think about whether their decision to vote sincerely in the first round positively affects the likelihood that a candidate whom they do not like will win either the first or second round. For example, consider the 2002 presidential elections in France that we described in Chapter 11. The second round of these elections involved a candidate from the mainstream right, Jacques Chirac, and a candidate from the extreme right, Jean-Marie Le Pen. One reason why there was no left-wing candidate was that the left-wing electorate split its vote among so many left-wing candidates in the first round that none made it into the second round. As a result, the only choice that left-wing voters had in this second round was between a candidate whom they disliked and a candidate whom they really disliked. It is arguable that France’s left-wing voters would have been better off had they voted more strategically in the first round.

Another attractive feature of TRSs is that they create incentives for candidates who make it into the second round to look beyond their own electoral base and reach compromises with the leaders of parties who are already eliminated in an attempt to win over their supporters. In addition, because voters are not required to rank order candidates with numbers to express their second choice, some have argued that TRSs are more suitable to countries

Box 12.3**THE SUPPLEMENTARY VOTE AND SRI LANKA**

One of the disadvantages of two-round systems is that they are costly. An electoral system

that acts like a majority-runoff TRS but with lower costs is the **supplementary vote** (SV). In the SV, a candidate-centered electoral system used in single-member districts, voters are required to rank at least one and at most two candidates in order of preference. Typically, voters are presented with a ballot with two columns alongside a list of names. Voters place an X in the first column to indicate their most preferred candidate and, if they wish, an X in

The **supplementary vote** is a candidate-centered electoral system used in single-member districts, in which voters are required to rank at least one and at most two candidates in order of preference. A candidate who wins an absolute majority of the first-preference votes is automatically elected. If no candidate wins an absolute majority, then all but the two leading candidates are eliminated. The second-preference votes of those who voted for eliminated candidates are then reallocated to determine the winner.

the second column to indicate their second choice. A candidate who wins an absolute majority of the first-preference votes is automatically elected. If no candidate wins such an absolute majority, however, all but the two leading candidates are eliminated. The second-preference votes of those who voted for eliminated candidates are then reallocated to determine the winner. The SV is, in many ways, like a majority-runoff TRS except that there is only one round of voting. It is this characteristic that makes the SV less costly than the TRS. As you will have noticed, the SV is also a special variant of the preferential AV system in which voters are restricted to expressing only a first and second choice and in which there can be at most two counts of the votes. This means that, unlike in an AV system, voters affect the outcome of the election only if they indicate a preference for at least one of the top two candidates; if individuals vote for candidates who finish outside the top two, then their votes are wasted. The Australian state of Queensland first used a variant of the SV, then known as the contingent vote, between 1892 and 1942. A form of SV was also used in Alabama from 1915 to 1931. The SV system is currently used to elect various mayors, including the mayor of London (Kolk, Rallings, and Thrasher 2006).

A slight variant of the SV is used in contemporary Sri Lanka to elect its president (Reilly 2002b). The only difference with the SV system described above is that voters can mark their preferences for the top three, instead of the top two, candidates. If no candidate wins an absolute majority of the first-preference votes, then all but the top two candidates are eliminated and the second- and third-preference votes of the eliminated candidates are reallocated to determine the winner. As a former British colony, Sri Lanka originally employed an SMDP electoral system with a parliamentary form of government. Over time, though, concern grew that this institutional structure was unable to adequately represent minority interests. In 1978, political actors decided to transform the parliamentary democracy into a mixed democracy along French lines (Reilly 2001, 112–115). The need to elect a president raised particular concerns, given that Sri Lanka had a long history of bitter ethnic conflict between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamil communities. The goal was to have a president who would



Kumaratunga greets her cabinet colleagues on April 10, 2004, after a swearing-in ceremony at the president's house in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

dent is elected with majority support, the SV creates incentives for candidates to look beyond their own political party or ethnic constituency to win over the second- and third-preference votes from other groups. Sri Lanka has conducted five presidential elections—1982, 1988, 1994, 1999, 2005—since adopting the SV. So far, the winning presidential candidate has won an absolute majority (if only just) in the first round and has had no need to rely on the transfer of preference votes to be elected. Despite this, some scholars have argued that the possibility that winning candidates might have to rely on these preference votes has led presidential candidates to pay more attention to minority groups during their campaigning than political actors typically did under the old SMDP electoral system (Reilly 2001, 119–120). For example, Chandrika Kumaratunga, the winning candidate in the 1994 presidential elections, made formal coalition arrangements with the major Muslim party in Sri Lanka. In addition, her moderate approach to ethnic matters led parties representing Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils to support her as well (Schaffer 1995, 423).

be a national figure capable of representing all the groups in society and who could encourage different factions in the parliament and beyond to compromise and reach a consensus. But what was the best way to elect such a president?

Two objectives were seen as being particularly important. One was that the minority Tamil community should have a meaningful role in electing the president. The other was that the president should have the explicit support of an absolute majority of the voters. Given the origins of the 1978 Sri Lankan constitution in the French model, political actors were initially interested in adopting a majority-runoff TRS. "However, the extreme costs and security issues associated with holding two separate elections within a two-week period was seen as being a major defect, particularly since Sri Lanka was in the midst of a violent civil war at the time" (Reilly 2002b, 115). These concerns ultimately led to the adoption of the supplementary vote system that combines the two rounds of voting into one election.

In addition to ensuring that the presi-

with widespread illiteracy and low levels of education than preferential voting systems such as the alternative vote (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005, 53).

Despite these attractive features, TRSs also have many disadvantages. One is that they impose significant costs on the electoral administration. After all, the electoral administration has to conduct two sets of elections instead of one. Indeed, these additional costs have led some countries, such as Sri Lanka, that were initially interested in the TRS, to adopt a different electoral system (see Box 12.3, on the supplementary vote and Sri Lanka). TRSs also impose additional costs on individuals, who potentially have to vote twice; empirical evidence suggests that there is a considerable drop-off in the level of turnout between the two rounds of elections. A second disadvantage is that, like SMDP electoral systems, TRSs also produce a disproportional translation of votes into seats. Indeed, there is some evidence that the TRS produces the most disproportional results of any electoral system used in Western democracies (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005, 53). According to some, a third disadvantage is that the TRS hurts minority representation. For example, Guinier (1994) has argued that, on extending the right to vote to African Americans, several southern states in the United States adopted the majority-runoff TRS in an attempt to reduce the ability of African American candidates to win. Evidence that the majority-runoff TRS does, indeed, hurt minority candidates comes from a series of elections conducted in the laboratory by Morton and Rietz (forthcoming).

Majoritarian Electoral Systems in Multimember Districts

Most, though not all, of the majoritarian electoral systems that we have examined so far can be employed only in single-member districts. We now briefly turn to some majoritarian electoral systems that are employed in multimember districts.

Single Nontransferable Vote

The **single nontransferable vote** is a system in which voters cast a single candidate-centered vote in a multimember district. The candidates with the highest number of votes are elected.

The **single nontransferable vote** is essentially the equivalent of an SMDP electoral system applied in multimember districts. Both systems involve individuals casting a single vote for

some candidate. The only difference is that voters in an SNTV system are now electing more than one candidate in each district. Basically, each party competing in a district puts up a list of candidates, and individuals vote for one of them. The candidates that win the most votes are elected. Candidates in an SNTV system know how many votes they need to win in order to guarantee their election. For example, if there are n seats to be filled, then any candidate A can guarantee being elected by receiving one more than $1 / (n + 1)$ of the votes. This is because n other candidates cannot all receive more than candidate A. Thus, in a four-seat district, a candidate can guarantee winning one of the seats by winning more than 20 percent of the vote. An SNTV system was employed for legislative elections in Japan from 1948 to 1993. It is currently employed for filling some seats in the Taiwanese parliament and for legislative elections in Jordan and the pacific island of Vanuatu.

One advantage of SNTV systems over SMDP ones is that they tend to produce more proportional outcomes and improve the representation of smaller parties and minority ethnic groups. This is because candidates from smaller parties and minority ethnic groups can now get elected even though they do not win the most votes in a district. Indeed, the fact that some countries have adopted the SNTV system to explicitly improve minority representation and that it tends to produce more proportional outcomes than other majoritarian electoral systems has led some scholars to classify SNTV as a “semi-proportional,” rather than a majoritarian, electoral system (Lijphart 1994). This line of reasoning, however, confuses the outcome of an electoral system—proportionality or minority representation—with its actual mechanics (Massicotte and Blais 1999; Golder 2005). As we noted earlier, the defining feature of majoritarian electoral systems is that the candidates or parties that ultimately win must obtain the most votes. Because this is precisely what happens with the SNTV system, it should rightfully be classified as a majoritarian electoral system.¹¹

Several disadvantages are associated with SNTV systems. One is that they tend to create incentives for intraparty fighting and factionalization. This is because the candidates from one party are not only competing against candidates from other parties in their district but also against candidates from their own party. The fact that candidates can guarantee their own election with a specific percentage of votes also encourages clientelistic behavior, in which candidates target subtle “electoral bribes to groups of defined voters” (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005, 117). Another disadvantage is that candidates have few incentives to build broadly based coalitions because their election does not depend on the transfer of any preference votes from other parties or candidates.

Finally, it should be noted that SNTV systems raise certain strategic quandaries for political parties and voters. Although every party in an SNTV system wants to win as many seats as they can in each multimember district, they do not want to put up too many candidates in case their party supporters split their vote between these candidates to such an extent that none, or only a few, of the candidates actually finish among the top vote winners. If we go to an extreme, it is possible in an SNTV system for a party whose candidates together obtain a substantial percentage of the votes, even an absolute majority, to win no seats. This suggests that political parties have to be very careful in choosing how many candidates to run in each district. Similarly, supporters of each party must think hard about which candidate from their party most needs their vote to be elected; if they give their vote to a candidate that is already likely to obtain a sufficient number of votes, then their vote will be wasted.

11. The Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), which provides the most widely cited classification of electoral systems, classifies electoral systems into four major families—majoritarian, proportional, mixed, and other. The SNTV is among several electoral systems that fall into the “other” category. In effect, the “other” category is a residual category for all of the cases that cannot unambiguously be assigned according to IDEA’s classification rules. The existence of such a residual category suggests that the IDEA’s classification rules are flawed.

Block Vote and Party Block Vote

The **block vote** (BV) is a candidate-centered system used in multimember districts in which voters have as many votes as there are candidates to be elected. The candidates with the most votes are elected.

as many or as few of their votes as they wish; however, they can give only one vote to any one candidate. The candidates with the most votes are elected.¹³ This system was used in the two-member districts in United Kingdom legislative elections until their complete abolition in the 1950s and is still used for some local elections in England and Wales. It is currently used in such countries as Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Mauritius, Syria, and Tonga. One disadvantage of the BV worth noting is that it has the potential to produce extremely disproportional outcomes if voters allocate their votes to candidates from the same party. In Mauritius in 1982 and 1995, for example, the opposition party won all of the legislative seats with just 64 percent and 65 percent of the votes, respectively (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005, 44).

The **party block vote** is used in multimember districts in which voters cast a single party-centered vote for their party of choice. The party with the most votes wins all of the district seats.

The **block vote** (BV) is essentially the same as the SNTV electoral system except that individuals now have as many votes as there are seats to be filled.¹² When presented with a list of candidates from various parties, voters can use

Like the block vote, the **party block vote** (PBV) is employed in multimember districts. The difference is that individuals in the PBV have only a single vote and they allocate this to a list of party candidates rather than an individual candidate.

In effect, voters are choosing the party or list of people that they want to win all of the district seats. The party that obtains the most votes in a PBV system wins all of the seats; all of the candidates on the party list are elected. The PBV is a potentially useful electoral system for those political actors who wish to encourage minority representation. Consider the use of the PBV in the East African country of Djibouti. Each party list in Djibouti must, by law, include a mix of candidates from different ethnic groups. By making this a requirement, voters in Djibouti are essentially forced to elect candidates from minority ethnic groups that they might never have chosen to elect if they had been able to vote for individual candidates rather than party lists. It is important to note, though, that the increased representation of minority groups is not inherent to the PBV; instead, it arises because the PBV is combined with a law requiring parties to have minority candidates on the party lists. Without such a law, the PBV is likely to produce highly disproportional results that are harmful to minority groups. Other countries that employ the PBV to elect all or significant portions of their legislatures include Cameroon, Chad, and Singapore.

12. If individuals have multiple votes but not as many as there are seats available, then the electoral system is referred to as the limited vote. This is the electoral system used to elect the legislature in Gibraltar.

13. This helps to explain why the block vote is sometimes referred to as plurality-at-large voting.

PROPORTIONAL ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

The rationale behind most **proportional**, or **proportional representation, electoral systems** is to consciously reduce the disparity between a party's share of the vote and its share of the seats. In other words, the goal of proportional representation (PR) systems is to produce proportional outcomes—if a party wins 10 percent of the vote, it should win 10 percent of the seats; if it wins 20 percent of the vote, it should win 20 percent of the seats, and so on. This proportionality should exist both within districts and in the nation as a whole. This has led some scholars to define PR systems as those that produce proportional outcomes (Cox 1997). As we noted earlier, however, defining electoral systems in terms of the outcome that they produce rather than in terms of how they work—their mechanics—is problematic. One reason for this is that PR systems differ in the extent to which they produce proportional outcomes; some are more proportional than others. Indeed, it is even possible, under some circumstances, for a majoritarian electoral system to regularly produce more proportional outcomes than a PR system (Barkan 1995). A second reason is that we often want to explain the proportionality of an electoral outcome in terms of the type of electoral system that is being used. If we have already defined electoral systems in terms of the proportionality that they produce, we would be engaging in circular reasoning. For these reasons, we might want to define PR systems without reference to their relative ability or inability to produce proportional outcomes. So how should we define a PR system? Well, all PR systems share two things in common. One is that they employ multimember districts. This is basically because it is impossible to divide a single seat proportionally. The second is that they use either a quota or a divisor to determine who is elected in each district. As we will see, a quota or a divisor essentially determines the number of votes that a candidate or party needs in order to win a seat. In sum, then, we can define a proportional electoral system as a quota- or divisor-based system that is employed in multimember districts.¹⁴ Although there are important variations among proportional systems, they are typically divided into the two main types illustrated in Figure 12.1: list proportional representation (list PR) systems and the single transferable vote (STV).

A **proportional, or proportional representation, electoral system** is a quota- or divisor-based electoral system employed in multimember districts.

Many scholars have argued that proportional electoral systems have a number of advantages over majoritarian ones (Lijphart 1999). Perhaps the main advantage of PR systems is that they tend to produce a more accurate translation of votes into seats. In other words, they tend to produce more proportional outcomes. This means that PR systems avoid the possi-

14. Some majoritarian systems can be considered quota-based systems. For example, the majority-runoff TRS and the AV all require the winning candidate to obtain the quota of an absolute majority in order to win a seat. However, all but one of these quota-based majoritarian systems are employed in single-member districts. The one exception is the electoral system employed in Mali, where the party block vote with an absolute majority requirement is used in a two-round format in multimember districts. To avoid any ambiguity that might arise from the one case of Mali, we could define PR systems as “non-majoritarian” electoral systems that employ quotas or divisors to allocate seats in multimember districts.

bility that a party wins a large percentage of the vote but few legislative seats. Recall that this was one of the possible anomalies with majoritarian systems. It also means that small parties are able to win representation in proportion to their size. As a result, minorities are likely to be better represented in a PR system than in a majoritarian one. The fact that small parties have a greater chance of winning seats means that individuals face weaker incentives to vote strategically. As a result, electoral outcomes in PR systems should be a more accurate reflection of voters' sincere preferences. Arguably, it is also the case that individuals are more likely to turn out and vote in PR systems because they know that their votes are less likely to be wasted (Blais and Carty 1990; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998).

Some have argued that PR systems are all but essential for ethnically and religiously divided societies (Lijphart 1990, 1991). PR makes it easy for social groups to organize into ethnic and religious parties that can obtain legislative representation in proportion to their size. This, in turn, produces legislatures that reflect all the significant segments of society and leads to coalition governments based on power-sharing arrangements. The implicit assumption here, of course, is that the different ethnic groups will ultimately choose to work together in the legislature and the government. The notion that PR systems are essential for stability and democratic rule in divided societies is challenged by a set of scholars that advocates the use of preferential voting systems such as the alternative vote and the supplementary vote (Horowitz 1985, 1991; Reilly 1997, 2001). These scholars note that PR systems essentially replicate societal divisions in the legislature without creating incentives for cooperation and accommodation across the different ethnic parties. In contrast, they argue that preferential voting systems encourage political parties to make broadly based centrist appeals beyond their core set of supporters because they know that their electoral success is likely to depend on the transfer of preference votes from other ethnic groups. In effect, one can think of the choice as being between replicating ethnic divisions in the legislature and hoping that political leaders will cooperate after the election, and creating institutional incentives that seek to weaken or even transcend the political salience of ethnicity altogether. One complaint made of preferential voting systems like the AV and SV is that they are majoritarian and produce disproportional outcomes (Lijphart 1997). As we will see, however, an alternative preferential voting system that works in multimember districts and produces relatively proportional outcomes is the single transferable vote.

Other scholars have offered more general criticisms of proportional electoral systems. One of the most common is that they tend to produce coalition governments. As we noted earlier, it is often difficult to hold political parties accountable in coalition governments because it is hard to identify who is responsible for policy and, hence, who to hold accountable at election time. Even if those responsible for policy could be identified, it is still difficult to hold them accountable because parties that lose significant numbers of votes frequently make it back into coalition governments anyway. As the empirical evidence we presented in Chapter 11 indicates, coalition governments are also more unstable than the single-party majority governments that are typically produced by majoritarian electoral systems. Another criticism of PR systems is that they allow small, extremist parties to win rep-

resentation. This is frequently seen as problematic. For example, some have argued that the existence of extremist parties, such as the Nazi Party in the Weimar Republic, undermines democracy. A third criticism is that small parties in PR systems frequently have a strong role in the government formation process and receive concessions that are disproportionate to their actual level of support in the electorate. It is rare for parties to obtain a majority of the legislative seats in PR systems, so large parties often rely on the support of some smaller party to get into government. These smaller parties can often use their leverage to wring concessions from the larger party. Some of these concessions may be quite radical and lack the support of an electoral majority. In Israel, for example, ultra-religious parties have won support for many of their policies by threatening to pull out of the government. A fourth criticism is that PR systems create a weak link between constituents and their representatives, because no single representative is responsible for policy in a given district. Voters might also wonder which of the elected representatives from their districts actually represent them.

List PR Systems

How do proportional electoral systems actually work? We start by looking at list PR systems.

In a **list PR system** each party presents a list of candidates in each multimember district. Parties then receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the votes. Despite obvious similarities, list systems differ in important ways. These differences include (a) the precise formula for allocating seats to parties, (b) the district magnitude and the use of higher electoral tiers, (c) the use of electoral thresholds, and (d) the type of party list that is employed (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2005, 354). We discuss each of these in turn.

In a **list PR system**, each party presents a list of candidates for a multimember district. Parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the votes.

Electoral Formulas: Quotas and Divisors

All proportional electoral systems either employ quotas or divisors to determine how many seats each party wins. In the quota system the **quota** indicates the number of votes that guarantees a party a seat in a particular district.

A **quota** is the number of votes that guarantees a party a seat in a particular electoral district.

Four different quotas are in common use around the world: Hare, Droop, Imperiali, and Reinforced Imperiali.¹⁵ A quota, $Q(n)$, is defined as:

$$Q(n) = \frac{V_d}{M_d + n},$$

where V_d is the total number of valid votes in district d , M_d is the number of seats available in district d , and n is the modifier of the quota. When $n = 0$, the system employs the Hare

15. The Hare quota is sometimes referred to as the Hare-Niemeyer quota or the simple quota. It was first invented in the United States to apportion seats among the states; it was originally called the Hamilton quota. The Droop quota is sometimes referred to as the Hagenbach-Bischoff quota.

quota; when $n = 1$, the system employs the Droop quota; when $n = 2$, the system employs the Imperiali quota; and when $n = 3$, the system employs the Reinforced Imperiali quota. For example, the Hare quota in an electoral district with 10 seats and 100,000 valid votes would be 10,000. This means that a political party obtains a seat for every 10,000 votes that it wins. The Droop quota in the same electoral district would be 9,091 votes, the Imperiali quota would be 8,333 votes, and the Reinforced Imperiali quota would be 7,692.

We now provide an example of how votes are translated into seats in a list PR system that employs the Hare quota system. Table 12.7 illustrates the election results for a ten-seat district in which 100,000 valid votes are split among parties A through F. How many seats does each party win? As we already illustrated, the Hare quota in this case is 10,000. Because Party A has 47,000 votes, it has 4.7 full quotas. This means that it automatically receives four seats. Following the same logic, Parties B, C, and D all automatically win one seat. You'll have noticed that we have allocated only seven of the ten seats available in this district so far. What happens to the three "remainder" seats? How are these seats allocated?

The issue of remainder seats arises with all list PR systems that use quotas to allocate seats. Three different methods are employed to allocate these seats: largest remainder (LR), highest average (HA), and modified highest average (mHA). By far the most common is the largest remainder method. Table 12.8 illustrates how the largest remainder method works in our sample district. After all of the automatic seats are allocated, we calculate the fraction of a Hare quota that was left unused (remainder) by each party. The first remainder seat is then allocated to the party with the largest remainder. Thus, Party A wins the first remainder seat because its remainder (0.7) is the largest. The second remainder seat is then allocated to the party with the next largest remainder. The remainder seats are allocated in this way until all of the district seats have been allocated. Thus, the total number of seats won by each party in a district is the sum of their automatic and remainder seats. As Table 12.8 illustrates, Party A wins five seats, Party B wins two seats, and Parties C, D, and E each win one seat. Countries that use the Hare quota with largest remainders include Colombia, Honduras, Namibia, and Sierra Leone.

TABLE 12.7**Translating Votes into Seats Using the Hare Quota**

	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	Party E	Party F	Total
Votes	47,000	16,000	15,800	12,000	6,100	3,100	100,000
Seats							10
Quota							10,000
Votes/quota	4.7	1.6	1.58	1.2	0.61	0.31	
Automatic seats	4	1	1	1	0	0	7
Remainder seats							3

TABLE 12.8**Hare Quota with Largest Remainders**

	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	Party E	Party F	Total
Votes	47,000	16,000	15,800	12,000	6,100	3,100	100,000
Seats							10
Quota							10,000
Votes/quota	4.7	1.6	1.58	1.2	0.61	0.31	
Automatic seats	4	1	1	1	0	0	7
Remainder	0.7	0.6	0.58	0.2	0.61	0.31	
Remainder seats	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Total seats	5	2	1	1	1	0	10

In Table 12.9, we illustrate what would have happened in our sample district if we had employed the highest average method to allocate the remainder seats. The highest average method requires that the number of votes won by each party be divided by the number of automatic seats that they obtain.¹⁶ This gives the average number of votes “paid” by each party for the automatic seats that they won. The highest average method then allocates the remainder seats to the parties that paid the most votes (highest average) for their seats. As Table 12.9 illustrates, Party B gets the first remainder seat because it paid 16,000 votes for its one seat; Party C gets the second remainder seat, and Party D gets the third. Countries that use the Hare quota with the highest average method include Benin and Brazil.

TABLE 12.9**Hare Quota with Highest Average Remainders**

	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	Party E	Party F	Total
Votes	47,000	16,000	15,800	12,000	6,100	3,100	100,000
Seats							10
Quota							10,000
Votes/quota	4.7	1.6	1.58	1.2	0.61	0.31	
Automatic seats	4	1	1	1	0	0	7
Votes/Automatic seats	11,750	16,000	15,800	12,000	0	0	
Remainder seats	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
Total seats	4	2	2	2	0	0	10

16. The modified highest average method for allocating remainder seats is basically the same except that it requires the number of votes won by each party to be divided by the number of automatic seats plus one. Although no countries use the modified highest average method with the Hare quota, Luxembourg uses it in combination with the Droop quota.

A **divisor, or highest average, system** divides the total number of votes won by each party in a district by a series of numbers (divisors) to obtain quotients. District seats are then allocated according to which parties have the highest quotients.

A list PR system that does not employ quotas to translate votes into seats is known as a **divisor, or highest average, system**. Three divisor systems are commonly employed around the world: d'Hondt, Sainte-Laguë, and Modified Sainte-Laguë.¹⁷

In divisor systems, the total number of votes won by each party in a district is divided by a series of numbers called divisors to give quotients. District seats are then allocated according to which parties have the highest quotients.

To illustrate how these systems work, we apply the d'Hondt method to the same ten-seat district that we used to examine quota systems. The results are shown in Table 12.10. Under the d'Hondt system, we divide the total number of votes won by each party by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and so on to obtain a series of quotients.¹⁸ The ten largest quotients are shown in boldface type. The exact order in which the ten district seats are allocated among these ten quotients is shown by the numbers in parentheses next to them. For example, Party A receives the first and second seat, Party B wins the third seat, Party C wins the fourth seat, Party A the fifth seat, and so on. Unlike quota systems, it is easy to see that divisor systems do not leave any remainder seats. The final allocation of the ten district seats is five to Party A, two each to Party B and Party C, and one to Party D. The d'Hondt system is the most common divisor system and is used by Argentina, Bulgaria, the Dominican Republic, Portugal, Turkey, and others.

TABLE 12.10

Translating Votes into Seats Using the d'Hondt System

	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	Party E	Party F	Total
Votes	47,000	16,000	15,800	12,000	6,100	3,100	100,000
Seats							10
Votes/1	47,000 (1)	16,000 (3)	15,800 (4)	12,000 (6)	6,100	3,100	
Votes/2	23,500 (2)	8,000 (9)	7,900 (10)	6,000	3,050	1,550	
Votes/3	15,666 (5)	5,333	5,266	4,000	2,033	1,033	
Votes/4	11,750 (7)	4,000	3,950	3,000	1,525	775	
Votes/5	9,400 (8)	3,200	3,160	2,400	1,220	620	
Total seats	5	2	2	1	0	0	10

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the order in which the ten seats in the district are allocated among the parties.

17. Like the Hare quota, these divisor systems were first invented in the United States to apportion seats among the states and districts. D'Hondt was known as the Jefferson Method and Sainte-Laguë was known as the Webster Method (Young 1994).

18. The general formula for the d'Hondt quotient is $V / (S + 1)$, where V is the total number of valid votes won by a party list and S is the total number of seats allocated to the party so far (S is initially 0 for all parties). Whichever party has the highest quotient gets the next seat to be allocated and then its quotient is recalculated given its new seat total.

The Sainte-Laguë system works in a similar way except that the divisors are different. Under the Sainte-Laguë system, the votes of each party are divided by 1, 3, 5, 7, and so on to obtain the quotients.¹⁹ The Sainte-Laguë system is currently employed for legislative elections in Latvia. The divisors in the Modified Sainte-Laguë system, currently used for legislative elections in Sweden, are 1.4, 3, 5, 7, 9, and so on.

The electoral formulas used to allocate seats to parties in list PR systems differ in their proportionality; some produce a more proportional translation of votes into seats than others (Lijphart 1986; Gallagher 1991, 1992; Benoit 2000). Another way to think about this is that some proportional formulas help small parties more than others. Although the proportionality of an electoral outcome depends to some extent on the distribution of votes given to the parties in a district, a widely accepted overall ranking of the different proportional formulas is shown in Table 12.11. As you can see, the Hare and Droop quotas with largest remainders are the most proportional; the d'Hondt divisor and Imperiali quota systems are the least proportional. All of these systems are more proportional than SMDP systems.

District Magnitude and Higher Electoral Tiers

The different formulas used to translate votes into seats clearly affect the proportionality of an electoral system. The factor that political scientists generally recognize as the most important factor influencing the proportionality of an electoral system, however, is the district magnitude (Rae 1967; Taagepera and Shugart 1989; Lijphart 1994; Cox 1997). Recall that the district magnitude is the number of representatives that are elected in a district. Electoral systems are more proportional when the district magnitude is large. This is because smaller parties are much more likely to win seats when the district magnitude is large. For example, a party would need to win more than 25 percent of the vote to guarantee winning a seat in a three-seat district, but it would need to win only a little more than 10 percent of the vote

TABLE 12.11

The Proportionality of Proportional Electoral System Formulas

Formula	Proportionality
Hare LR	
Droop LR	
Sainte-Laguë	
Imperiali LR	
Modified Sainte-Laguë	
d'Hondt	
Imperiali HA	

19. The general formula for the quotient is $V / (2S + 1)$, where V and S are the same as before. Whichever party has the highest quotient gets the next seat to be allocated and then its quotient is recalculated given its new seat total.

to guarantee winning a seat in a nine-seat district. One thing to note is that the electoral outcome is likely to be disproportional whenever the district magnitude is small, irrespective of the particular formula used to translate votes into seats. It is for this reason that political scientists argue that the district magnitude is the most important factor for the proportionality of the electoral system.

Although all PR systems use multimember districts, the average size of these districts—the average district magnitude—can vary quite a lot from one country to another. At one extreme are the Netherlands and Slovakia, who elect all 150 of their legislators in a single national district. At the other extreme is Chile, which elects all its legislators in sixty two-seat districts. Other countries have district magnitudes of varying size between these two extremes. Countries with low average district magnitudes include Chile (2.00), Benin (3.50), Cape Verde (3.79), and the Dominican Republic (5.00). Countries with high average district magnitudes include the Netherlands (150.00), Slovakia (150.00), Israel (120.00), Brazil (19.00), and Indonesia (17.11).

In addition to the proportionality of the electoral system, the district magnitude also affects the strength of the linkage between elected representatives and their constituency. As district magnitude increases and with it the geographical size of the district, the linkage between representatives and their voters is likely to weaken. Some countries have attempted to provide a relatively strong link between representatives and voters as well as high levels of proportionality by

allocating seats in two **electoral tiers**. How does this work? Typically, some seats are allocated at the constituency level in small districts in an attempt to create a clear connection between the representatives and the voters. In addition, some supplemental seats are kept aside to be allocated

An **electoral tier** is a level at which votes are translated into seats. The lowest tier is the district or constituency level. Higher tiers are constituted by grouping together different lower tier constituencies; they are typically at the regional or national level.

in some higher electoral tier above the constituency level, normally at the regional or national level. These “higher tier” seats are distributed among those parties that do not receive their fair or proportional share of the seats at the constituency level. In other words, they go to parties that earn fewer seats than their share of the votes would suggest is appropriate. The way this works is that each party’s votes that are not used to obtain seats at the constituency level are gathered up and pooled in the higher tier; the supplemental seats are then allocated among the parties on the basis of these “unused votes.” As an example, about 11 percent of the legislative seats in Sweden are allocated in a national tier to parties and cartels whose share of the seats at the constituency level is less than their share of the votes. Likewise, parties in Venezuela that are under-represented in the allocation of constituency-level seats relative to their national vote share are eligible to receive a limited number of compensatory seats (Golder 2005, 111).²⁰

20. In our examples, the two electoral tiers are “linked” in the sense that the allocation of seats in the higher tier depends on the seats received in the lower tier (Shvetsova 1999). This is by far the most common situation for proportional electoral systems that employ multiple tiers (Golder 2005). Still, a few countries like Poland and Guatemala employ multiple electoral tiers that are unlinked. The level of proportionality produced by these unlinked systems is not usually as high as that produced by the linked systems. The reason is that unlinked systems are constrained in their ability to increase proportionality because they do not take account of the unused votes in the lower tier.

Electoral Thresholds

All proportional electoral systems have an **electoral threshold** that stipulates the minimum percentage of votes that a party must win, either nationally or in a particular district, to gain representation. This threshold is either legally imposed (**formal threshold**) or it exists as a mathematical property of the electoral system (**natural threshold**). The size of the electoral threshold has a strong effect on the proportionality of the electoral system.²¹

Natural thresholds are not written into electoral laws; instead, they are a mathematical by-product of certain features of the electoral system, such as the district magnitude. For example, any candidate in the Netherlands must win more than 0.67 percent of the national vote, not because this is legally stipulated somewhere, but simply because there are 150 legislative seats allocated in a single national district, that is, $100\text{ percent} \div 150 = 0.67\text{ percent}$. All electoral systems have a natural threshold. In contrast to natural thresholds, formal thresholds are explicitly written into the electoral law. For example, political parties in Israel have had to win 2 percent of the national vote before they can win seats in the Knesset since 2003 (the natural threshold in Israel is only 0.83 percent). In Turkey, political parties must win more than 10 percent of the national vote before they can gain representation in parliament. In Poland, parties and coalitions must win 5 percent and 8 percent of the national vote, respectively, before they can win seats in the Sejm. Some countries have more complicated formal thresholds. For instance, political parties in Germany must win either 5 percent of the national vote or three constituency seats before they are eligible to win legislative seats. Formal thresholds always increase the disproportionality of an electoral system because the votes for parties that might otherwise have won representation are wasted.

Formal thresholds are often introduced in an attempt to reduce party system fragmentation by preventing very small parties from gaining representation. For example, the imposition of the 5 percent threshold in Germany was largely a response to the fractious and unstable party system of Weimar Germany in the interwar period. Similarly, many East European countries have imposed high formal thresholds in an attempt to reduce the number of parties and encourage the consolidation of a stable party system (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006, 357). Although some countries would like to prevent all small parties from winning seats, others want to prevent only small *extremist* parties from gaining representation. One potential way to do this is to combine a formal threshold with a provision known as **apparentement**. Apparentement allows small parties to group together and form a cartel to contest

An **electoral threshold** is the minimum level of support a party needs to obtain representation. A **natural threshold** is a mathematical by-product of the electoral system. A **formal threshold** is explicitly written into the electoral law.

21. Majoritarian systems also have thresholds. For example, the requirement that the winning candidate obtain an absolute majority in AV systems can be considered an electoral threshold. Despite this, electoral thresholds are considered more of an issue in proportional systems because the underlying goal of these systems is to produce proportional outcomes.

Apparentement is the provision in a list PR system for two or more separate parties to reach an agreement that their votes will be combined for the purposes of seat allocation.

elections. The parties in the cartel remain as separate entities on the ballot and campaign independently; however, the votes gained by each party are counted as if they belonged to the single cartel for the purposes of surpassing the threshold. To the extent that getting other parties to join a cartel will be more difficult for extremist parties, apparentement helps nonextremist small parties win a share of seats proportional to their support while making it difficult for extremist parties to win any representation. Apparentement is a provision employed in Israel and some countries in Latin America and Europe.

It should be noted that formal thresholds can have a significant effect on election outcomes. For example, there were so many parties that did not surpass the 10 percent threshold in the Turkish legislative elections of 2002 that fully 46 percent of all votes cast in these elections were wasted. Similarly, 34 percent of the votes cast in the Polish legislative elections of 1993 were wasted because of the 5 percent threshold for parties and 8 percent threshold for coalitions. In the Polish case, these wasted votes were crucial in allowing the former Communists to return to power only a few years after the collapse of communism in that country (Kaminski, Lissowski, and Swistak 1998). These examples from Turkey and Poland force us to think about whether the problems arising from formal thresholds (wasted votes and increased disproportionality) are more or less acceptable than the problems they are designed to solve (fragmented party systems).

Types of Party List

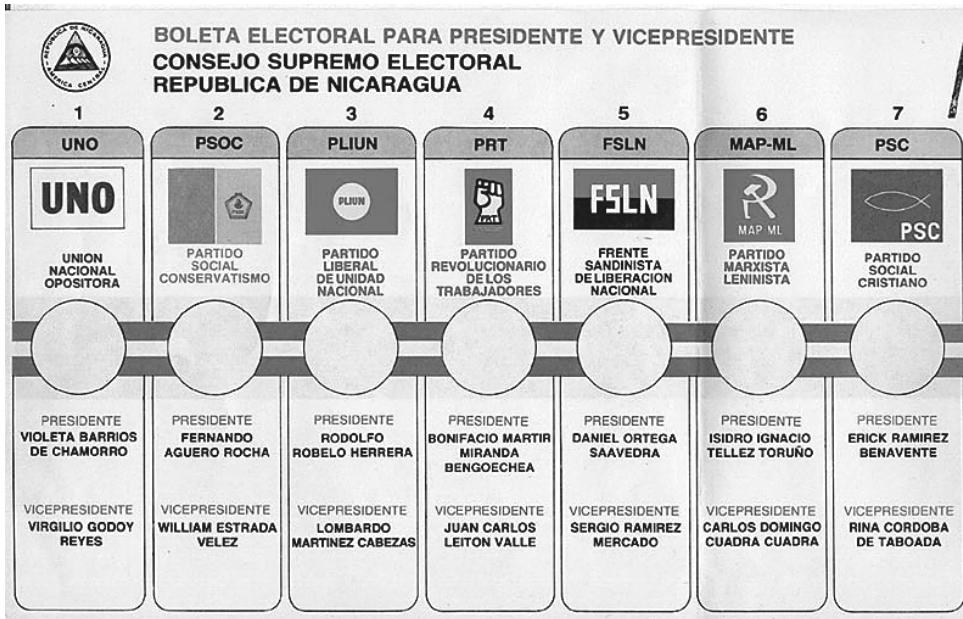
To this point we have discussed how seats are allocated between parties competing in multi-member districts. However, we know that parties present lists of candidates in each district. You may be wondering which candidates on the lists actually get the seats that their party

wins. This depends on which of the three types of party list is being used: the **closed party list**, the **open party list**, or the **free party list**.

In a closed party list, which is sometimes known as a nonpreferential or blocked list, the order of candidates elected is determined by the party itself, and voters are not able to express a preference for a particular candidate.

In a **closed party list**, the order of candidates elected is determined by the party itself, and voters are not able to express a preference for a particular candidate. In an **open party list**, voters can indicate not just their preferred party but also their favored candidate within that party. In a **free party list**, voters have multiple votes that they can allocate either within a single party list or across different party lists.

In a closed list system, political parties receive seats in proportion to the number of votes that they obtain using one of the formulas described earlier. The first seat won by the party goes to the candidate listed first on the party's list; the second seat goes to the second candidate, and so on. Thus, if a party wins four seats in a district, then the top four candidates on the list gain seats and the remaining candidates do not win any. In some cases, the ballot paper in a closed list system will contain the names of the individual candidates and their positions on the list, as with the Nicaraguan ballot paper illustrated in Figure 12.4. More frequently, though, ballot papers in closed list systems do not contain the names of individual candidates. Instead, the only information on the list is the party names and symbols, and perhaps a photograph of the party leader. As Figure 12.5 illustrates, this type of ballot paper was used in South Africa's 1994 legislative elections.

FIGURE 12.4**Nicaraguan Closed List PR Ballot Paper**

Source: www.unc.edu/~asreynol/ballot_pages/nicaragua.html

One of the potential advantages of closed party lists is that parties can more easily include some candidates, such as minority ethnic and linguistic candidates, or female candidates, who might otherwise have had difficulty getting elected. Of course, some voters may consider this potential advantage a disadvantage in that they are unable to choose the candidates that they most desire and may have to elect unpopular and undesirable candidates if they wish to vote for their preferred party.

Closed party lists are often preferred by the leaders of political parties because they provide a useful way of disciplining and rewarding candidates. Candidates that are important in the party hierarchy can be guaranteed relatively safe seats by being placed toward the top of the party list, whereas candidates who fail to toe the party line can be placed toward the bottom of the party list. Political parties tend to be more important than individual candidates in closed list systems for this reason.

In an open party list, which is sometimes known as a preferential or unblocked list, voters can indicate not just their preferred party but their favored candidate within that party. In most open list systems, it is up to the voter to choose whether to indicate her preferred candidate as well as her preferred party. If individuals simply vote for a party and do not indicate a preferred candidate, then the candidate-choice option of the ballot paper will obviously have little effect. If we look at Sweden and its open list system, we find that over 25 percent of Swedish voters regularly choose an individual candidate within a party list;

FIGURE 12.5

South African Closed List PR Ballot Paper



Source: www.unc.edu/~asreynol/ballot_pages/south_africa.html

many of these candidates would not have been elected had the party list been closed (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005, 84).

Figure 12.6 illustrates an open list ballot from the 1994 legislative elections in Denmark. In Danish elections, voters cast a single vote either for their preferred party (party vote) or for their preferred candidate from among that party's list of candidates (preferential or personal vote). The total number of seats won by each party is determined equally by both types of votes. Each individual candidate is credited with all of the personal votes given to him plus a share of the votes cast for his party. The order in which the party's seats are allocated among the individual candidates is determined by the number of total votes (personal and party) that are credited to them.

FIGURE 12.6**Danish Open List PR Ballot Paper**

Folketingsvalget 1990	
A. Socialdemokratiet	Nordjyllands amts 2. kreds
Ole Stavås	
Martin Glerup	
Holger Graversen	
Ilse Hansen	
Arne Jensen	
Frank Jensen	
J. Risgaard Knudsen	
Bjarne Laustsen	
Kaj Poulsen	
B. Det Radikale Venstre	
Lars Schönberg-Hemme	
Bent Bundgaard	
Marianne Jelved	
Bent Jørgensen	
Hans Larsen-Ledet	
Axel E. Mortensen	
Lars Lammet Nielsen	
Ove Nielsen	
Preben Pedersen	
C. Det Konservative Folkeparti	
Karsten Frederiksen	
Niels Ahlmann-Olszen	
H. P. Clausen	
Suzanne Kogsbøll	
Jørgen Lund	
Allan Nygaard	
Gerda Thymann Pedersen	
Per Seerberg	
Søren Pflug	
D. Centrum-Demokraterne	
Peter Duehoff	
Gregers Folke Gregersen	
Bodil Melgaard Haakonsen	
Anton Jepsen	
Tove Kattrup	
Hartwig Kjeldgaard	
Bent V. Villadsen	
E. Danmarks Retsforbund	
Knud Christensen	
Aase Bak-Nielsen	
Jane Dyrdal	
Karen Hansen	
Einar Pedersen	
Ole Thielemann	
Egon Thomsen	

Source: www.unc.edu/~asreynol/ballot_pages/denmark.html

Although voters normally have a choice in open list systems as to whether to vote for a candidate, this is not the case in all open list PR systems. For example, individuals have to vote for a party candidate in countries like Brazil, Finland, and the Netherlands. The total number of seats won by each party in these countries is determined by the total number of votes given to its candidates, and the order in which each party's candidates receive these seats is determined by the number of individual votes that they receive.

Open list systems clearly give voters greater freedom over their choice of candidates and weaken the control of party leaders over their party's candidates compared with closed list systems. A frequent consequence of open lists, though, is that they generate internal party fighting, because candidates from the same party are effectively competing with each other for the same votes. A result of this is that political candidates in open list systems have incentives to cultivate a personal vote rather than a party vote (Carey and Shugart 1995). A personal vote occurs when an individual votes based on the characteristics of a particular candidate rather than the characteristics of the party to which the candidate belongs. Building a personal vote is frequently associated in the United States with legislators bringing back pork-barrel projects to their single-member districts. As you can see, though, incentives to build personal votes also exist in multimember districts, where the election of candidates can depend on personal reputations in open list systems. In addition to internal party fighting, some scholars worry that open lists make it less likely that minority candidates will be elected. In Sri Lanka, for instance, majority Sinhalese parties tried to place minority Tamil candidates in winnable positions on their open party lists. These efforts at improving minority representation were rendered ineffective, however, when many voters deliberately voted for lower-placed Sinhalese candidates instead (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005, 90).

Voters have even more flexibility in free list systems than in open list systems. This is because voters in free list systems have multiple votes that they can allocate to candidates either within a single party list or across different party lists as they see fit. The capacity to vote

for candidates from different party lists—split voting—is known as **panachage** (Cox 1997, 43). In Luxembourg, voters can either cast their ballot for a party and accept the party's rank

ordering of the candidates, or they can vote for as many individual candidates as there are seats available, irrespective of whether they come from the same party. Switzerland has a similar system with the added freedom that voters can give up to two of their votes to the same candidate. The capacity to give more than one vote for a single highly favored candidate is known as **cumulation**. Swiss parties simply present a list of names in no particular rank order (often alphabetically) and voters have a choice of (a) choosing a candidate from the list, (b) choosing a candidate twice from the list, (c) dropping a candidate from the list, (d) writing in one or more candidates from a different party list (up to two times each), or (e) voting for the party without revealing any preference for a particular individual candidate. The sole condition is that Swiss voters have only as many votes as there are seats available in their district. The seats allocated to each party are determined by the total number of votes won by

Panachage is the ability to vote for candidates from different party lists. **Cumulation** is the capacity to give more than one vote to a single candidate.

the party. Seats are then given to individual party candidates based on the number of times their names appear on the party lists, including write-ins on other parties' lists.

Single Transferable Vote

The only proportional electoral system that does not employ a party list is the **single transferable vote**. This electoral system was invented by the English lawyer, Thomas Hare, in 1857 and is currently used to elect the Australian Senate and the Irish and Maltese legislatures. The STV is used in multimember districts, and voters must rank at least one candidate in order of preference. Voters usually do this by placing a number next to the name of the candidates, indicating whether they are the voter's first choice, second choice, third choice, and so on. Because voters indicate their preference ordering of competing candidates, the STV is another form of preferential voting like the alternative vote, supplementary vote, and Borda Count that we discussed earlier.

In order to win a seat, candidates must obtain a particular quota or threshold of votes. Votes initially go to each voter's most preferred candidate. If an insufficient number of candidates obtain the necessary quota to fill all of the district seats, then the candidate with the lowest number of first-choice votes is eliminated. The votes from the eliminated candidate, as well as any surplus votes from candidates that are already elected, are then reallocated to the remaining candidates. This process continues until enough candidates meet the quota to fill all of the district seats. The exact process by which the STV system transfers votes and the exact size of the quota used to determine the winning candidates vary from country to country. Although the Hare quota is sometimes employed, it turns out that the most common quota is the Droop quota. If you think that the STV system sounds familiar, you would be right: it is essentially the same as the alternative vote but applied in multimember districts.

The STV is quite a complicated electoral system and so an example of how it works might help. Our specific example illustrates how the STV works when a Droop quota is used with the Clarke method for reallocating surplus votes.²² This is the STV system employed to elect the Australian Senate. Imagine that there are five candidates—Bruce, Shane, Sheila, Glen, and Ella—competing in a three-seat district containing twenty voters. Table 12.12 illustrates how the twenty voters marked their preferences on their ballots; each icon represents a ballot and each type of icon reflects a particular preference ordering. Thus, four people (👤) placed Bruce first and Shane second; two people (👤) placed Shane first and Bruce second, and so on. One thing to note is that not everybody provided a complete preference ordering of all the candidates. For example, two people (👤 and 🚩) marked only their first preferences.²³

The **single transferable vote** is a preferential candidate-centered PR electoral system used in multimember districts. Candidates that surpass a specified quota of first-preference votes are immediately elected. In successive counts, votes from eliminated candidates and surplus votes from elected candidates are reallocated to the remaining candidates until all the seats are filled.

22. There are a variety of different ways of reallocating surplus votes—Hare's method, Cincinnati method, Clarke method, senatorial rules, and Meek's method (Tideman and Richardson 2000, 248–258).

23. In the actual elections to the Australian Senate, individuals must rank order all of the candidates if they want their vote to count.

TABLE 12.12**Results from Twenty Ballots in an STV Election**

Voting round						
1st	Bruce	Shane	Sheila	Sheila	Glen	Ella
2nd		Bruce	Glen		Ella	
3rd			Ella		Glen	

Note: Each icon represents a ballot and each type of icon reflects a particular rank ordering of the candidates.

As we noted earlier, a Droop quota is normally calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes in a district by the number of seats plus one. If the Droop quota turns out to be a whole number, however, as is the case here, then a one is added to it. Thus, in our example of a three-seat district and twenty voters, the Droop quota is $20 / (3 + 1) + 1 = 6$. In other words, each candidate must win six votes in order to be elected. We can now begin examining how votes are translated into seats in an STV system. The whole process is outlined in Table 12.13.

TABLE 12.13**The STV in a Three-Seat District with Twenty Voters**

Voting round	Candidates					Result
	Bruce	Shane	Sheila	Glen	Ella	
1st						Sheila is elected and Sheila's surplus votes are reallocated
2nd						Shane is eliminated
3rd						Bruce is elected
4th						Ella is eliminated and Glen is elected

Note: Each icon represents a ballot and each type of icon reflects a particular rank ordering of the candidates. See Table 12.12 to see the particular rank ordering of the candidates associated with each icon.

The first thing to do is to see if any candidates obtained a Droop quota in the first-choice votes. If they did, they are automatically elected. Because Sheila has twelve first-choice votes, she is elected in the first round. Next, it is necessary to reallocate any surplus votes from already elected candidates to the remaining candidates. In the example, Sheila has six surplus votes, that is, she received six votes more than she needed to be elected. As we noted at the beginning, we are going to use the Clarke method for reallocating these six surplus votes to the remaining candidates. To do this, it is necessary to separate Sheila's ballots into bundles based on who the second-choice candidates are. Because those who voted for Sheila list either Glen ♂ or Ella ♀ as their second choice, there would be two bundles. Because the eight ♀ votes make up two-thirds of Sheila's twelve total votes, two-thirds of Sheila's surplus votes (four) go to Glen. Because the four ♂ votes make up one-third of Sheila's total votes, one-third of Sheila's surplus votes (two) go to Ella. After reallocating these surplus votes to Glen and Ella, votes are recounted a second time to see if any new candidate has now obtained the Droop quota. In our example, no candidate meets the Droop quota in the second count. As a result, the next step is to eliminate the candidate with the lowest number of votes (Shane) and reallocate his votes to the remaining candidates. Because the second choice of Shane's voters is Bruce, Shane's two votes are reallocated to Bruce. Votes are now recounted a third time to see if any candidate now meets the Droop quota. As you can see, Bruce meets the Droop quota on the third count because he has six votes and he is, therefore, elected. If there were any surplus votes for Bruce, then we would reallocate them among the remaining candidates. In this case, though, Bruce has no surplus votes. To this point, we have filled two of the three district seats. No one else meets the Droop quota, so the candidate with the next lowest number of votes (Ella) is eliminated. Because there is only one candidate left, there is no need for a fourth recount; Glen is the third and last candidate to be elected. Thus, the STV with the Droop quota and the Clarke method for reallocating surplus votes results in the election of Sheila, Bruce, and Glen in this three-seat district.

How does the STV system compare with other electoral systems? One of the advantages of STV systems is that they provide voters with an opportunity to convey a lot of information about their preferences (Bowler and Grofman 2000, 1). Like other preferential voting systems, individuals in STV systems have the opportunity to rank order all of the candidates rather than simply voting yes or no to one (or more) of the candidates as in most majoritarian and list PR systems. Because an individual's preferences end up being reallocated whenever a candidate is elected or eliminated, the STV minimizes wasted votes. STV systems also allow individuals to vote for candidates from different parties. This means that individuals can vote for candidates who share a similar policy stance even though the candidates may come from different parties. This might be useful in cases in which an issue cuts across traditional party lines, such as abortion. With the exception of those that allow for panchage, the vast majority of list PR systems do not allow this type of cross-party voting. Another advantage is that the STV is a proportional electoral system that does not require the existence of political parties—individuals vote for candidates, not parties. This could be important in countries in which political parties are yet to organize or political elites do not

wish to allow the formation of political parties (see Box 12.5 on electoral system choice in Poland on pages 523–524). STV systems are also advantageous in that they give voters total control over how their votes will be used; a candidate cannot receive support from a voter unless that voter expresses a preference for her. As Gallagher, Laver, and Mair (2006, 360–361) note, “This sets STV apart from all list systems, where a preference given to one candidate of a party might end up helping another candidate of the same party—a candidate whom, perhaps, the voter does not like. Under STV, voters can continue to give preferences after their first, knowing that a preference given to a candidate can never help that person against a candidate to whom the voter gave a higher preference.”

Like other preferential voting systems, an additional advantage of STV systems is that they create incentives for candidates to appeal to groups outside their core set of supporters and campaign on broadly based centrist platforms. This is because a candidate’s election may well depend on the transfer of votes from different social groups. Recall that it is for this reason that some scholars advocate the use of preferential voting systems in divided societies (Horowitz 1985, 1991; Reilly 1997, 2001). One criticism of the preferential voting systems that we have examined to this point, such as the alternative and supplementary votes, is that they are majoritarian and can produce highly disproportional outcomes (Lijphart 1997). A benefit of the STV, though, is that it works in multimember districts and typically produces more proportional outcomes than majoritarian systems. Thus, the STV holds out the possibility of combining relatively proportional outcomes with incentives for candidates to make cross-cleavage appeals and build electorates that bridge religious and ethnic lines.

Another advantage of the STV highlighted by its supporters is that it tends to create a strong link between representatives and their constituents. Since the STV is a candidate-rather than a party-centered system, candidates have an incentive to build personal votes and engage in constituency service. For example, there is evidence that the STV in Ireland leads to an emphasis on local campaigning, a focus on district work and local concerns, and a low importance attached to ideology and national issues (Katz 1980). In this respect, the STV “involves a notion of the connection between the individual representative and his or her constituency that is much closer to the notion of representation implicit in the first past the post [SMDP] system than to the notion of representation of parties underlying list systems” (Sinnott 1992, 68). Another benefit of STV systems is that they reduce the incentive for voters to behave strategically, because their votes are less likely to be wasted. As with any electoral system, though, strategic concerns are never entirely absent. In an attempt to strategically channel the transfer of votes in an STV system so as to benefit their candidates as much as possible, parties in Ireland hand out “candidate cards” in a similar way to how parties hand out how-to-vote cards in the AV system used in Australia.

Despite these advantages, the STV system has its critics. One criticism is that it tends to weaken the internal unity of parties and make them less cohesive. Because voters are allowed to rank order candidates from the same party, these candidates have incentives to criticize and campaign against one another. As Farrell and McAllister (2000, 18) note, “[T]he prob-

lems of intraparty factionalism and excessive attention to localist, particularistic concerns [in Ireland] are attributed to politicians who must compete with each other for votes on ordinally ranked STV ballots." You will perhaps recall that the single nontransferable vote also created incentives for intraparty factionalism. It is worth noting, though, that the incentives for factionalism are weaker under the STV because candidates can expect to receive votes from fellow party members who are eliminated. This means that candidates from the same party in an STV system do not want to harm each other too much.

A second criticism of the STV is that it is hard to operate in large districts. As a result, the system tends to produce outcomes that are not as proportional as those produced by list PR systems. For practical reasons, the STV is hard to operate in districts whose magnitude is greater than ten; the ballot paper could contain fifty or more names. In fact, the ballot for the Australian Senate in New South Wales in 1995 contained the names of ninety-nine candidates and was several feet long (Farrell and McAllister 2000, 29). It is difficult to believe that voters would have sufficient information to rank candidates beyond the first ten or so names on a ballot. For this reason, constituencies in STV systems tend to be relatively small. For example, the largest district magnitude in Ireland and Malta is five.

MIXED ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

A way to think about a **mixed electoral system** is that there are two electoral systems using different formulas running alongside each other. One electoral system uses a majoritarian formula to allocate seats, and the other uses a proportional formula. Thus, a mixed electoral system is one in which voters elect representatives through two different systems, one majoritarian and one proportional. Many mixed systems have more than one electoral tier, with majoritarian formulas employed in one tier and proportional formulas used in another. Multiple electoral tiers, however, are not a necessary characteristic of mixed electoral systems, as some have claimed (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001). Mixed systems can, and do, function in countries that have only one electoral tier. The defining characteristic of mixed systems is simply that they combine majoritarian and proportional electoral formulas in the same election. Although there are important variations among mixed systems, we can divide them into two main types: independent and dependent (see Figure 12.1).

A **mixed electoral system** is one in which voters elect representatives through two different systems, one majoritarian and one proportional.

Independent Mixed Electoral Systems

An **independent mixed electoral system** is one in which the majoritarian and proportional components of the electoral system are implemented independently of one another. This type of mixed system is often referred to as a parallel system. The most common form of

An **independent mixed electoral system** is one in which the application of one electoral formula does not depend on the outcome produced by the other.

independent mixed electoral system involves the use of majoritarian and proportional formulas in two separate electoral tiers. For example, Russia elects 225 of its legislators using an SMDP system at the constituency level and another 225 using list PR in a single district at the national level. The precise balance between “proportional” and “majoritarian” seats varies from country to country. Only Andorra, Russia, and the Ukraine have a 50-50 split (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005, 104). Although in some countries, such as South Korea, individuals have only one vote, which is used for both parts of the electoral system, in other countries, such as Japan and Lithuania, they have two votes—one for the majoritarian component and one for the proportional component.

Table 12.14 illustrates how votes are translated into seats in an independent mixed electoral system with two electoral tiers. Two parties, A and B, are competing over ten seats. Five seats are allocated at the constituency level using an SMDP system, and five seats are allocated in a single district at the national level using some type of list PR system. Given the distribution of votes shown in Table 12.14, Party A wins eight seats. Why? First, it wins all five constituency seats because it came first in each constituency. Second, because Party A wins 60 percent of the party list vote, it wins 60 percent of the five seats allocated in the national tier, that is, three seats. As a result, Party A wins eight seats altogether. Party B wins 2 seats—it gets no constituency seats but it gets 40 percent of the five party list seats in the national tier, or two seats.

Although rare, some independent mixed systems involve the use of different electoral formulas in a single electoral tier. For example, Madagascar elects eighty-two legislators using an SMDP system in some constituencies and another seventy-eight legislators using list PR in other districts. Even rarer are independent mixed systems that use different electoral formulas in a single constituency. The Turkish electoral system did precisely that between 1987 and 1994. During this period, Turkey employed a “contingency mandate,” in which the first seat in a constituency was allocated to the largest party, as in an SMDP system. The remaining seats were then allocated using a list PR system. In effect, the Turkish system gave a bonus seat to the largest party.

TABLE 12.14

Translating Votes into Seats in an Independent Mixed Electoral System

	Votes won in each electoral district					Seats won					
						National district	votes won	% of votes won	SMDP	List PR	Total
	1	2	3	4	5						
Party A	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	15,000	60	5	3	8	
Party B	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,000	40	0	2	2	
Total	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000	100	5	5	10	

Dependent Mixed Electoral Systems

A **dependent mixed electoral system** is one in which the application of the proportional formula is dependent on the distribution of seats or votes produced by the majoritarian formula.

A **dependent mixed electoral system** is one in which the application of the proportional formula is dependent on the distribution of seats or votes produced by the majoritarian formula.

This is because the proportional component of the electoral system is used to compensate for any disproportionality produced by the majoritarian formula at the constituency level. This type of mixed system is sometimes referred to as a mixed member proportional (MMP) system. Dependent mixed electoral systems involve the use of majoritarian and proportional formulas in two separate electoral tiers. For example, Mexico elects 300 of its legislators using an SMDP system at the constituency level and another 200 using list PR in five 40-member districts at the regional level. Other countries that employ dependent mixed systems include Albania, Germany, and New Zealand.

In most dependent mixed electoral systems, such as those used in Germany and New Zealand, individuals have two votes. They cast their first vote for a representative at the constituency level (candidate vote) and their second vote for a party list in a higher electoral tier (party vote). These types of mixed dependent systems allow individuals to give their first vote to a constituency candidate from one party and to give their second vote to a different party if they wish. This is called split-ticket voting. In systems in which voters have only one vote, the vote for the constituency candidate also counts as a vote for that candidate's party.

In order to illustrate how votes are translated into seats in a dependent mixed electoral system, consider the example shown in Table 12.15. This is identical to the example shown in Table 12.14 except that our mixed system is now dependent rather than independent. The first thing that happens is that each party receives legislative seats in proportion to the total number of votes that they obtained nationally. This means that because Party A won 60 percent of the vote overall, it receives 60 percent of the party list seats, or six seats. And since Party B won 40 percent of the vote overall, it receives 40 percent of the party list seats, or four seats. We then look to see how many constituency seats each party won. In our example, Party A won all five constituency seats because it came first in each constituency. Party A already has five constituency seats, so it gets to keep only one of its six party list seats. Party B has no constituency seats, so it gets to keep all four of its party list seats. In effect, the party list seats "correct" or "compensate" for the fact that Party B won no seats at the district level even though it won 40 percent of the vote. Overall, then, Party A receives six seats (five constituency seats and one party list seat), and Party B gets four seats (no constituency seats and four party list seats). As you can see, the party list vote determines how many seats a party gets, whereas the candidate vote determines whether these seats will be constituency or party list seats. This particular version of the dependent mixed system is used in Germany and New Zealand.

If you compare the results in Tables 12.14 and 12.15, you'll notice that the election outcome is much more proportional in the dependent mixed electoral system than in the independent one even though the starting distribution of votes is exactly the same. This is to be expected, because the list PR component of dependent mixed systems is specifically designed

TABLE 12.15**Translating Votes into Seats in a Dependent Mixed Electoral System**

	Votes won in each electoral district					National district votes won	% of votes won	Seats won			
	1	2	3	4	5			SMDP	List PR	Total	
	Party A	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	15,000	60	5	1	6
Party B	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,000	40	0	4	4	
Total	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000	100	5	5	10	

to reduce the disproportionality created by the majoritarian component of the electoral system; this is not the case in independent mixed systems.

Two issues crop up in dependent mixed systems. First, some candidates compete for a constituency seat but are also placed on the party list. You may wonder what happens if a candidate wins a constituency seat but is also placed high enough on a party list that she could win a party list seat as well. In this circumstance, the candidate would keep the constituency seat, and her name would be crossed off the party list. Second, some parties win more constituency seats than is justified by their party list vote. An example is shown in Table 12.16. Three parties competed for ten legislative seats. Party B and Party C each won 30 percent of the vote and so get three party list seats. They did not win any constituency seats, so they get to keep all three of their party list seats. Party A won 40 percent of the vote and so gets four party list seats. Party A, however, won all five of the constituency seats. What happens now? Well, Party A loses all of its party lists seats but gets to keep all five of its constituency seats. Overall, then, Party A gets five constituency seats, and Party B and Party C each get three party list seats. You'll notice that the total number of allocated seats is eleven even though the original district magnitude was just ten. Because Party A won more constituency seats than its party list vote justified, the legislature in this example ends up being one seat larger than expected. This extra seat is known as an "overhang seat." This means that

TABLE 12.16**An Example of Overhang Seats**

	Votes won in each electoral district					National district	%	Seats won		
	1	2	3	4	5			SMDP	List PR	Total
Party A	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	15,000	40	5	0	5
Party B	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	11,250	30	0	3	3
Party C	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	11,250	30	0	3	3
Total	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	37,500	100	5	6	11

the size of a legislature in a dependent mixed electoral system is not fixed and ultimately depends on the outcome of the election. In New Zealand's 2005 legislative elections, the fact that the Maori Party won 2.1 percent of the party vote entitled it to three legislative seats. Because it won four constituencies, however, it ended up with four seats. As a result, the New Zealand legislature had 121 seats instead of the normal 120.

In many respects, mixed electoral systems are an attempt to combine the positive attributes of both majoritarian and proportional systems. In particular, mixed electoral systems help produce proportional outcomes at the same time as ensuring that some elected representatives are linked to particular geographic districts. The extent to which mixed systems produce proportional outcomes is likely to depend on the institutional features that characterize them. As we have already seen, dependent mixed systems are likely to be more proportional than independent systems because the allocation of seats in the proportional component of the electoral system is specifically designed to counteract the distortions created by the majoritarian component. It is perhaps interesting to note that the vast majority of the new democracies in Eastern Europe did not adopt the dependent mixed electoral system of Germany, as is often assumed, but actually chose an independent mixed electoral system. Institutional features, such as the percentage of seats distributed by list PR, the size of the district magnitude used in the proportional component of the electoral system, and the proportional formula itself are likely to affect the degree of proportionality in independent mixed systems (Golder 2005).

Dependent mixed electoral systems produce outcomes as proportional as those found in pure list PR systems. As a result, they share many of the advantages and disadvantages of list PR systems that we have already discussed. Some issues arise that are specific to dependent mixed systems, though. One is that dependent mixed systems can create two classes of legislators—one that is responsible and accountable to a geographic constituency and one that is more beholden to the party. This can influence the cohesiveness of political parties (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005, 95). In addition, there is some concern that individuals who have two votes in dependent mixed systems are unaware that it is their party vote rather than their candidate vote that ultimately determines the number of seats that each party wins in the legislature.

Box 12.4

HUNGARY: THE WORLD'S MOST COMPLICATED ELECTORAL SYSTEM?

The electoral system used for Hungary's legislative elections has been described as the world's most complicated electoral system (Benoit 1996, 2005; Benoit and Schiemann 2001). Let us explain exactly how it works. There are three electoral tiers—a constituency tier, a regional tier, and a national tier—and candidates can compete simultaneously in all of them. Voters cast two ballots, one for an individual candidate in a single-member district at the constituency level and one for a closed party list in the regional tier. The 176 seats that are available at the constituency level are allocated using a majority-plurality TRS. If a candidate obtains an



Watched by her daughters, Anna, left, and Eva, right, local teacher Eva Toth, center, leaves the booth after casting her ballot during the first round of the third free democratic parliamentary elections polling station in Boldog, Hungary, some 50 kilometers west of Budapest, Sunday, May 10, 1998.

There are about 8.1 million people with suffrage in Hungary.

between the Droop quota and the remainder used to obtain the additional seat is *subtracted* from that party's national vote pool. Therefore, each vote is used only once and no seat will be allocated at a "discount." For example, suppose that the regional district has a Droop quota of 10,000 votes and that after the quota allocation of automatic seats has been done, Party A has 7,500 remainder votes and Party B has 6,500 remainder votes. Party A has the highest number of remainder votes, and so gets the next seat. Because Party B's remainder votes are less than the two-thirds (6,666) requirement, it does not receive an additional seat at the regional level. For Party B, 6,500 votes are *added* to the national vote pool. For Party A, 2,500 votes (10,000–7,500) are *subtracted* from its national vote total.

How are seats allocated in the national tier? In order to be eligible to receive any national closed party list seats, a party list must have won at least 5 percent of the national vote in the

absolute majority in the first round, then he is automatically elected. If no candidate obtains this number of votes, however, the top three candidates, as well as any candidate gaining more than 15 percent of the vote, are eligible to compete in a second round if they want. The candidate with the most votes in the second round is elected. This part of the electoral system is further complicated by the fact that if fewer than 50 percent of the eligible voters cast a ballot in the first round, then the whole constituency election is repeated in the second round. This occurred in thirty-one of the districts in the 1998 elections.

The regional tier has 152 seats allocated in twenty regions. These seats are allocated according to a regional closed party list vote using the Droop quota with largest remainders. There is a slight twist, however. No party in the Hungarian system can receive a seat in the remainder process if their remainder is less than two-thirds of a Droop quota. The application of the two-thirds limit typically means that some of the 152 seats in the regional tier are left unallocated. These unallocated seats are added to the 58 seats reserved for the single district national tier. Thus, the regional tier has a *maximum* of 152 seats and the national tier has a *minimum* of 58 seats. In practice, about 85 to 90 seats end up being allocated in the national tier. Remainder votes from the regional tier are all transferred to the national vote pool in the following manner. If the remainder votes for a party were not used to obtain an additional seat in the regional tier, then these remainder votes are *added* to that party's national vote pool. However, if the remainder votes for a party were used to obtain an additional seat, then the difference

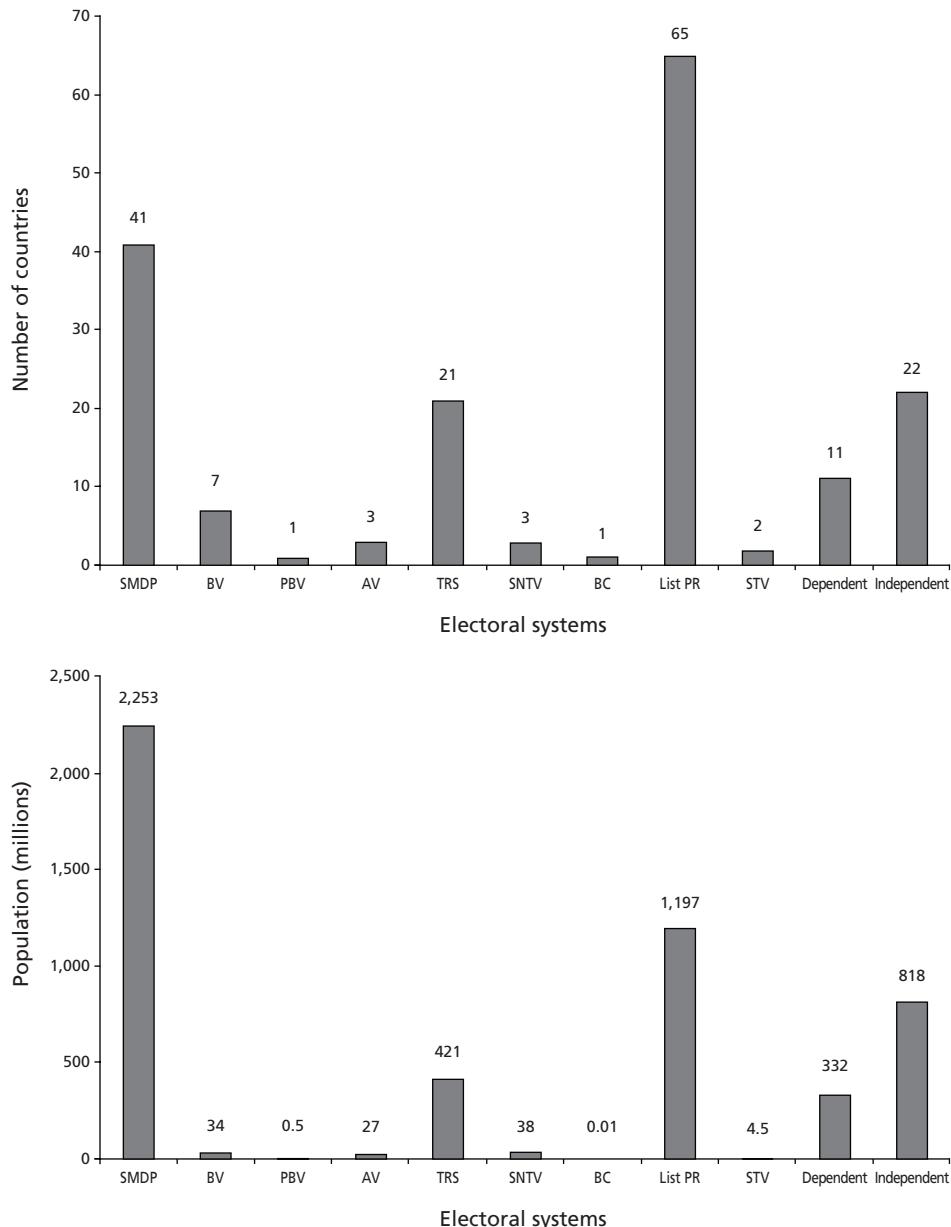
regional party lists. As we indicated earlier, there is no ballot for these national tier seats. Instead, the national tier seats are awarded on the basis of compensation votes—votes that are unused to allocate seats in a lower electoral tier. Compensation votes come from two sources. First, there are the votes from the first round of the majority-plurality TRS elections at the constituency level that went to candidates who did not end up winning seats. Second, there are the remainder votes from the party list vote at the regional level that we just described. Having obtained the total number of votes for each party in the national tier, the remaining seats are allocated using the d'Hondt proportional electoral system. Because only the first-round single-member-district votes of losing candidates transfer to the national list, and because most single-member districts are decided in the second round, the national list seats cannot be allocated until these second-round elections have taken place. And that's how votes are translated into seats in Hungary.

As you can see, the Hungarian electoral system is extremely complicated and has characteristics of both a dependent and independent mixed system. The majoritarian system at the district level and the list PR system at the regional level occur completely independently of each other. This is similar to an independent mixed system. The list PR system at the national level, however, does depend on the results of the majoritarian system at the district level and the list PR system at the regional level. This is similar to a dependent mixed system. Because the Hungarian system combines dependent and independent mixed systems, we might want to classify it as a "super" mixed system.

AN OVERVIEW OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AROUND THE WORLD

The electoral systems used in 188 independent countries in the world in 2004 are shown in Appendix B at the end of this book. Eleven of these countries were either holding no elections in 2004 or were in transition and an electoral system still had to be adopted. We now examine some summary statistics on the 177 electoral systems employed for legislative elections as of 2004. In Figure 12.7, we show the number of countries that use each of the different electoral systems examined in this chapter. We also show the number of people in the world that live under these systems. As you can see, the most popular electoral system in terms of the number of countries that use it is the list PR system (65). The second most popular system is the SMDP electoral system (41). Very few countries use the BV, PBV, AV, SNTV, BC, or STV systems (17). Although more countries use the list PR system than any other electoral system, more people actually live under the SMDP system than any other. Fully two-thirds of the world's population live in countries that use either SMDP systems (2.2 billion) or list PR (1.2 billion) to elect their representatives.

In Table 12.17, we illustrate how electoral systems are distributed across geographic regions in 2004. Some regions are relatively homogeneous in the type of electoral systems that they use. For example, 81 percent of the countries in the Caribbean and North America use an SMDP electoral system; only three different electoral systems (SMDP, TRS, list PR) were

FIGURE 12.7**Electoral Systems in 177 Countries in 2004**

Source: Electoral system data are from Golder (2005) and Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis (2005); population data are from the *CIA World Factbook* (2007).

Note: Electoral system data are for 2004; population data are for 2007. The numbers above the bars indicate either the precise number of countries (top figure) or the precise population in millions (bottom figure).

TABLE 12.17 Electoral Systems by Geographic Region, 2004

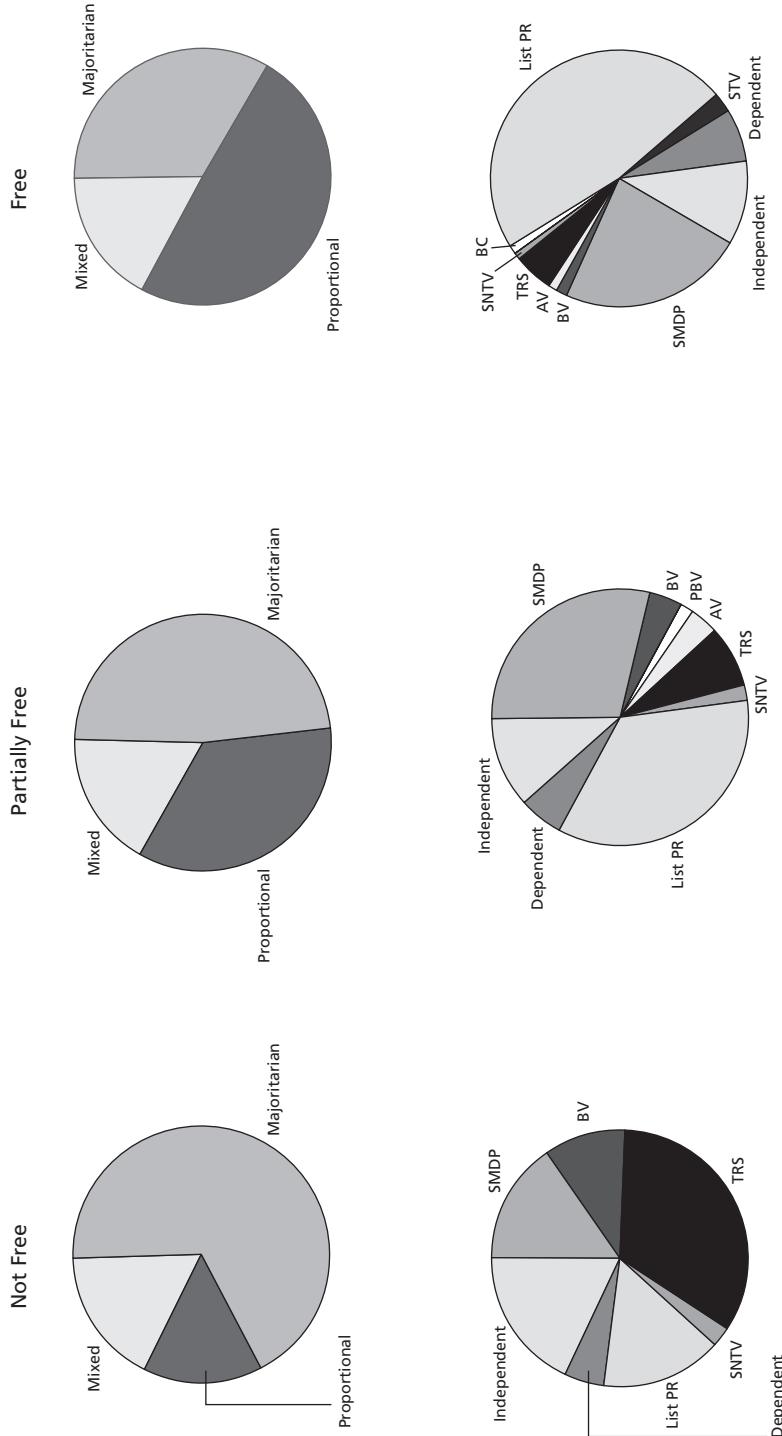
	Sub-Saharan Africa	North Africa and Middle East	Asia	Oceania	Latin America	Caribbean and North America	Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Total
									No. of countries using electoral system
SMDP	14	2	6	5	0	13	0	1	41
BV	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	7
PBV	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
AV	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
TRS	7	3	3	1	1	1	4	1	21
SNTV	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
BC	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
List PR	13	5	3	0	14	2	12	16	65
STV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Dependent	3	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	11
Independent	5	1	6	0	1	0	8	1	22
Total	44	15	20	13	19	16	27	23	177
No. of countries using electoral system family									
Majoritarian	26	11	12	9	1	14	5	2	80
Proportional	12	3	0	5	14	2	12	18	66
Mixed	6	6	1	1	4	0	10	3	31
Total	44	20	13	15	19	16	27	23	177

used by the sixteen different countries in this region. Similarly, 74 percent of the countries in Latin America and 70 percent of the countries in Western Europe use list PR. In contrast, there are other regions where countries employ a highly diverse set of electoral systems. This is the case in Oceania, North Africa and the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, the thirteen countries in Oceania use seven different electoral systems; many of these systems are rarely used elsewhere around the world (BC, BV, PBV, AV, SNTV, and so on). The information in Table 12.17 also indicates that majoritarian electoral systems of all kinds are largely absent in regions such as Latin America and both Western Europe and Eastern Europe; they are much more common in other regions of the world, such as Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean and North America.

Do dictatorships and democracies use different types of electoral systems? In Figure 12.8, we use Freedom House to classify countries into three categories: Not Free, Partially Free, and Free. If you remember from Chapter 5, these categories are frequently used to classify countries as democracies or dictatorships. Not Free countries are dictatorships, Free countries are democracies, and Partially Free countries are somewhere in between. Figure 12.8 illustrates that the percentage of countries employing majoritarian electoral systems declines as we move from the dictatorial end of the spectrum to the democratic end. In other words, dictatorships are much more likely to use majoritarian electoral systems than democracies. Why might this be the case? Unfortunately, relatively little work has been done examining the choice of electoral systems under dictatorships. We might come up with a few conjectures, however. One explanation for why dictatorships tend to adopt majoritarian systems might be that they are easier to manipulate. Some evidence for this comes from a study of twenty-four former Communist countries showing that elections conducted using a majoritarian SMDP system were much more likely to be the object of manipulation than those run under list PR systems (Birch 2007).

In one of the few studies on electoral system choice under dictatorship, Lust-Okar and Jamal (2002) argue that different types of dictatorships choose different types of electoral systems. Specifically, they claim that majoritarian electoral systems are more likely to be adopted by one-party-dominated dictatorships, and proportional systems are more likely to be employed by monarchies. The idea is that leaders in these two types of dictatorship have divergent preferences. Monarchs are political arbitrators; their legitimacy typically comes from things like the royal family, religious authority, or historical tradition rather than popular support. “For the monarch, then, political division and competition in popular politics, not unity, is the basis of stability. Kings have no interest in creating a single contender who could vie with them for power” (Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002, 353). As a result, monarchs prefer proportional systems that allow for the representation of competing political parties while they maintain their role as chief arbiter. In contrast, leaders in states dominated by a single party are forced to enter politics to maintain their rule. As a result, they want majoritarian systems that disproportionately favor their (large) political party. This line of reasoning is supported with empirical evidence from the Middle East. Clearly, more research needs to be done on why particular dictatorships adopt the electoral systems that they do and how these decisions affect the stability and other aspects of authoritarian rule.

Figure 12.8 **Freedom House and Electoral Systems, 2004**



The literature addressing electoral system choice in democracies is relatively new but growing quite rapidly. Various explanations have been proposed for why countries have the electoral systems that they do. These explanations point to things like the self-interest of political parties, general interest concerns, historical precedent, external pressures, and idiosyncratic occurrences (Benoit 2004, 2007). Self-interest explanations tend to focus on the preferences that political parties have for various electoral systems. Because electoral systems are basically distribution mechanisms that reward one party at the expense of another, parties are likely to have conflicting preferences for alternative electoral rules. The adoption of an electoral system is, then, an outcome that arises from a struggle between political parties with competing interests. In this struggle, political parties are thought to care about either policy or office. In policy-seeking stories, leaders care about how different electoral alternatives affect the types of policy that are likely to be adopted in the legislature. Bawn (1993) adopts such an approach to explain why Germany first used a proportional electoral system in 1949 and then switched to a mixed system four years later in 1953. In office-seeking stories, leaders care about how different electoral rules influence their seat share and the likelihood that they will be in government. As an example, Boix (1999) uses an office-seeking story to explain the spread of proportional electoral systems around the world at the beginning of the twentieth century. He argues that ruling elites who were historically elected using some kind of majoritarian electoral system chose to adopt proportional systems at a time when suffrage was being extended to the poor and the support of socialist parties was growing. The incentive to adopt a proportional system was particularly strong in those countries in which conservative parties on the right were fragmented and the presence of strong socialist parties posed a threat to their continued rule. In effect, Boix claims that conservative parties at the beginning of the twentieth century chose to adopt proportional systems as a preemptive strategy to guarantee strong representation in the legislature even if they remained divided. Office-seeking stories like this have also been used to explain the choice of electoral system in Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Taiwan (Brady and Mo 1992; Remington and Smith 1996; Kaminski 1999; Benoit and Schiemann 2001; Benoit and Hayden 2004).

Rather than argue that electoral systems are adopted because they are in the interest of particular parties, others claim that they are chosen because they serve some kind of general interest like promoting legitimacy, fairness, ethnic accommodation, participation, accountability, and the revelation of sincere preferences. For example, we discussed earlier how the adoption of the supplementary vote to elect the Sri Lankan president was driven by a desire to allow the minority Tamil community to have a meaningful role in the election, to ensure that any president enjoyed majority support, and to keep the administrative costs of running the election low (Reilly 2001). Some have argued that the leaders charged with choosing electoral institutions in Eastern Europe after the collapse of communism were motivated by a desire to maximize legitimacy and fairness by promoting proportionality and the development of political parties (Birch et al. 2002). It is worth noting that there can be high levels of uncertainty in newly democratic countries about how people will vote (Andrews and Jackman 2005). As a result, it becomes harder for political parties to know which electoral

Box 12.5**STRATEGIC MISCALCULATION: ELECTORAL SYSTEM CHOICE IN POLAND IN 1989**

As we note in the text, one explanation for why countries adopt the electoral systems that they do focuses on the strategic calculations of political parties. In effect, parties in power choose to adopt electoral rules that benefit them at the expense of their rivals. Although the stakes involved in choosing an electoral system can often be extremely high, history has shown us that political parties frequently make strategic miscalculations.

In an article entitled, "How Communism Could Have Been Saved," Marek Kamiński describes the bargaining that took place between the opposition movement, Solidarity, and the Communist Party over the electoral law to be used for the 1989 legislative elections in Poland. At the time, these elections were to be the first semifree elections held in the Soviet bloc. During these negotiations, the Communist Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) made two strategic miscalculations.

Mistake 1: The first mistake was that the PUWP overestimated its support in the electorate. Following the imposition of martial law in 1981, the PUWP under General Jaruzelski set up a Center for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) to keep better track of public opinion and support for the Communist regime. If you recall from our discussion of democratic transitions in Chapter 8, preference falsification is likely to be rampant in dictatorships because members of opposition groups are unlikely to publicly reveal their opposition for fear of punishment. This was certainly the case in Poland, where roughly 30 percent of respondents simply refused to complete surveys conducted by CBOS. Much of the opposition in Poland essentially remained underground and out of the sight of the PUWP. The result was that the PUWP went into the negotiations over the electoral law with Solidarity in 1989 with an overly optimistic belief about their electoral strength.

Mistake 2: The second mistake was that the PUWP did not adopt a proportional electoral system. As you may recall, the 1989 legislative elections turned into an electoral disaster for the PUWP with Solidarity winning all 35 percent of the legislative seats that they were able to compete for. The size of Solidarity's victory and the subsequent divisions that appeared between the PUWP and its supporters eventually led to the appointment of the first non-Communist prime minister in Eastern Europe. The reason that Solidarity won all the seats in these elections had a lot to do with the electoral system that was chosen—a majority-runoff TRS. Because Solidarity turned out to have the largest support in each district, this electoral system translated the 70 percent of the vote won by Solidarity into 100 percent of the seats and the roughly 25 percent of the vote won by the PUWP into zero seats. Had the PUWP adopted a proportional electoral system, though, the outcome of the elections would have been very different.

So why did the PUWP not adopt a proportional system? One reason has to do with the PUWP's belief that it had sufficient support to win seats in a majoritarian system. A second reason, however, has to do with the fact that the PUWP did not want to legalize any additional political parties. The maximum concession the PUWP was willing to make during the negotiations was to legalize Solidarity as a trade union; Poland was to remain a one-party

state. As a result, the PUWP refused to consider adopting any electoral system that required individuals to vote for parties rather than candidates. At the time, the PUWP believed that all proportional systems required the presence of political parties. As you now know from reading this chapter, this is not true. The STV is a proportional electoral system in which individuals vote for candidates. It appears that the PUWP was simply unaware that the STV system existed. In his article, Kaminski indicates that had the option of the STV come up, it would have been acceptable to both Solidarity and the PUWP. STV would have guaranteed a significant representation for Solidarity in the legislature and provided a greater margin of safety for the PUWP. It seems likely that with a more proportional allocation of seats, as would have occurred under an STV system, the PUWP may have been able to hold on to power and not had to appoint a prime minister from Solidarity.

This leads to an interesting counterfactual question that one might ask. What would have happened to communism in Eastern Europe had the PUWP adopted a proportional STV system in 1989 rather than the majoritarian TRS? What we know is that the collapse of communism in Poland had a snowball effect, to a large extent, on the rest of the Eastern bloc; a different course of events in Poland could perhaps have restrained the breakdown of the Communist regime. This leads one to wonder whether communism in Eastern Europe could have been saved if the political leaders in Poland had only been more aware of the information on electoral systems presented in this chapter.

After the Polish version of Kaminski's article was published, he received several letters from Premier Tadeusz Mazowiecki and other Solidarity leaders. Below, we list some of the more emotional responses that he received from former Communist dignitaries.

Jerzy Urban (former Communist spokesman, number 4 in Poland in the 1980s):

You are absolutely right that we did not read the surveys properly . . . we were ignorant about various electoral laws . . . probably nobody knew STV. . . . I distributed copies of your paper among General Jaruzelski, Premier Rakowski, and [the present] President Kwasniewski.

Hieronim Kubiak (former Politburo member, top political adviser):

The negative heroes of Kaminski's article are the "ignoramus"—we, communist experts. . . . [He thinks that the communist regime could have survived] if General Jaruzelski had known the STV electoral law and if he had chosen differently!

Janusz Reykowski (former Politburo member, the designer of the 1989 electoral law):

[The value of Kaminski's work] is in showing that technical political decisions [that is, the choice of the electoral law] may have fundamental importance for a historical process.

Maria Terese Kiszczałk (the wife of General Czesław Kiszczałk, number 2 in Poland in the 1980s):

You based your story on the bourgeois literature. . . . [C]ommunists did not really want to keep power. . . . [My husband] resisted a temptation to cancel the 1989 elections and to seize power.

system will be in their self-interest. It is partially for this reason that Birch (2003) claims that East European leaders often chose electoral systems less to maximize seat share than to promote general interest concerns and minimize risk.

External pressures and historical precedent help to explain why other countries have the electoral system that they do. For example, the particular electoral system adopted by many countries is heavily influenced by their former colonial ruler (Blais and Massicotte 1997). Nearly every African country that employs an SMDP system is a former British colony, and the former French colonies of the Central African Republic, Comoros, and Mali all use the TRS adopted by the French Fifth Republic; the former colonies of Portugal (Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe) and Italy (Somalia) use proportional electoral systems (Golder and Wantchekon 2004, 408). Similar to African countries, Iraq and Afghanistan adopted their current electoral rules as the result of pressure from a victorious invading power. Other countries appear to have adopted a particular electoral system for the simple reason that they have had some previous historical experience with it. For example, there is some evidence that the newly democratic Czechoslovakia chose a proportional electoral system in 1990 because it had used a similar system in the interwar period. Similarly, France's adoption of a TRS in 1958 can perhaps be traced back to its use in the Second Empire (1852–1870) and much of the Third Republic (1870–1940; Benoit 2004, 370).

It appears that some electoral systems are even chosen by accident. As an example, consider the following description from Benoit (2007, 376–377) of how New Zealand came to adopt a mixed electoral system in 1993.

In a now famous incident of electoral reform through accident, ruling parties in New Zealand found themselves bound to implement a sweeping electoral reform that traced back in essence to a chance remark, later described as a gaffe, by Prime Minister David Lange during a televised debate. In New Zealand, the use of first-past-the-post [SMDP] had virtually guaranteed a two-party duopoly of the Labor Party and the National Party, producing continuous single-party majority governments since 1914—often cited as the textbook example of the “majoritarian” or Westminster type of democracy (Nagel 2004). Grassroots dissatisfaction with the electoral system began in the 1970s among Maori and minor-party supporters who consistently found it difficult to obtain any representation, and increased with the 1978 and 1981 elections, in which Labor received a plurality of the vote yet National won a majority of the seats. This led Labor to pledge in the 1980s to establish a Royal Commission to reappraise the electoral law. The commission compared many options and finally recommended the “mixed-member plurality” (MMP) system combining single-member districts with lists, although the majority of Labor’s Members of Parliament opposed this system. Because the commission was politically independent and had very broad terms of reference, its considerations were disconnected from the strategic considerations of any particular party. After the commission’s report, “horrified politicians of both parties attempted to put the genie of reform back in the bottle” (Nagel 2004, 534). This succeeded for six years, until the televised leaders’ debate in which Labor Prime Minister David Lange inadvertently promised to hold a binding referendum on electoral reform in response to a question from the leader of the Electoral Reform Coalition. Labor initially refused to honor this pledge when elected in 1987, but after the

National Party politically exploited the incident as a broken promise, both parties promised a referendum in their 1990s manifestos. The National Party elected in 1990 finally held a referendum on electoral system reform in 1992, in which voters rejected the existing first-past-the-post system by 84.7 percent in favor of an MMP alternative (70.5 percent) (Roberts 1997). New Zealand's long-standing first-past-the-post system owes its changeover to the mixed-member system not so much to "a revolution from below [as to] an accident from above" (Rudd and Taichi 1994, p. 11, quoted in Nagel 2004).

CONCLUSION

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, almost every country in the world has had some experience with holding national-level elections in the postwar period. This is true of both democracies and dictatorships. As Appendix B indicates, only seven out of 188 independent countries were not holding national-level legislative elections as of 2004. Although elections obviously play a minimal role in choosing who rules in dictatorships, growing evidence suggests that authoritarian elections are not merely forms of institutional window dressing. Dictatorial elections appear to matter, although probably not in the way that most democratic reformers around the world would like. Rather than encourage ongoing reforms and an eventual transition to democracy, the weight of existing evidence suggests that authoritarian elections are designed to stabilize dictatorial rule. In dictatorships, as the former president of Uganda, Milton Obote (1966–1971, 1980–1985), said many years ago, elections are a way of controlling the people rather than being a means through which they can control the leader (Cohen 1983). In contrast, elections are one of the defining characteristics of democracies and they provide the primary mechanism by which democratic governments obtain the authority to rule from the people.

Although there is a great deal of variety in the types of electoral systems that are employed around the world, most political scientists tend to classify electoral systems into three main families, depending on the electoral formula that is used to translate votes into seats: majoritarian, proportional, and mixed. In this chapter, we illustrated how these electoral systems work in some detail. We are often asked whether there is a single electoral system that is better than all of the others. As our discussion indicates, though, each electoral system has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, some electoral systems promote proportionality but lower the ability of voters to hold representatives accountable. Others allow voters to more accurately convey their sincere preferences but are complicated for individuals to understand and costly for electoral agencies to administer. In an echo of our comments from Chapter 10, there is no perfect electoral system—there are always trade-offs to be made.

Of course, you may be more willing to make certain trade-offs than others. Perhaps you think proportionality is the key criteria for evaluating different electoral systems and are less concerned with having a close link between the representative and his constituents. When we think about the actual adoption of an electoral system, though, we need to stop and ask what is in the interests of the actors involved in choosing the electoral system. Rather than thinking about which electoral system is best at meeting some objective criteria that we might care about, such as proportionality, we now need to think of which electoral systems are politi-

cally feasible, given the preferences of the actors involved. We can then try to choose the “best” electoral system from within the set of politically feasible electoral systems.

As we noted earlier, electoral systems are distributive mechanisms that reward one set of actors at the expense of another. This means that no electoral system is a winning situation for everyone involved. This has important consequences for any budding electoral reformers among you. It is nearly always the case that the political actors who won under the existing electoral system are the ones who are in a position to determine whether electoral reform should take place. Given that these actors won under the existing system, they are unlikely to be willing to reform the electoral system except in ways that solidify their ability to win in the future. Only when there is some impending threat to their continued electoral success, as was the case with conservative parties at the beginning of the twentieth century when the right to vote was extended to the working class, are they likely to consider major electoral reform. Although many people in the United States complain about the existing SMDP electoral system and advocate for the adoption of a more proportional one, we suggest that they not hold their breath. Why would either the Democratic or Republican parties choose to adopt a more proportional electoral system that would hurt their chances to be reelected and help smaller political parties? Of course, as the New Zealand case that we just described illustrates, electoral reform can happen “by accident.”

In the next chapter, we discuss how electoral systems affect the size of the party system. Why do some countries have few parties but others have many? As we will demonstrate, whether a country has few or many parties depends to a great extent on the proportionality of the electoral system that is employed. It also depends on the social and ethnic makeup of a country. This last point forces us to think about which social and ethnic differences in a country become politicized.

KEY CONCEPTS

- alternative vote (AV), 477
- apparentement, 501
- ballot structure, 464
- block vote (BV), 492
- Borda count (BC), 478
- closed party list, 502
- cumulation, 506
- dependent mixed electoral system, 513
- district magnitude, 464
- divisor, or highest average, system, 498
- electoral formula, 464
- electoral system, 464
- electoral threshold, 501
- electoral tier, 500
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- independent mixed electoral system, 511
- list PR system, 495
- majoritarian electoral system, 473
- mixed electoral system, 511
- modified Borda count, 479
- natural threshold, 501
- open party list, 502
- panachage, 506
- party block vote, 492
- preference, or preferential, voting, 477
- proportional, or proportional representation, electoral system, 493
- quota, 495
- single-member district plurality system, 474
- single nontransferable vote, 490
- single transferable vote, 507
- supplementary vote, 488
- two-round system (TRS), 484
- universal suffrage, 468

PROBLEMS

The following problems address various issues relating to electoral systems that were raised in this chapter.

Electoral System Design

1. What criteria do you think are important for evaluating electoral systems? Explain and justify your answer.
2. Electoral formulas are rules that allow us to translate votes into seats. As we note in the chapter, the rationale behind proportional representation (PR) electoral systems is that they should produce highly proportional outcomes. In other words, the percentage of seats that a party wins should accurately reflect the percentage of votes that it receives. Proportionality is often taken as a criterion of an electoral system's "fairness." However, it is not always clear how to design a system that produces "fair" results even when we employ multimember districts. We now provide an example in which you can try for yourself. In Table 12.18, we present actual results from the 2005 Norwegian legislative elections for the Oslo district. Seventeen seats were allocated to Oslo. Answer the following questions (based on a modified series of questions asked by Professor Kaare Strøm, University of California, San Diego).

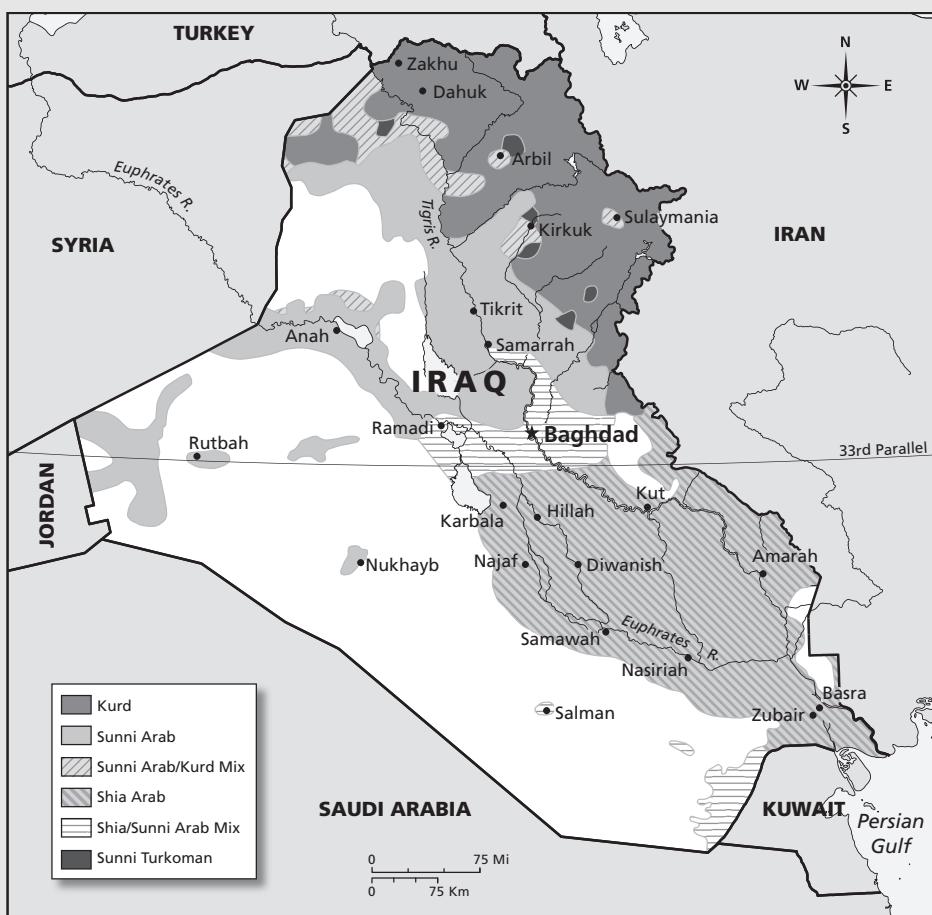
TABLE 12.18**Legislative Elections in Oslo, Norway, 2005**

Party	Votes (no.)	Votes (%)	Seats (no.)
Center Party (SP)	3,270	1.1	
Christian People's Party (KrF)	11,168	3.6	
Coast Party (Kyst)	551	0.2	
Conservative Party (H)	61,130	19.8	
Labour Party (Ap)	97,246	31.5	
Left Party (V)	28,639	9.3	
Socialist Left Party (SV)	41,434	13.4	
Progress Party (FrP)	53,280	17.3	
Other	12,116	3.9	
Total	308,834	100	17

- a. Copy Table 12.18. Now decide how you would allocate the seventeen seats between the parties. Put the number of seats you give to each party in your table.
- b. Explain your method and attempt to justify how you arrived at your distribution of seats among the parties. Are there any problems with fairness that would arise from the seat allocation that you suggest?

- c. How would your choice be affected if there were only three seats in Oslo instead of seventeen? What if there were thirty seats instead of fifteen? Under what conditions would it be easier to produce a "fairer" outcome?
3. Iraq is an ethnically and religiously diverse country. See Map 12.1, which illustrates the geographic location and size of Iraq's different ethnic groups. In December 2005, Iraqis elected 275 legislators to the Iraq Council of Representatives. Answer the following questions.
- a. The electoral system used for the 2005 legislative elections in Iraq was a list PR system. Use Internet resources to find out more detailed information about the electoral system. For example, how many districts and electoral tiers were there? How many legislators

MAP 12.1

Ethnoreligious Groups of Iraq

were elected in each district? What type of party list was employed? Did the Iraqis use a quota or divisor system? What type of quota and remainder system or what type of divisor method was employed? Were there any other special features of the Iraqi electoral system?

- b. Given the ethnically diverse character of Iraq, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the electoral system that was adopted?
- c. If you were in charge of designing an electoral system for Iraq, what would it be and why?

How Do Electoral Systems Work?

4. In Table 12.19 we again show the results from the Oslo district in the 2005 Norwegian elections. Answer the following questions.

TABLE 12.19

**Legislative Elections in Oslo, Norway, 2005
(Using Quota Systems)**

	Party									
	SP	KrF	Kyst	H	Ap	V	SV	FrP	Others	Total
Votes	3,270	11,168	551	61,130	97,246	28,639	41,434	53,280	12,116	308,834
Seats										17
Quota										
Votes/quota										
Automatic seats										
Remainder										
Remainder seats										
Total seats										

- a. Copy Table 12.19. Imagine that the seventeen seats in Oslo are to be allocated according to the Hare quota with largest remainders. Fill in your table and indicate how Oslo's seventeen seats are allocated among the parties. How many automatic, remainder, and total seats does each party obtain?
- b. Now make another table like Table 12.19 and repeat the process using the Droop quota with largest remainders. Does the allocation of seats change?
5. In Table 12.20, we again show the same results from the Oslo district in the 2005 Norwegian elections. Answer the following questions.

TABLE 12.20**Legislative Elections in Oslo, Norway, 2005
(Using Divisor Systems)**

Party	Party									
	SP	KrF	Kyst	H	Ap	V	SV	FrP	Others	Total
Votes										
3,270	11,168	551	61,130	97,246	28,639	41,434	53,280	12,116	308,834	
Divisors										Quotients
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
Total seats										

- Copy Table 12.20. Imagine that the seventeen seats in Oslo are to be allocated according to the d'Hondt divisor method. Show the different quotients that are calculated when you divide each party's vote total by the d'Hondt divisors in your table. How many seats does each party obtain?
- Now repeat the process using the St. Lagüe divisor method and then the Modified St. Lagüe divisor method. Note that you will need to change the integers used to estimate the quotients. How many seats does each party obtain under these divisor systems?
- Are there any differences if you examine the seat allocations from the two quota systems and the three divisor systems? Does one method produce a more proportional or fairer outcome in your opinion than another?

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CHAPTER

5

SOCIAL CLEAVAGES AND PARTY SYSTEMS

**BY WILLIAM ROBERTS CLARK, MATT GOLDER AND SONA NADENICHECK
GOLDER**

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Social Cleavages and Party Systems

Party is organized opinion.

Benjamin Disraeli

- Political scientists sometimes categorize democracies in terms of the type of party system that they exhibit. When they do this, they typically distinguish between party systems based on the number and size of the parties that they contain.
- A political party is an organization that includes officials who hold office and people who help get and keep them there. Parties help to structure the political world, recruit and socialize the political elite, mobilize the masses, and provide a link between rulers and the ruled.
- In this chapter, we examine why some party systems are divided primarily along ethnic lines, whereas others are divided mainly along class, religious, linguistic, or regional ones. We also investigate why some countries have few parties and others have many. As we will see, the general structure of a country's party system results from the complex interplay of both social and institutional forces.

In addition to classifying democracies according to the type of government that they have or the type of electoral system that they employ, political scientists sometimes categorize democracies by the type of party system that they exhibit. Although there are obviously many facets to a party system that one might examine, political scientists often focus on the number and size of the parties in a country. As a result, you will frequently see scholars distinguish between democracies that have a two-party system, like the United States, and democracies that have a multiparty system, like the Netherlands. Although the type of government and electoral system in a country is nearly always enshrined in a constitution or some other legal document, this is not the case for the type of party system (Stokes 1999, 245). Instead, party systems take the form that they do as a result of the evolving nature of political competition in each country. Like the structure of an economic market or the grammar of a language, the structure of a country's party system is not intentionally designed by particular individuals; rather, it arises from the complex interplay of decisions made by such actors as party leaders and voters. We will suggest in this chapter that socioeconomic forces largely drive the structure of a country's party system, but we will also demonstrate that these forces are channeled in powerful and important ways by the kinds of political institutions that we have examined in the last two chapters. In effect, the structure of a country's party system results from the complex interplay of both social and institutional forces.

We begin this chapter by asking what a party is and what a party does. After briefly describing the different types of party system that exist around the world, we then explore the social and institutional factors that interact to influence both the number and types of parties that exist in a country. As such, our goal is to help explain why some countries have few parties but others have many, and why some party systems are divided primarily along ethnic lines and others are divided mainly along class, religious, linguistic, or regional ones.

POLITICAL PARTIES: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

A **political party** can be thought of as a group of people that includes those who hold office and those who help get and keep them there.

A **political party** “is a group of officials or would-be officials who are linked with a sizeable group of citizens into an organization; a chief object of this organization is to ensure

that its officials attain power or are maintained in power” (Shively 2001, 234). As this definition suggests, a political party comprises a broad collection of actors that can range from officials who actually attain power to individuals who regularly vote for the party and people who contribute money or time to campaign for a party member. In other words, a party can be thought of as a group of people that includes those who hold office and those who help get and keep them there. One of the primary goals of political parties is to attain power; it is this goal that differentiates them from interest groups. In contrast to political parties, interest groups, such as the National Rifle Association, the American Medical Association, and Greenpeace, are organizations that attempt to influence policy without actually taking power.

One thing to note about the definition that we have just given is that political parties are not restricted to democracies or electoral activity. As we saw in Chapter 12, political parties exist in many dictatorships around the world. Some of these parties, such as Communist parties in China and Cuba, control the levers of power without holding national-level elections. That some dictatorships have chosen to have political parties even in the absence of elections should immediately alert you to the fact that political parties can serve important purposes beyond simply helping officials get elected to power.

Political parties perform many important functions that are crucial to the operation of modern political systems in both democracies and dictatorships. In what follows, we focus on (a) how political parties structure the political world, (b) how they recruit and socialize the political elite, (c) how they mobilize the masses, and (d) how they provide a link between rulers and the ruled (Shively 2001).

Political Parties Structure the Political World

Political parties help to structure the political world for both political elites and the masses. For the elites, political parties provide some kind of order to the policymaking process. Imagine, for a moment, a world in which there are no political parties. In other words, imagine a world in which every legislator is an independent with no institutionalized link to other legislators. Given that legislators must make policy decisions in numerous issue areas and that there is likely to be disagreement over which policies are most appropriate, the outcome of the policymaking process in this type of environment is probably going to be highly chaotic and unstable. You will no doubt recall that this is precisely the prediction that we saw in Chapter 10 when we examined the Chaos Theorem and Arrow's (1963) Impossibility Theorem. Political parties help to overcome some of these problems by coordinating the actions of individual legislators and simplifying the issue space. In effect, parties help to provide structure to an otherwise unstable policymaking process. Aldrich (1995) argues that the need to coordinate votes on many issues among congressional representatives with similar, but not identical, preferences is precisely the explanation for why political parties were formed in the United States in the eighteenth century.

Just as for elites, political parties also structure the political world for voters. One way in which they do this is by providing "information shortcuts" to voters (Downs 1957; Fiorina 1981). Voters seldom have the opportunity, time, energy, or even the inclination to gather information about particular political issues. For these uninformed voters, party labels and party attachments can be an information shortcut in the sense that these things tell voters how to feel about certain issues. In effect, voters might decide that they are against a particular piece of legislation not because they have read up on it and realized that it is not in their interests but simply because the party to which they feel attached dislikes it. In many ways, one's political identity is frequently tied up with one's **party identification** (Campbell et al. 1960). Campbell et al. (1986, 100) note this when they describe "party identification [as] an attachment to a party that helps the citizen

Party identification is an attachment to a party that helps citizens locate themselves on the political landscape.

locate him/herself and others on the political landscape.” For example, simply admitting to being a Democrat or a Republican in the United States or a Labour or Conservative supporter in the United Kingdom can convey a lot of information about a person’s likely stance on a whole host of different issues. All of this helps to explain why so many people seem to view politics in terms of the fortunes of political parties rather than the fate of political issues.

Recruitment and Socialization of the Political Elite

In addition to structuring the political world, parties play an important role in recruiting and socializing the political elite. In many countries, it is extremely difficult to get elected as an independent. In other words, being selected as a party’s candidate is often a necessary condition for a successful run for office. Similarly, cabinet positions are frequently restricted to senior members of a political party. In effect, “gaining access to political power requires being accepted by a party, and usually being a leading figure in it. Parties also socialize the political elite; most government ministers have spent a number of years as party members, working with other party members and learning to see the political world from the party’s perspective” (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006, 308). To see a more concrete example of this, consider the description Shively (2001, 238) gives of how an ambitious young woman interested in entering politics in Britain might behave.

[She] might work for a while at lesser tasks for one of the major parties, such as the Conservative Party. Before too long, if she were interested in standing for Parliament, she might be nominated from a district. To get the nomination, she would have to convince the local selection committee of the Conservative Party in that district that she was their best nominee. As a beginner, she would probably be selected in a hopeless district, where no Conservative had much of a chance; but once she had proved she could campaign well in one or two lost causes, she might get the nomination from a decent district, win, and enter the House. In the House, she would continue to be molded and guided by the party. If she were the sort that party leaders like—witty in debate, hard working, and above all a faithful party voter—she might advance into positions of real responsibility, such as party spokesperson on defense or on health. Eventually, she might aim so high as to be prime minister. To be selected for this position, she would have to win an internal election at which all the Conservative members of Parliament vote to choose their leader. Throughout this career, her advancement would have been primarily due to her support from her party organization, and she would have risen to the top only because she was the sort of person her party wanted and because, in each position she held, she had learned from the rest of the party how to behave in ways they preferred. This is essentially the only way to make a political career in Great Britain.

To some extent, the role played by parties in recruiting and socializing the political elite is more important in parliamentary democracies than in presidential ones. Although it is true that much of the political elite in presidential democracies will have worked their way into place through the apparatus of one political party or another, parties are not the

monopolistic gatekeepers to power that they frequently are in parliamentary systems. For example, our discussion of the government formation process in presidential democracies in Chapter 11 indicated that presidents are much more likely to appoint nonpartisan ministers to their cabinets than prime ministers are in parliamentary systems. If you recall, the reason for this is that the president has less need to negotiate with political parties in the legislature over the composition of the cabinet because the vote of no confidence is absent in presidential systems. Presidential regimes that allow for primaries, like the United States, and, increasingly, many Latin American countries (Carey and Polga-Hecimovich 2006, 2007), further weaken the role that political parties play in recruiting and socializing the political elite. By allowing candidates to appeal directly to the voters rather than rely on party leaders, primaries can allow candidates with little political or party experience to win elections. The existence of primary elections is often posited as the key reason for the organizational weakness of political parties and the dominance of candidate-centered, rather than party-centered, electoral campaigns in the United States (Aldrich 1995). In presidential democracies, it is even possible for complete political outsiders to win the presidency. This is precisely what happened when the academic and TV presenter Alberto Fujimori surprisingly won the 1990 presidential elections in Peru. The election of such a candidate to a position equivalent to that of prime minister in a parliamentary democracy is almost unthinkable. That political parties do not exert the same degree of control over the recruitment and socialization of the political elite across different types of democracy suggests that the political direction of leaders in presidential democracies is inclined to be inherently less stable and more unpredictable than that of political leaders in parliamentary democracies (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006, 308).

Just as political parties play an important role in recruiting and socializing the political elite in democracies, they can perform a similar function in dictatorships. Consider the role that the Communist Party (CPSU) played in the former Soviet Union. For all intents and purposes, membership in the CPSU was a necessary condition for becoming part of the political, economic, and academic ruling class—the *nomenklatura* (Gershenson and Grossman 2001). Describing the Soviet nomenklatura in the 1980s, Voslensky (1984, 98) writes, “While a party card is of course no guarantee of success, lack of it is a guarantee that you will not have a career of any kind.” Power and authority increased the higher one rose in the party, as did the monetary and nonmonetary benefits. For example, members of the nomenklatura got to enjoy many of the things that were denied to the average citizen—they got to shop in well-stocked stores, they had access to foreign goods, and, more important, they were allowed to travel abroad. As George Orwell ([1949] 1977, 192) describes in his book *1984*,

By the standards of the early twentieth century, even a member of the Inner Party lives an austere, laborious kind of life. Nevertheless, the few luxuries that he does enjoy—his large well-appointed flat, the better texture of his clothes, the better quality of his food and drink and tobacco, his two or three servants, his private motorcar or helicopter—set him in a different world from a member of the Outer Party, and the members of the Outer Party have a similar advantage in comparison with the submerged masses.

As citizens gained membership into the CPSU and advanced up its ranks, they would be increasingly socialized into following the party line; demonstrating loyalty to the party was crucial to gaining and retaining the benefits of power associated with membership in the nomenklatura.

Mobilization of the Masses

Political parties are also key tools for mobilizing the masses. This is particularly important at election time, when ordinary citizens need to be encouraged to turn out to vote. A large literature in political science suggests that people will not necessarily choose to vote given that turning out to vote is costly—it takes time, they could be doing something else, it might be raining, and so on—and the likelihood that anyone's individual vote will determine the outcome of the election is incredibly small (Aldrich 1993; Gomez, Hansford, and Krause 2007). This suggests that organizations such as political parties have a significant role to play in getting people to the polls (Morton 1991; Uhlaner 1989). Political parties are well-placed to carry out this role because they are likely to have membership and organizational structures that extend deeply into each constituency. Moreover, they have a strong incentive to get people (at least particular people) to the polls—they want to win elections. In a one-party dictatorship like the Soviet Union, there was obviously no need for the Communist Party (CPSU) to mobilize the electorate in order to win elections—it was guaranteed to win. The CPSU did many of the same things that political parties do in democracies to encourage voter turnout, however, because it wanted to generate a good show and enhance the legitimacy of the regime (Shively 2001, 237). It is worth noting that political parties in democracies also frequently play this role as well—they encourage general voter turnout in an attempt to build support for the democratic regime as a whole.

The ability of political parties to mobilize the masses can be important even when elections are not being held. For example, French president Charles de Gaulle used his Gaullist Party to help mobilize party supporters against student and worker protests in 1968 (Lacouture 1986, 719–720). What was originally a relatively small, student-led protest soon got out of hand as police used tear gas, water cannons, mass arrests, and beatings to disperse the protesting students. In an attempt to take advantage of the situation, the French trade unions went out on the streets and formed an alliance with the students. Over a two-week period, as many as ten million workers went on strike. The student protest quickly became a social crisis that seemed to threaten the very existence of the French Fifth Republic. De Gaulle, who had initially kept a low profile as events developed, finally delivered a radio address that preyed on the French people's fears of a Communist revolution. He said that he would dissolve the National Assembly, that he would hold new elections, and that the country was "threatened with dictatorship, that of totalitarian communism." He also called on the people to come to the defense of the republic against the "Communist" students and workers. As Hitchcock (2003, 251) notes, "Within an hour of de Gaulle's address, crowds began to form on the place de la Concorde. . . . Perhaps as many as half a million people poured out of their homes into the streets, and marched up the Champs-Elysées behind the major polit-

ical leaders of the Gaullist and right-wing parties.” In the new elections that took place about a month later, the electorate gave a huge majority to the Gaullist candidates.

The previous example illustrates how political parties might be used to mobilize the masses in support of a regime, but there are numerous other instances in which parties are used to mobilize people *against* the ruling order. For example, the main opposition movement against the rule of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe comes from the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which is an opposition party established in 1999 by the trade unionist Morgan Tsvangirai. The MDC has frequently organized street protests against the government’s failure to address the crumbling economy and mounting food shortages.



Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change opposition party, addressing about 3,000 supporters at an election rally in the border town of Mutare, Zimbabwe, about 300 kilometers (186 miles) east of Harare, Sunday June 4, 2000. The MDC said the then-recent farm takeovers and plans for immediate land redistribution were aimed at bolstering President Robert Mugabe’s flagging popularity and to punish white farmers for supporting the opposition.

Political parties and their leaders were also the central mobilizing forces behind the protests against Ukrainian authorities from November 2004 to January 2005 that became known as the Orange Revolution. These protests started after presidential elections in which the authorities were deemed by many to have engaged in widespread corruption, voter intimidation, and electoral fraud to help Viktor Yanukovych come to power. Viktor Yushchenko, the leader of Our Ukraine, and his party supporters refused to recognize the results of these elections and helped to organize demonstrations. Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, became the focal point for the opposition movement with thousands of protesters demonstrating daily in the city. On some days, the number of protesters in the center of Kiev reached into the hundreds of thousands; one million by some estimates.

Across the country, the opposition movement led by Yushchenko and his party organized sit-ins and general strikes. Following thirteen days of protests, the Ukrainian Supreme Court overturned the election results and ordered a rerun of the presidential elections, which Viktor Yushchenko eventually won with 51.99 percent of the vote. Other examples of political parties mobilizing the masses against the ruling regime include the Congress Party in India and the National Front for Liberation in Algeria. Both of these parties were originally established as a means to mobilize the masses against British and French colonial rule (Shively 2001, 237).

The Link between Rulers and the Ruled

Political parties provide a link between rulers and the ruled. According to most democratic theorists, democratic governments are supposed to reflect the preferences of their citizens (Mill [1861] 1991; Dahl 1956; Pitkin 1967). As discussed in Chapter 11 in our examination of

the government formation process, the political party is the primary vehicle ensuring that citizen preferences are reflected in government policy. In fact, it is probably the central function of a political party in a democracy to represent, articulate, and champion the interests and political causes of its membership. Political parties are also the main means by which democracies can be induced to be responsive. Some people claim that “political parties created democracy . . . modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties” (Schattschneider 1942, 3). In democracies, it should be possible for the people to hold elected leaders accountable for their actions in office. The problem is that government policy is frequently determined by the collective actions of many officeholders. As a collective group, the political party provides the main means by which voters can hold elected officials responsible for what they do collectively. Fiorina (1980, 26) goes so far as to write, “[T]he only way collective responsibility has ever existed, and can exist . . . is through the agency of the political party.”

It is important to recognize that the link that parties create between officials and citizens runs both ways. We have just described the political party as an organization that citizens can use to control the actions of officials and hold them responsible for what they do in office, but we should recognize that political parties can also help officials exert control over other political actors and citizens as well. For example, party leaders have many carrots and sticks at their disposal that they can use to deliberately force the obedience of legislators when it comes to voting in the legislature. Party leaders can use promotion within the party, promises of campaign resources, threats of expulsion, and the like to induce legislators to vote the

A **whip** is an individual whose job it is to ensure that members of the party attend legislative sessions and vote as the party leadership desires.

“right” way on pieces of legislation. Most political parties have an individual called a **whip**, whose job it is to ensure that members of the party attend legislative sessions and vote as the

Box 13.1

PARTY WHIPS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The term *whip* to describe someone who ensures that party members attend legislative sessions and vote as the party leadership desires originated in the English Parliament in the 1880s. The term derives from the “whipper-in” at a fox hunt, whose job it is to keep the pack together and prevent the hounds from running riot. As you can imagine, the role of the whips is particularly important when the voting strengths of the government and the opposition are close as they were in the Parliament between 1992 and 1997. The duties of whips include (a) keeping legislators informed of forthcoming parliamentary business, (b) maintaining the party’s voting strength by ensuring that members attend important debates and vote as the party leadership desires, and (c) passing on the opinions of legislators to the party leadership. Each of the three major parties in the United Kingdom—the Conservatives, the Labour Party, and the Liberals—have a chief whip, a deputy chief whip, and a varying number of junior whips. The government chief whip has the formal title of parliamentary secretary to the treasury; he is directly answerable to the prime minister, attends cabinet meetings, and makes the day-to-day arrangements for the government’s program of business.

The term *whip* also applies to a weekly circular sent out by each party's whips to all their Members of Parliament notifying them of parliamentary business and the schedule for the days ahead. This circular includes the sentence "Your attendance is absolutely essential" next to each debate in which there will be a vote. The degree of importance of each debate is indicated by the number of times this sentence is underlined. Sentences that are underlined once are considered routine and attendance is optional. Those that are underlined twice are more important and attendance is required unless a "pair"—a member of the Opposition who also intends to be absent from the debate—has been arranged. Those that are underlined three times are highly important and pairing is not normally allowed. The number of underlines determines whether there is a one-line, two-line, or three-line whip on a vote. Three-line whips are imposed on important occasions, such as for votes of no confidence and the second reading of significant bills.

The consequences of defying the party leadership depend on the circumstances surrounding a vote and are usually negotiated with the party whips in advance. Cabinet ministers who defy the whips are immediately dismissed, assuming that they have not already resigned. The consequences for defying the party whip for a backbencher—someone who is not in the cabinet or the "shadow" cabinet of the Opposition—can include being overlooked for future promotions to a cabinet post, being given little support by the party organization when seeking reelection, being de-selected by local party activists or moved to a different, and less safe, constituency seat, or being expelled from the party altogether. Failure by MPs to attend a vote with a three-line whip is usually treated as a rebellion against the party and, theoretically, leads to suspension from the party. As an example, nine Conservative MPs were suspended from the party in 1994 when they voted against the position of John Major's government regarding the European Union.

Party whips can be extremely forceful in obtaining the votes of their backbenchers, even engaging in "blackmail, verbal intimidation, sexual harassment and physical aggression" from time to time to force some unpopular votes (Dixon 1996, 160). Occasionally, whips bring in very sick MPs for what are sometimes referred to as "death" or "stretcher" votes. For example, Labour Party whips brought in heart attack victims and an MP who had just had brain surgery to vote in an attempt to bring down the government of John Major in the 1990s. A former MP, Joe Ashton, refers to a similar case from the final days of James Callaghan's government (1976–1979).

I remember the famous case of Leslie Spriggs, the then Member for St. Helens. We had a tied vote and he was brought to the House in an ambulance having suffered a severe heart attack. The two Whips [from the Government and the Opposition] went out to look in the ambulance and there was Leslie Spriggs laid there as though he was dead. I believe that John Stradling Thomas said to Joe Harper, "How do we know that he is alive?" So he leaned forward, turned the knob on the heart machine, the green light went around, and he said, "There, you've lost—it's 311." [The vote had been tied 310–310.] That is an absolutely true story. It is the sort of nonsense that used to happen. No one believes it, but it is true.

party leadership desires. Although the power of whips varies from country to country, whips are frequently some of the most important political actors in a country. The importance of whips often goes unrecognized by the public because these actors rarely appear in the media, at least in their capacity as whips.

Political parties can also be used to control the behavior of actual citizens. As you might suspect, this is much more common in dictatorships than in democracies. As Friedrich and Brzezinski (1961, 29) put it in their book on dictatorships, “the role of the party [is] to provide a following for the dictator.” Single-party dictatorships frequently use the party organization as a means to control the citizenry. In exchange for perks, privileges, and prospects for career advancement, party members agree to mobilize popular support and supervise the behavior of people who are unwilling to identify themselves with the dictator. As an example, Gershenson and Grossman (2001) describe how the Communist Party in the Soviet Union used party membership to co-opt and repress various segments of society. In particular, they detail how the CPSU systematically eased and tightened the restrictions on who could become a member of the party to undermine potential opposition at different points in time. Hough (1980, 33) makes a similar point, claiming that “[t]he Soviet government has thus far been skillful in the way it has tied the fate of many individuals in the country to the fate of the regime. By admitting such a broad range of the educated public into the party, it has provided full opportunities for upward social mobility for those who avoid dissidence, while giving everyone in the managerial class reason to wonder what the impact of an anti-Communist revolution would be on him or her personally.”

A further illustration of how political parties can be used to control the masses comes from Przeworski and Gandhi (2006, 25).

Consider communist Poland. Even though in 1948 communists forced their major rival, the Polish Socialist Party, into a “merger,” thus creating the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), they tolerated a pre-war left-wing United Peasant Party (ZSL), a small private business party (SD), and a Catholic group with direct ties to Moscow. After 1956, two other Catholic groups were allowed to organize. Even though these parties functioned under separate labels in the legislature, they were presented to the voters as a single list, with all candidates approved by the communists. Hence, elections only ratified the distribution of parliamentary seats and the specific appointees of the Communist Party. One way to think of this “multipartism” is that it represented a menu of contracts, allowing people characterized by different political attitudes (and differing degrees of opportunism) to sort themselves out. Membership in each party entailed a different degree of identification with the regime: highest for members of the PUWP, lower for those joining the Peasant Party, the lowest for the Catholic groups. In exchange, these memberships offered varying amounts of perks and privileges, in the same order. Someone not willing to join the Communist Party, with the social opprobrium this membership evoked among Catholic peasants, may have joined the Peasant Party. This choice entailed a less direct commitment and fewer perks, but it did signify identification with the regime, and it did furnish perks and privileges. This separating equilibrium maximized support for the regime and visibly isolated those who were not willing to make any gesture of support.

Having examined what it is that political parties do, we now briefly describe the different types of party systems that are observed around the world.

PARTY SYSTEMS

As we noted at the beginning, political scientists sometimes categorize democracies in terms of the type of party system that they exhibit. When they do this, they typically distinguish between party systems by the number and size of the parties that they contain. In what follows, we identify five different types of party system: **nonpartisan democracy**, **single-party system**, **one-party dominant system**, **two-party system**, and **multiparty system**. Single-party systems exist only in dictatorships, and nonpartisan and one-party dominant systems are relatively rare in democracies. It is for this reason that political scientists usually distinguish between democracies on the basis of whether they have a two-party system, like the United States, or a multiparty system, like the Netherlands.

The existence of political parties is often seen as a necessary condition for the existence of modern democracy. For example, scholars have claimed that “parties are the core institution of democratic politics” (Lipset 1996), that “democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties” (Schattschneider 1942), and that “modern democracy is party democracy” (Katz 1980). Despite these claims, though, it turns out that a small handful of democracies in the world can be considered nonpartisan, that is, ones in which there are no official political parties. The absence of political parties may be because a law prohibits their existence or simply because they have yet to form. Historically, the administration of George Washington and the first few sessions of the U.S. Congress were nonpartisan. Today, the only democracies that can be considered nonpartisan are the small Pacific islands of Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, and Tuvalu (Anckar and Anckar 2000).¹ These islands have extremely small populations; Nauru, Palau, and Tuvalu all have fewer than 15,000 residents. Although nonpartisan democracies at the national level are extremely rare, a few countries have some nonpartisan governments at the subnational level. For example, the unicameral legislature of Nebraska is nonpartisan, as are some Swiss cantons and some Canadian territories.

In single-party systems, only one political party is legally allowed to hold power. Liberia is generally considered the first single-party state in the world. The True Whig Party ruled

A **nonpartisan democracy** is a democracy with no official political parties.

A **single-party system** is one in which only one political party is legally allowed to hold power.

A **one-party dominant system** is one in which multiple parties may legally operate but in which only one particular party has a realistic chance of gaining power.

A **two-party system** is one in which only two major political parties have a realistic chance of holding power.

A **multiparty system** is one in which more than two parties have a realistic chance of holding power.

1. Of these six countries, it is widely accepted that Micronesia, Palau, and Tuvalu are nonpartisan democracies. There is some disagreement, however, as to whether political parties have existed in certain periods in the other countries, particularly in Kiribati. Much depends on how one exactly defines a political party.

Liberia from 1878 to 1980, when it was ousted by a military coup. Current single-party states include such countries as China, Cuba, Eritrea, Laos, North Korea, Syria, Turkmenistan, and Vietnam. Although these party systems are called single-party systems, minor parties are sometimes allowed to exist. These minor parties, however, are always legally required to accept the leadership of the dominant party. As an example, consider our earlier discussion of single-party rule in Communist Poland. Although minor parties were allowed to coexist under separate labels in the legislature alongside the Polish Communist Party (PUWP), the candidates of these parties were always presented to the voters on a single PUWP party list; in other words, the candidates of the minor parties had to be approved by the PUWP ahead of time. All single-party systems occur in dictatorships.

In some countries, multiple parties are legally allowed to exist but only one party has a realistic chance of gaining power. States in which this is the case are said to have one-party dominant systems. Many of these one-party dominant systems occur in dictatorships. In these countries, the dictatorship might allow certain opposition parties to legally operate but they then use various means to prevent them from actually coming to power (Lust-Okar 2005). Examples of one-party dominant systems in dictatorships include the National Democratic Party (NDP) of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

Not all one-party dominant systems are necessarily undemocratic, though. For example, there are several cases of democracies in which a single party is dominant for long periods

of time. This dominance is normally attributed to things like long-running popularity, a divided opposition, the efficient use of patronage systems, and, occasionally, electoral fraud. Examples of one-party dominant systems in states that many consider, or considered, democratic include the African National Congress in South Africa since 1994, the Botswana Democratic Party in Botswana since 1966, the Democratic Party in the southern United States from the 1880s to the 1960s, the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan from 1955 to 1993, and the Congress Party in India from 1947 to 1977. Although a one-party dominant system is similar in many ways to a single-party system, “the availability of other active parties does guarantee that there will be fairly open discussion and debate, and it also provides for possible long-term flexibility and adjustment in the system” (Shively 2001, 249).



Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto (1996–1998) raises his hand to fellow Liberal Democratic Party members, who wore victory headbands, while campaigning ahead of upper house elections in 1998. Hashimoto was the leader of one of the largest factions within the ruling LDP through most of the 1990s and remained a powerful actor in Japanese politics until a scandal forced him to resign his leadership position in 2004.

Box 13.2**ONE-PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEMS IN JAPAN: THE CASE OF THE LDP**

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was the dominant political force in Japan from 1955 to 1993, regularly winning more than 50 percent of the vote and managing to form single-party majority governments throughout this period. Although the LDP can trace its roots back to the 1880s, it officially came into existence in 1955 when the Liberal Party and the Japan Democratic Party merged to form a united front against the popular Japan Socialist Party. Given the emerging cold war, the merger that led to the creation of the LDP was strongly supported by the United States. Indeed, the CIA spent millions of dollars over the following two decades to help the LDP win elections against the Communists and Socialists (*New York Times*, March 31, 1997).

Since its formation, the LDP has been a large party representing a broad spectrum of interests. The party has failed to espouse a well-defined ideology, however, which has led many to claim that the LDP might more accurately be considered a coalition of factions rather than a party. Throughout its history, there have been between six and thirteen different factions in the LDP. Every LDP member of parliament is typically associated with one of these factions and each faction is headed by a senior party figure. Faction leaders offer their followers such services as financial support during election campaigns and contact with influential bureaucrats and business people. Without these funds and contacts, it is extremely difficult for LDP legislators to survive politically. To a large extent, the sole thing that kept all of these factions together within the LDP tent was the desire to win elections and share in the spoils of office. Given the electoral dominance of the LDP from 1955 to 1993, much of the real struggle for political power in Japan during this period occurred between factions within the LDP rather than among the different Japanese parties. The central role of these factions has led some to joke that the LDP is neither liberal, nor democratic, nor even a party.

If you recall from our discussion of electoral systems in Chapter 12, Japan employed the single nontransferable vote (SNTV) to elect its legislators during the period of LDP dominance. As we noted at the time, SNTV creates incentives for intraparty fighting and factionalization because candidates from one party are competing not only against candidates from other parties in their district but also against candidates from their own party. One consequence of this was that LDP legislators went to enormous lengths to cultivate personal reputations in their districts to differentiate themselves from competing LDP candidates (Cox and Niou 1994). This led scholars to conclude that Japan was characterized by the most candidate-centered politics of any democracy in the world during this period of time (Reed and Thies 2000).

As Hirano (2005, 8) notes, LDP legislators were notorious for engaging in constituency service and targeting subsidy (pork) allocations to their districts. "The constituency services, which are organized through the candidates' personal support networks (*koenkai*), provide a wide range of events for the constituents, such as local fund raisers, study groups, cultural events (such as sumo matches), tours of the Diet [parliament], and in some cases trips to hot springs. LDP candidates were also expected to perform personal favors for their constituents, such as providing monetary gifts at weddings and funerals, helping with job or school placement, and mediating disputes between constituents." Hirano (2005, 9) goes on to describe Tanaka

Kakuei as the most extreme example of a candidate's using services and pork provision to cater to his electorate. For example, he writes that "one of Tanaka's final activities while in office was to take 11,000 people to Nukumi hot springs in Yamagata prefecture at a cost of \$1.4 million (Richardson 1997, 28). He is also known for bringing Japan's high speed rail line to his home prefecture, a project that took 11 years to build at a cost of millions of dollars per kilometer. Four of the eight bullet train stops are in Tanaka's home prefecture, and two of the stops are less than 14 miles apart (Schlesinger 1997, 104)."

The importance and pervasiveness of personal ties between LDP legislators and their faction leaders, as well as between LDP legislators and their constituents, created a strong, multilayered patronage structure in which large numbers of people had incentives to preserve the LDP's political dominance. The success of the LDP's system "depended less on generalized mass appeals than on the three 'bans': *jiban* (a strong, well-organized constituency), *kaban* (a briefcase full of money), and *kanban* (prestigious appointments, particularly on the cabinet level)" (Dolan and Worden 1994). The LDP's modus operandi led to numerous corruption and bribery scandals over the years. For example, several members of Japan's political, business, and underworld classes were involved in the 1976 Lockheed bribery scandal, when Japanese prime minister Tanaka Kakuei was arrested for taking \$3 million in bribes from the U.S. aerospace company Lockheed during negotiations over the sale of aircraft.

In the wake of further corruption scandals and a strong downturn in the Japanese economy, the LDP's hold on power finally ended in the 1993 elections when a coalition of opposition parties entered office. Prior to these elections, more than fifty LDP members had left the party to form the Shinseito and Sakigake parties. This was enough to prevent the LDP from obtaining the legislative majority it needed to form the government. In 1994 a package of reform laws was introduced that was specifically designed to reduce corruption. Not only did these laws create a new electoral system, but they also introduced a public subsidy program to fund political parties and stricter regulations for political donations. Despite these changes, it was not long before the LDP was back in power. In that same year, 1994, the Japan Socialist Party formed a coalition with the LDP, its former archrival, when several opposition parties left the government. In the 1996 elections, the LDP was triumphantly returned to power as the majority party. Although the LDP has lost some of its popularity since then, as of June 2008 it was still in power alongside the much smaller Buddhist New Komeito Party. The LDP remains by far the largest party in the lower house; however, during the July 2007 elections, it lost its majority status in the upper house.

A two-party system is one in which only two major political parties have a realistic chance of holding power. In democracies with this type of party system, nearly all elected offices are held by candidates endorsed by one of the two major parties; electoral success under the label of some third party, although not impossible, is extremely difficult. Examples of two-party systems include the systems in Jamaica, the United Kingdom, and the United States. As of 2006, 434 of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and 98 of the 100 seats in the U.S. Senate were controlled by either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party.

The 2007 elections in Jamaica resulted in all sixty legislative seats going to either the Jamaica Labour Party or the People's National Party. Although the United Kingdom has recently seen some electoral success for third parties, the two major parties—the Conservatives and Labour—still managed to win 86 percent of the legislative seats in the 2005 elections. Despite their name, virtually all two-party systems have many more than two parties competing for office. As of 2007, for instance, there were 185 registered political parties in England and 50 national-level parties in the United States with endorsed candidates. Both the United Kingdom and the United States, however, are traditionally seen as two-party systems because only the two major parties usually have any expectation of winning.

A multiparty system is one in which more than two political parties have a realistic chance of holding power, either separately or as part of a coalition. Most democracies have multiparty systems. Examples include France, Israel, and the Netherlands. In Table 13.1, we list those parties holding legislative seats in the 2006 Israeli Knesset. As you can see, the seats in the legislature are split among numerous political parties, with no single party coming close to obtaining a legislative majority. The coalition government formed by Israeli prime minister Olmert after the 2006 elections included his own Kadima Party, Labour, Shas, and Gil.

We have just described how political scientists frequently distinguish between democracies based on the number and size of the parties that exist. In general, they tend to distinguish between two-party and multiparty democracies. Rather than lump democracies into just these two categories, however, we might want to know how many parties there are in each country. This requires us to think about how we count political parties. It turns out that the most appropriate way of doing this is not as obvious as you might think.

TABLE 13.1**Political Parties with Seats in the Israeli Knesset, 2006**

Political party	No. of seats
Kadima	29
Labour	19
Shas	12
Likud	12
Yisrael Beiteinu	11
National Union-National Religious Party	9
Gil	7
United Torah Judaism	6
Meretz-Yachad	5
United Arab List-Ta'al	4
Hadash	3
Balad	3
Total	120

You might think to count every party that contests national elections. If you did this, though, the number of parties in many countries would be extremely large and include “joke” parties, such as the “Mongolian Barbecue Great Place to Party” Party and the “Monster Raving Loony” Party in the United Kingdom, the “Church of the Militant Elvis” Party and the “Guns and Dope” Party—which advocates replacing one-third of Congress with ostriches—in the United States, the “Sun Ripened Warm Tomato” Party in Australia, and the “Beer Drinkers” Party in Russia (and many other countries). The problem is that a party system in which votes are divided evenly among ten parties is quite different from a system in which two parties get 90 percent of the votes with eight parties splitting the rest; this difference would be lost if we simply described both systems as “ten-party” systems.

The **effective number of parties** is a measure that captures both the number and size of parties in a country. The **effective number of electoral parties** is a measure of the number of parties that win votes. The **effective number of legislative parties** is a measure of the number of parties that win seats.

To take account of this, political scientists have frequently used a measure called the **effective number of parties** to count political parties (Laakso and Taagepera 1979). This measure counts each party that wins votes or seats, but it attaches to each party a weight that

is related to the share of votes or seats that it wins. The precise formula for the effective number of parties in a system in which four parties receive votes would be:

$$\text{effective number of parties} = \frac{1}{v_1^2 + v_2^2 + v_3^2 + v_4^2},$$

where v_1 is the vote share of party 1, v_2 is the vote share of party 2, and so on. If all four parties received the same percentage of votes (0.25), then the effective number of parties would be 4, that is,

$$\text{effective number of parties} = \frac{1}{0.25^2 + 0.25^2 + 0.25^2 + 0.25^2} = \frac{1}{0.25} = 4.$$

Contrast this with the situation in which two parties split 90 percent of the vote equally and the two other parties split the remaining 10 percent equally. In this situation, the effective number of parties would be 2.44, that is,

$$\text{effective number of parties} = \frac{1}{0.45^2 + 0.45^2 + 0.05^2 + 0.05^2} = \frac{1}{0.41} = 2.44.$$

The “effective number of parties” is a desirable measure if we think that this latter situation is more like a two-party system than a four-party one.

If we use the “vote share” of political parties to weight each party as we did in the example above, then we are measuring what political scientists call the **effective number of electoral parties**. This gives us a sense of how many parties earned votes and how the electorate’s

votes were distributed across the parties. If we use the “seat share” of political parties to weight each party, then we are measuring what political scientists call the **effective number of legislative parties**. This gives us a sense of how many parties won seats in the legislature and how those seats were distributed across the parties. In effect, both measures of the effective number of parties not only take account of the number, but also the size, of the parties in a country. Note that we can use the effective number of parties in a country to classify democracies as having two-party or multiparty systems. One common way to do this is to classify democracies as having a two-party system if the effective number of parties is less than three and a multiparty system if the effective number of parties is three or more.

In Table 13.2, we list the effective number of electoral and legislative parties in fifty-four democracies around the world in the mid-1980s (Amorim Neto and Cox 1997). The country with the lowest effective number of electoral (1.84) and legislative (1.18) parties is Trinidad and Tobago. The reason why the effective number of parties is so low in Trinidad and Tobago is that the National Alliance for Reconstruction won 65.8 percent of the vote and

TABLE 13.2**Party Systems in Fifty-four Democracies in the mid-1980s**

Country	Year	Effective number of electoral parties	Effective number of legislative parties	Effective number of ethnic groups
Argentina	1985	3.37	2.37	1.34
Australia	1984	2.79	2.38	1.11
Austria	1986	2.72	2.63	1.01
Bahamas	1987	2.11	1.96	1.34
Barbados	1986	1.93	1.25	1.50
Belgium	1985	8.13	7.01	2.35
Belize	1984	2.06	1.60	3.46
Bolivia	1985	4.58	4.32	3.77
Botswana	1984	1.96	1.35	1.11
Brazil	1990	9.68	8.69	2.22
Canada	1984	2.75	1.69	3.49
Colombia	1986	2.68	2.45	2.51
Costa Rica	1986	2.49	2.21	1.08
Cyprus	1985	3.62	3.57	1.56
Czech Republic	1990	3.10	2.04	1.12
Denmark	1984	5.25	5.04	1.02
Dominica	1985	2.10	1.76	1.68
Dominican Republic	1986	3.19	2.53	1.75
Ecuador	1984	10.32	5.78	2.60
El Salvador	1985	2.68	2.10	1.25
Finland	1983	5.45	5.14	1.13

continues

TABLE 13.2**Party Systems in Fifty-four Democracies in the mid-1980s (continued)**

Country	Year	Effective number of electoral parties	Effective number of legislative parties	Effective number of ethnic groups
France	1981	4.13	2.68	1.17
Germany	1983	3.21	3.16	1.15
Greece	1985	2.59	2.14	1.04
Grenada	1990	3.84	3.08	1.06
Honduras	1985	3.49	2.80	1.23
Iceland	1983	4.26	4.07	1.06
India	1984	3.98	1.69	1.72
Ireland	1987	3.46	2.89	1.08
Israel	1984	4.28	3.86	1.39
Italy	1983	4.51	4.11	1.04
Jamaica	1989	1.97	1.60	1.65
Japan	1986	3.35	2.57	1.01
Korea, South	1988	4.22	3.56	1.01
Liechtenstein	1986	2.28	1.99	1.11
Luxembourg	1984	3.56	3.22	1.63
Malta	1987	2.01	2.00	1.13
Mauritius	1983	1.96	2.16	1.86
Netherlands	1986	3.77	3.49	1.08
New Zealand	1984	2.99	1.98	1.28
Norway	1985	3.63	3.09	1.04
Peru	1985	3.00	2.32	2.76
Portugal	1983	3.73	3.41	1.02
Spain	1986	3.59	2.81	1.65
St. Kitts & Nevis	1984	2.45	2.46	1.22
St. Lucia	1987	2.32	1.99	1.22
St. Vincent	1984	2.28	1.74	1.66
Sweden	1985	3.52	3.39	1.26
Switzerland	1983	5.99	5.26	2.13
Trinidad & Tobago	1986	1.84	1.18	2.74
United Kingdom	1983	3.12	2.09	1.48
United States	1984	2.03	1.95	1.36
Uruguay	1989	3.38	3.35	1.28
Venezuela	1983	2.97	2.42	1.99

Source: Amorim Neto and Cox (1997).

Note: The effective number of parties is a measure that captures both the number and size of parties in a country. The effective number of *electoral* parties is a measure of the number of parties that wins votes and the effective number of *legislative* parties is a measure of the number of parties that wins seats. The effective number of ethnic groups is a measure that captures both the number and size of ethnic groups in a country.

92 percent of the legislative seats in the 1986 elections. In effect, one party dominated the elections, and this is reflected in the two measures of the effective number of parties. The country with the highest effective number of electoral parties (10.32) is Ecuador, and the one with the highest effective number of legislative parties (8.69) is Brazil. In both of these countries, votes and seats were shared fairly evenly among a very large number of parties.

WHERE DO PARTIES COME FROM?

You might be wondering at this stage why democracies have the types of party systems that they do. To answer this question, we need to understand where parties come from. Political scientists have two basic views—primordial and instrumental—on this. The primordial view treats parties as the natural representatives of people who share common interests. In effect, this view takes it as given that there are “natural” divisions, or cleavages, in society. As groups of individuals form around these cleavages, political parties emerge and evolve to represent these interests. This is sometimes referred to as the “bottom up” approach to party formation. The instrumental view of party formation treats parties as teams of office seekers and focuses on the role played by political elites and entrepreneurs. According to this “top down” approach, political parties are created by individuals who, perhaps because of certain informational advantages and additional resources, are able to discern an opportunity to represent a previously unrepresented interest. Indeed, the instrumental approach recognizes that political entrepreneurs may even help citizens become aware that such an interest exists; in other words, they can even “create” divisions, or cleavages, in society.

These two views of party formation are similar to what economists would call supply and demand factors. The primordial view takes the social demand for the representation of particular interests as given and explains the existence of political parties as a response to those demands. In contrast, the instrumental view, along the lines of “Say’s Law” in economics, holds that “supply creates its own demand.” Just as advertising and marketing firms can shape the tastes of consumers, savvy political entrepreneurs might help create the demand for particular policies and ideologies. As in the case with supply and demand, it turns out that understanding the origins of political parties involves recognizing the interaction of both primordial and instrumental forces. To a large extent, social demands for representation drive the formation of political parties. These demands, however, are channeled in powerful and important ways by political institutions that structure the environment of would-be political entrepreneurs and voters. In what follows, we examine how social (primordial) and institutional (instrumental) forces interact to determine both the *type* and *number* of political parties that form in a democracy. We begin by looking at the types of parties that form. This requires us to examine societal cleavages and the process of political identity formation.

TYPES OF PARTIES: SOCIAL CLEAVAGES AND POLITICAL IDENTITY FORMATION

As we noted earlier, perhaps the central function of a political party in a democracy is to represent, articulate, and champion the interests and causes of its membership. These interests

and causes are, by their very nature, shared by only a part of the overall population. The *Oxford English Dictionary* recognizes this when it defines a party as “a division of a whole; a part, portion, or share.” By this definition, political parties arise when officials or would-be officials seek office to pursue goals that are shared by a *part*, but not all, of society. The origins of the British party system can be understood from this perspective.

Origins of the British Party System

The British party system first emerged in the seventeenth century out of a conflict in Parliament over the appropriate relationship between the church and state. In 1679 the first Earl of Shaftesbury introduced an Exclusion Bill to Parliament with the goal of preventing King Charles II’s Catholic brother, James, the Duke of York, from succeeding him. Supporters of the Exclusion Bill were known as Whigs, whereas opponents of the bill were known as Tories. Although these names were originally meant to be insults (one meaning of Whigs being “Scottish horse thieves” and one meaning of Tories being “Irish outlaws”), parliamentary leaders embraced the terms—probably because the insults gave them a sense of shared offense that could be mobilized to create a sense of group loyalty. These group identities survived even after the resolution of the Exclusion Crisis in 1681—King Charles II dissolved Parliament twice over the Exclusion Bill, and the Duke of York did eventually become King James II after Charles’s death in 1685—in part because they helped parliamentarians who shared similar views on several issue dimensions to organize their work. Compared with most modern political parties, “Tories” and “Whigs” stood for loose groupings of men. Nonetheless, they did capture important dispositional, confessional, and professional distinctions.

According to Ivor Bulmer-Thomas (1965), Tories and Whigs were divided most fundamentally in regard to their attitudes toward change. Forged in a time of revolution, with epic struggles between the Crown and Parliament, town and country, commerce and agriculture, capitalism and the remnants of feudalism, religious tradition and religious toleration—in short, tradition and modernity—Tories were associated with the status quo and Whigs with change or, as they would say, “progress.” Although not fully determined by material relations, people’s attitudes toward change were not entirely unrelated to their position in society. For example, Tories tended to come from the landed agricultural elite that had been long dominant in England, whereas the Whigs were more likely to come from the rising commercial elite. Tories and Whigs also differed in their attitudes toward the relationship between church and state. The Tories tended to support the Church of England’s attempt to monopolize religious and political life by barring people who did not belong to the Church of England from holding public office, whereas the Whigs tended to support religious toleration.² These differences in social and economic background also influenced foreign policy

2. The tolerance of the Whigs went only so far, though. For instance, although the 1689 Act of Toleration, which was supported by the Whigs, granted freedom to worship to Nonconformist Protestants (such as Baptists, Congregationalists, and Quakers), it did not extend the same right to Catholics or Unitarians.

preferences. Because Whigs were more associated with commerce, they tended to be more “internationalist” in their outlook. For instance, they were willing to finance Queen Anne’s military efforts because they saw such actions as important for protecting their commercial interests. Tories, by contrast, tended toward isolationism—they supported only those claimants to the Crown who came from the British line of succession and sought to avoid continental royalty that might bring foreign entanglements.

As you can see, the embryonic parties at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries tended to sort members of Parliament into two distinct camps that were cleaved along several dimensions. The correlation or mapping across these dimensions was not entirely perfect. For example, there were nonconformist Tories and Whigs representing rural districts. Similarly, some Tories joined with the Whigs in inviting William of Orange and, later, George of Hanover to pursue the British Crown. As is the case with modern political parties, some members toed the “party line” more comfortably on some issues than on others. On the whole, though, the Whigs and Tories comprised parliamentarians who shared views across different policy dimensions. It is (only) at this point that these “like-minded” parliamentarians began to resemble what we would call a political party. Some of the policy dimensions along which Tories and Whigs competed at the beginning of the eighteenth century are shown in Table 13.3. As we will see, some of these same issue dimensions have been central to party systems in other times and places as well.

The Tories and Whigs went from groups of like-minded parliamentarians to competing teams of office seekers during the early eighteenth century. By excluding Tories from his ministry, George I was the first king (1714–1727) to compose his inner circle of advisers from a single party. One consequence of this “party ministry” was that gaining office now meant a party had greater control over policy and a greater control over public resources for the purpose of furthering the party’s interests than before. Not only did this shift power from the Crown to the parliamentary elite, but it also raised the utility and benefit of holding office. Thus, what appeared to be differences of opinion within a bipartisan administration

TABLE 13.3**Some Dimensions of Whig-Tory Conflict**

Whigs		Tories
“Progress”		“Tradition”
Limited government		Monarchy
Gentry		Nobility
Nonconformity and toleration		High Church orthodoxy
Commerce		Agriculture
Urban		Rural
Internationalism		Isolationism

now became congealed into competing teams that had incentives to help get their fellow party members elected and an increased capacity to use patronage to further a party's electoral goals.

Social Cleavages

As we noted earlier, some of the dimensions of political conflict between Tories and Whigs have been salient in other political systems as well. These cleavages have been used by political scientists to analyze the structure of party systems around the world. Before we begin to discuss why certain cleavages have become salient in some countries but not others, it is worthwhile to list a few of the more common cleavages that occur and talk about the evolution of their salience over time.

The Urban-Rural Cleavage

The conflict between rural and urban interests is one of the oldest political conflicts in the world. Moreover, it remains salient in many countries to this day. The conflict in early modern Europe between feudal lords on the one hand and town dwellers—freemen, burghers, or the bourgeoisie—on the other had both an economic and a cultural dimension. Economically, rural dwellers were typically associated with agricultural production and city dwellers with trade, crafts, and commerce. The most basic point of conflict between rural and urban interests, therefore, involved the price of food. Town dwellers were *consumers*, not producers, of food and, as a result, they typically experienced an increase in their living standards when food prices dropped. Rural dwellers were more likely to be *producers* of food and, so, benefited from increased food prices. In addition, much of rural life took place through a barter system that involved the trading of goods and services. Reputation was an important element in making the complex set of commitments surrounding such trades “credible,” and reputation typically rested upon ties of kinship. In contrast, economic exchange in towns tended to be monetized and to take place between relatively anonymous actors. Consequently, urban commitment problems often surrounded the credibility of the money used to buy goods or the weights and measures employed to apportion them. It was because of this that the development of contract law, clearly defined property rights, and financial innovation became more of a priority in towns than in rural areas. Culturally, rural actors tended to value tradition, whereas town dwellers favored change.

The Confessional Cleavage

Another important conflict in many countries centers on confessional, or religious, differences. Conflict over religious differences emerged in European countries during the Protestant Reformation in the early sixteenth century. At this time, the authority of the Roman Catholic Church was challenged by the rise of Protestantism and men like Martin Luther in Germany and John Calvin in Geneva. For several decades, Europe was thrown into tumult as struggles between Protestants and Catholics, which would later become known as

the Wars of Religion, tore apart countries, principalities, and the Holy Roman Empire. Religious conflict also fueled war between various political entities that lasted well into the seventeenth century. When the Peace of Westphalia (1648) ended both the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War (or Dutch Revolt), it also re-invigorated the norm of *cuius regio, eius religio*. This Latin phrase means "Whose region, his religion" and is used to describe the notion that the leader of a country, city-state, or principality is entitled to choose the religion for those who live under his or her rule. The idea dates back to the days of Emperor Constantine in the fourth century. Although the Peace of Westphalia may have led to a reduction in religious conflict between jurisdictions and helped create the modern state by rendering the Holy Roman Empire irrelevant, it did little to resolve religious conflicts within states. In fact, by empowering leaders to declare a state religion, it all but dictated religious intolerance.

The result was that individuals who confessed a commitment to a particular brand of Christianity often found themselves in conflict with devotees of other denominations. The exact way that this played out varied across different contexts. Britain, for example, was cleaved along confessional lines on at least two fronts. On the one hand, religious conflicts arose between supporters of the Church of England and the Nonconformists, such as Congregationalists (also known as Puritans), Presbyterians, and Quakers. This conflict was most acute during the English Civil War of 1642. On the other hand, religious conflicts also arose between supporters of the Church of England and Catholic Jacobites. The Jacobites supported the exiled King James II, his son James Edward ("the Old Pretender"), and his grandson Charles Edward ("the Young Pretender") in various conflicts. In addition, there was a long and brutal conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland (and later, Northern Ireland).

The Protestant-Catholic cleavage has been important in many other European countries as well. Its continued salience, however, depends largely on whether or not one or the other side has been able to establish its dominance. In some places, the division has led to two different countries. For example, the Eighty Years' War split the Low Countries into the Protestant- (mostly Calvinist) dominated Dutch Republic (now the Netherlands) and the Catholic-dominated southern Netherlands (today's Belgium). In some places, such as Germany, Catholics and Protestants eventually formed an uneasy truce, and in other countries, such as Sweden (Lutheran) or France (Catholic), one or the other church became dominant. Finally, it is worth mentioning that in some countries, such as Italy and Spain, the Protestant Reformation never made any significant inroads. Whatever the settlement, many European party systems bear the imprint of the now centuries-old conflict between Protestants and Catholics.

Confessional cleavages continue to be salient in many non-European countries as well. For example, conflict between Hindus and Muslims led to the partition of India into a predominantly Hindu India and a Muslim-dominated Pakistan in 1947. Following the creation of Pakistan, millions of Muslims moved from India to Pakistan and millions of Hindus and

Sikhs moved from Pakistan to India. The conflict between Hindus and Muslims continues to be salient in this region today, particularly in the disputed region of Kashmir. Deep divisions between Sunni and Shia Muslims have been central to the politics of many Middle Eastern countries for centuries. The removal of Saddam Hussein by U.S. forces in 2003 exacerbated these divisions in Iraq and beyond. Nigeria is another country with deep confessional divisions, this time between a predominantly Muslim north and a predominantly Christian south. Finally, nowhere is the confessional cleavage more institutionalized than in Lebanon, where high political offices are explicitly reserved for representatives of different religious groups. For example, the president, prime minister, deputy prime minister, and the speaker of the parliament are constitutionally mandated to be held by a Maronite Christian, Sunni Muslim, Orthodox Christian, and Shia Muslim, respectively.

The Secular-Clerical Cleavage

In the last two centuries, political competition around religious issues in European democracies has taken place primarily along a church-state axis (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The conflict “between the growing state, which sought to dominate, and the church, which tried to maintain its historic corporate rights” had been growing for some time (Lipset 2001, 6). This conflict was particularly pronounced in France, where close cooperation between the nobility and the Catholic clergy had helped maintain the Bourbon monarchy in power since the sixteenth century. The Roman Catholic Church was the largest landowner in the country and had, since 585 AD, the right to exact a tax of 10 percent (or *la dîme*) on all agricultural products. These church taxes fueled resentment among many French people, in part because these resources, which were originally meant to provide for local parishes, were often siphoned off by the church hierarchy to support remote monasteries and bishops. Consequently, when the French Revolution was launched in 1789 against Louis XVI, the popular uprising was, to a large extent, aimed at the church as much as the monarchy. Legislation that was passed in 1790 abolished the church’s authority to levy *la dîme*, confiscated church property, and canceled special privileges for the clergy. The 1790 Civil Constitution of the Clergy turned clergy into employees of the state, thereby subordinating the Roman Catholic Church to the French government and removing it from the authority of the pope.

In order to solidify his hold on power after a coup d'état in 1799, though, Napoleon Bonaparte reached an agreement with the Roman Catholic Church—the Concordat of 1801—to restore some of the church’s power. With the brief restoration of the monarchy in 1814, the Catholic Church regained even more of its former status, and the clergy continued to enjoy

Anti-clericalism is opposition to religious institutional power and influence in public and political life. **Laïcité** is the notion that there is a division between private life, where religion belongs, and public life, where it does not; it does not necessarily imply any hostility to religion.

privileges into the late nineteenth century. French **anti-clericalism**—opposition to religious institutional power and influence in public and political life—once again grew stronger as the nineteenth century drew to a close. In the 1880s, religious figures began to be ex-

elled from public schools, and the Jules Ferry laws mandated that the French state provide

a free and *lay* education for its citizens. Numerous conflicts broke out at this time between supporters of the Catholic Church and supporters of a secular state. One such conflict was the Dreyfus Affair, which divided French society from the 1890s to the early 1900s (Bredin 1986). The Dreyfus Affair was a political scandal centering on the wrongful conviction of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jew, for treason. This scandal was about many things, including pervasive anti-Semitism in French society, but it divided the country into supporters of Dreyfus (republicans, socialists, and anti-clericalists) and opponents of Dreyfus (royalists, conservatives, and the Catholic Church). In effect, the Dreyfus Affair divided France into those groups that supported the ideas behind the French Revolution and those that opposed them.

In 1905 France passed a law requiring the complete separation of church and state. The law states, “The Republic neither recognizes, nor salaries, nor subsidizes any religion.” In effect, this law established state secularism in France and is the backbone of the current French principle of *laïcité*. *Laïcité* refers to the division between private life, where religion belongs, and public life, where religion does not. To a large extent, this principle rests on the belief that citizens should be treated equally in the public sphere and that things like religion (and ethnicity), which might distinguish between individuals and lead to unequal treatment by the state, should be ignored. *Laïcité* is distinct from anti-clericalism in that it does not necessarily imply any hostility on the part of the state toward religion; it is simply the idea that the state and political issues should be kept separate from religious organizations and religious issues.

Although the secular state is now well-established and *laïcité* is overwhelmingly supported by the French people, religion remains a source of political conflict in contemporary France. Since the 1990s, for example, it has led to a political conflict that has come to be known as the Headscarf Debate. This debate has primarily been about whether Muslim girls wearing headscarves in public schools are violating the principle of *laïcité* by wearing a religious symbol (the headscarf) in a state-funded institution (public school). After several years without a clear policy, the French National Assembly overwhelmingly passed a law against pupils wearing “conspicuous” or “ostentatious” symbols of belonging to a religion in 2005. Although the law does not mention any particular religious symbol, the prohibited items are generally recognized to include headscarves for Muslim girls, yarmulkes for Jewish boys, turbans for Sikhs, and large Christian crosses. Although the law initially led to several demonstrations and protests from affected groups, the law has been implemented fairly smoothly. Nonetheless, there is ongoing debate as to whether this specific law, and the strict implementation of *läi-cité* more generally, is actually encouraging the integration of religious groups, mainly Muslims, into mainstream French society or alienating them. The current French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, has recently proposed weakening the strict separation of church and state, for example, by allowing the state to subsidize Muslim prayer rooms in schools.

The specifics of the French case should not distract us from a broader trend toward secularism in Europe from the dawn of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century into the twenty-first century. Although the degree of secularization in terms of individual piety is the subject of considerable debate among sociologists, there is no debate that this period saw a



Lila Levy, 18, left, and her sister Alma, 16, stand outside the headquarters of the Movement Against Racism and for Friendship Between People, or MRAP, after giving a news conference in the premises, Monday, Oct. 13, 2003 in Paris. The two sisters were expelled the previous Friday from their high school in Aubervilliers, outside Paris, after administrators said their headscarves were ostentatious symbols of religion. The girls' father, Laurent Levy, blamed the decision on what he claimed was a phobia of Islam "eating away at French society."

persistent retreat by religious institutions from the public square. Modernizing elites around the world argued persuasively that the state and church should be separated. Much of the popular appeal of this argument stemmed from the frequent association of the church with the unpopular *ancien régime*—conservative, monarchist forces seeking to protect aristocratic privilege.

Church officials and some believers resisted the separation of church and state, arguing that Christian values of charity for the poor, protection of the family, and the like needed to be protected against what they saw as the corrosive effects of secularism. As a consequence, religious parties formed in many countries. For example, the Tories in Britain originally rallied around the slogan "For Church and King." Separate Protestant and Catholic parties competed in the Netherlands, although by the late nineteenth century they were typically making common cause against "secular" parties. Indeed, political conflicts between Catholics and Protestants subsided in many countries as the cleavage between confessional and secular groups became increasingly salient. For example, the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) in the Netherlands is explicitly nondenominational and seeks to unite Catholics and Protestants. In many countries in Europe and Latin America, Christian Democratic parties combine a conservative position on social issues like abortion and same-sex marriage with an activist position on economic policy. Although staunchly anti-Communist, many Christian Democratic parties take an organic or corporatist view of the economy that emphasizes individuals' obligation to serve their community. This stands in

stark contrast to the economic position of Liberal parties in Europe, which derive their identity from the defense of individual, rather than group, rights. European liberals are staunchly secular in their social orientation and champion free-market capitalism in the economic world.

The Class Cleavage

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) refer to the preceding cleavages as "pre-industrial cleavages." This is in marked contrast to the class cleavage, which is said to have become salient during the Industrial Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century. Like the urban-rural cleavage,

the class cleavage pits actors against each other over conflicting economic interests. Whereas the urban-rural cleavage involves horizontal conflicts *between* different sectors in society, however, the class cleavage involves vertical conflicts *within* sectors between actors who derive their livelihood from the use of their labor and those who derive their livelihood from the use of their property or capital. Class conflict takes place most fundamentally between workers and capitalists in industrial sectors of the economy, but it takes place primarily between peasants (or, later, agricultural workers) and large landowners in the agricultural sectors. Class conflict typically involves attempts to use the state to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor. Capitalists tend to favor the free market, a small state, and a restricted franchise; in contrast, workers support greater state intervention in the economy and an expansion of the franchise.

The class cleavage became increasingly salient in most European countries during the nineteenth century as demands for franchise expansion, particularly from the working class, grew. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the right to vote was typically restricted to adult male citizens who owned large amounts of property. Although the Great Reform Act of 1832 expanded the franchise in Great Britain, it still allowed only about one in five male adults to vote. The 1867 Reform Act expanded the suffrage further to include all working-class males. Through this process, and analogous processes in other European states, workers became relevant at the ballot box, and the state was set for full-scale competition between parties claiming to represent the industrial working class and parties that represented economic elites.

For the next hundred years, politics in Europe revolved around the “left-right” divide. The terms *left* and *right* were first used to describe the seating location of competing factions in the French National Assembly in 1791. From the viewpoint of the speaker’s chair, monarchists sat to the right and bourgeois reformers sat to the left. This pattern was replicated in other continental parliaments: protectors of aristocratic and clerical interests sat on the right and middle-class reformers sat on the left. At the time, people sitting on the left—the “left-wingers”—were advocating laissez-fair capitalism and democratization. Through the nineteenth century, though, the political center of gravity shifted further leftward throughout Europe so that by the beginning of the twentieth century, protectors of free markets and democracy were considered “right-wing” and those in favor of workers’ rights and socialist revolution were considered “left-wing.” Eventually the “Left” came to be represented by Communist and Social Democratic parties and the “Right” by Christian Democratic and Liberal parties.

In the nineteenth century, many socialists were in favor of democracy and the socialist transformation of society. Marxist theory predicted the expansion of the industrial working class (proletariat) as capitalism expanded. Under such conditions it was thought that the expansion of the franchise and the natural course of economic development would in short order produce huge Socialist majorities that would then implement the transition to a socialist society by legislative means (Przeworski and Sprague 1986, 22–25). Several factors, however, conspired to inhibit the unfolding of this set of historical developments that many Marxists had once thought inevitable.

First, not all actors voted according to their class interests. In his book *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Karl Marx ([1847] 1995) makes the distinction between a class “in itself” and a class “for itself.” Individuals are members of a class “in itself” simply by virtue of their objective “relation to the means of production.” In other words, individuals who sell their labor for a wage are workers; those who earn a profit are capitalists. In contrast, individuals are members of a “class for itself” only if they are actually conscious of their status as a member of that class. Thus, the socialist project can be thought of as a process of class formation. In effect, the goal was to make workers realize that they were workers and to transform the proletariat from a “class in itself” to a “class for itself.” Although Marxist orthodoxy held that this process of class formation was a historical inevitability, individual Marxists differed on the extent to which this process could be accelerated or delayed by the strategic organizational practices of the leaders of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. What is clear is that the process by which workers were radicalized took longer than many Marxist theorists expected, leading scholars to label the continued commitment of some workers to bourgeois parties and institutions as “false consciousness” in which “the real motive forces impelling (an actor) remain unknown to him” (Engels [1893] 1968). Whether workers perceived their interests differently from the way that Marxist theorists suggested they should, or whether they were, in fact, suffering from “false consciousness,” it is a historical fact that across a wide range of countries and time periods, a nontrivial portion of manual laborers voted *against* left-wing parties and a substantial share of managers and professionals voted *for* left-wing parties.

Second, workers “never were and never would become a numerical majority in their respective societies” (Przeworski and Sprague 1986, 31). As a consequence, Socialist parties found it necessary either to broaden their appeals to attract salaried workers and other members of the bourgeoisie or to govern in coalition with bourgeois parties. Przeworski and Sprague (1986) note how these strategies, which were designed to help win elections and gain office, ultimately ended up diluting the salience of class as a basis for individual behavior in some countries.

Finally, even where Socialist parties were electorally successful, there were structural factors at work to limit the extent to which they could bring about a socialist transformation. As we discussed in Chapters 6 and 9, part of the reason for why Socialist parties did not institute a socialist transformation had to do with the disciplining effects that investors can play in deterring radical policies. As you will recall, this disciplining effect is referred to as the “structural dependence of the state on capital.” In addition to this pressure from external actors, scholars have identified organizational factors that helped to moderate the policy positions of Socialist parties. With some irony, German sociologist Robert Michels ([1911] 2001, 13) noted that “[i]n theory, the principal aim of social and democratic parties is the struggle against oligarchy in all its forms. The question therefore arises how we are to explain the development in such parties of the very tendencies against which they have declared war.” Michels responded to this puzzle by arguing that in all sufficiently complex organizations, including political parties, a division of labor must arise between rank-and-file members and professional managers. Because the leaders of the organization

develop lifestyles, skills, and interests different from those of the rank and file, the organization will, inevitably, begin to pursue goals that are different from those it was originally formed to pursue. In the case of labor unions and Socialist parties, although the leadership may exist to represent the “ruled,” it is inevitably transformed into part of the ruling class by virtue of its position at the head of the organization. This notion that the leadership of an organization will develop goals that are distinct from those of the organization’s rank and file, and that because they *are* leaders their goals will become dominant, is known as **Michels’ iron law of oligarchy**. Michels’ iron law of oligarchy has been used to explain organizational dynamics in many different social settings, from trade unions and political parties to religious denominations, corporations, and nonprofit organizations.

Michels’ iron law of oligarchy states that the leadership of organizations such as political parties will never be faithful to the program and constituency that gave rise to the organization in the first place.

The Post-Material Cleavage

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) observed that European party systems were remarkably stable during most of the twentieth century. They observed that the preceding cleavages were all activated during a period when new groups were in the process of being politically mobilized. For example, the urban-rural cleavage and the various religious cleavages became salient at the same time that new elites (the landed gentry and commercial elites in urban areas) were being incorporated into national politics in competition with traditional elites (the nobility and the clergy). The class cleavage became salient during a period when the franchise was expanded to include male workers and eventually women. As these cleavages were activated, new parties could be formed to capture segments of the population that had not previously been active in electoral politics. Lipset and Rokkan argued that European party systems became “frozen” with the achievement of universal suffrage during the 1920s. Social structures might change, as they had in the past, but there was no longer any untapped electoral base to be mobilized into new parties. In effect, the barriers to successful entry for new parties seeking to represent emerging interests became too high after the 1920s. As a consequence, political positions associated with new cleavages would either go unrepresented or existing parties would alter their positions to capture “unrepresented” voters.

Lipset and Rokkan’s **freezing hypothesis** states that West European party systems became frozen following the extension of universal suffrage in most countries during the 1920s.

Lipset and Rokkan’s famous “**freezing hypothesis**” was used to explain why the ideological dimensions of most European party systems were so similar. Although there was some interesting variety across cases, the modal European party system in the middle of the twentieth century had two parties on the left (Socialist and Communist, with Socialists being more hostile to Soviet influence than the Communists) and a Conservative Party (often Christian Democratic) and a Liberal Party on the right. The freezing hypothesis was also used to explain why the political parties dominating elections in the 1960s were the same parties that had dominated elections decades earlier in the 1920s and 1930s.

Two challenges to Lipset and Rokkan's freezing hypothesis have arisen in Europe since the 1960s. One is the emergence in the 1960s and 1970s of new political parties that Kitschelt (1988) terms "left-libertarian" parties.³ These parties differ from the "Old Left" in that they are less closely tied to the industrial working class and are likely to privilege issues such as environmentalism and immigration that can be perceived to run against working-class interests. Inglehart (1977, 1997) argues that these new parties are a response to a fundamental value shift in advanced industrial democracies from "materialist" to "post-materialist" values. In effect, he claims that they are a response to the relative decline in the salience of more traditional cleavages and the emergence of a new post-materialist cleavage. Having been raised in an environment of plenty in which their existential security was taken for granted, new generations of voters prioritize the expansion of human freedom. This new generation of voters is more concerned with issues relating to multiculturalism, gender and racial equality, reproductive choice, and sexual freedom than the traditional bread-and-butter issues that concerned the left in previous decades.

According to Kitschelt (1988, 195):

All left-libertarian parties are critical of the logic of societal development and the institutions that underlie the postwar compromise between capital and labor in industrial societies. They oppose the priority that economic growth has on the political agenda, the patterns of policy making that restrict democratic participation to elite bargaining among centralized interest groups and party leaders, and the bureaucratic welfare state. Their political alternatives conform neither to traditional conservative nor to socialist programs, but link libertarian commitments to individual autonomy and popular participation, with a leftist concern for equality.

Kitschelt goes on to show that there is a strong correlation between a country's level of development and the electoral success of left-libertarian parties such as the Greens. Using survey evidence, he suggests that these parties "overproportionally draw voters from the ranks of the younger, well-educated middle class; they are employed in human services (teaching, health care, social work), have left-of-center political convictions, subscribe to 'post-materialist' values, and sympathize with environmental, feminist, and peace movements" (1988, 198).

The second challenge to the freezing hypothesis comes from the successful emergence of populist extreme right parties in some European countries during the 1980s and 1990s (Kitschelt 1996; Golder 2003). Several scholars have linked the emergence of these parties to the same new post-materialist cleavage that supposedly led to left-libertarian parties (Flanagan 1987; Inglehart 1990; Ignazi 1992; Minkenberg 1992; Betz 1994). In fact, these

3. This is an unfortunate label because there are at least two other distinct intellectual movements that use this term. One is influenced by the Austrian-School economist Murray Rothbard and the other is associated with such philosophers as Hillel Steiner, Peter Vallentyne, and Michael Otsuka. Both of these intellectual movements are largely unrelated to Kitschelt's "left-libertarian" parties.

scholars see the successful emergence of populist extreme right parties as a direct reaction to the post-materialist agenda of the libertarian left. In contrast to the libertarian left, populist parties on the extreme right tend to emphasize traditional values and highlight how things like immigration are not only threatening national identity and culture but also the jobs and economic welfare of native workers (Golder 2003). For example, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the National Front in France used the slogan, “Two million immigrants are the cause of two million French people out of work” during the 1984 European elections (Mitra 1988), and the Republicans in Germany have campaigned under a similar slogan: “Eliminate Unemployment: Stop Immigration.” Populist parties have also managed to exploit the shift from an industrial to a postindustrial economy, in which certain sections of the population, such as the uneducated, feel alienated and unable to compete and prosper (Betz 1994).

Despite the emergence of these new left-libertarian and populist parties in Europe since the 1960s, there is considerable debate about the extent to which European party systems have truly changed (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Mair 1997). Although the policies of left-libertarian parties have found some resonance in the wider citizenry, these parties managed to poll only about 5 percent of the vote on average during the 1990s in Western Europe. Populist parties on the extreme right were, on average, polling about the same during this period. Although these averages obviously hide some significant variation across different countries, it is hard to argue that they represent a large-scale change in aggregate voter alignments. If one looks at the left and right as a whole “the most remarkable feature of all is the extraordinary persistence across the postwar decades” (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006, 286). On the whole, the parties that dominate West European elections and governments today tend to be the same parties that dominated elections and governments as far back as the 1920s (Golder 2002).

Ethnic and Linguistic Cleavages

In various countries around the world, ethnic or linguistic cleavages or both are another important source of conflict. Exactly what counts as an “ethnic” cleavage is not obvious because there are many different definitions of what makes a group an “ethnic” group. One common characteristic in definitions of an **ethnic group**, though, is an emphasis on the role of “descent” (Chandra 2006). In effect, members of ethnic groups share some characteristic more closely with fellow group members than with nongroup members, and this characteristic is inherited in some way from their parents. What scholars tend to differ with one another about is what the particular characteristic or trait is that is shared by the ethnic group members. Thus, an individual’s eligibility for membership in an ethnic group is based on the possession of certain attributes that are, at least believed to be, related to descent. We say “believed to be” because the claims of many ethnic groups to having a common ancestry or common place of origin are simply myths. Chandra (2006, 400) notes that “descent-based attributes” shared by ethnic group

An **ethnic group** is one in which members possess some attributes, believed to be related to descent, which are shared more closely with fellow group members than with nongroup members.

members can be “acquired genetically (e.g., skin color, gender, hair type, eye color, height, and physical features), through cultural and historical inheritance (e.g., the names, languages, places of birth and origin of one’s parents and ancestors), or in the course of one’s lifetime as markers of such an inheritance (e.g., last name or tribal markings).”

Eligibility in an ethnic group does not mean the same thing as “membership.” As with class, there is a natural tension between ethnic groups “in themselves” and ethnic groups “for themselves.” On the one hand, there are circumstances in which individuals can choose the extent to which they identify with an ethnic group. For example, one of the authors of this book (Clark) might embrace his Irish-American heritage at a Celtic music performance or poetry reading but shy away from that same heritage when confronted with particularly crass and distasteful “St. Paddy’s Day” debauchery. On the other hand, there are circumstances in which individuals might be classified by others, such as in-group “gatekeepers” or government officials, as belonging or not belonging to a particular ethnic group. In addition, as the experiments on ethnic identity that we mentioned in Chapter 7 indicate, it is not always the case that the ethnic identity of an individual can be easily identified by other actors, even by other members of the individual’s ethnic group (Habyarimana et al. 2005). Ethnic identity is not always self-evident.

As with class, social scientists have differed on the extent to which they see ethnic group membership as based on objective or subjective traits. Scholars who emphasize the objective nature of ethnic identification have been termed “primordialists,” and those who emphasize the subjective nature of ethnic identification have been called “constructivists” or “instrumentalists.” Briefly, primordialists believe that ethnic attachments are transmitted automatically and that group composition is naturally and externally determined. Constructivists, in contrast, believe that group attachments are socially constructed. In other words, they believe that group identities today are the result of choices made by social actors in the past; social groups do not fall from heaven, nor do they spring from some primordial ooze. “Instrumentalism” might be thought of as a subcategory of constructivism in that instrumentalists believe that group attachments result from the intentional acts of social actors who see group attachments as *serving some other purpose*, such as aiding their political survival or giving them access to state resources.

Given the salience of various ethnic cleavages around the world, it is little surprise that ethnic parties exist in many countries. An **ethnic party** is one that “appeals to voters as the champion of the interests of one ethnic category or set of categories to the exclusion of others,

An **ethnic party** is one that champions the interests of one ethnic category or set of categories to the exclusion of others, and does so as a central component of its mobilizing strategy.

and makes such an appeal central to its mobilizing strategy. The key aspect of this definition is *exclusion*. An ethnic party may champion the interests of more than one ethnic cat-

egory, but only by identifying the common ethnic enemy to be excluded” (Chandra 2005, 236). Although most people probably think of Africa when they think of ethnic parties, ethnic parties exist and do well in most regions of the world. In fact, probably the first ethnic parties were Jewish parties in the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires and the Swedish

Party in Finland, all founded in the nineteenth century or the first decade of the twentieth century. Relatively successful ethnic parties exist today in countries as far afield as Canada, Fiji, India, Ireland, Israel, Macedonia, New Zealand, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sri Lanka, and Turkey. One continent where there have historically been few ethnic parties is Latin America. This has recently begun to change, however, with the emergence of various ethnic parties in countries such as Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela to represent indigenous populations (Van Cott 2005).

Theorizing about Politicized Cleavages

So far we have identified a number of salient social cleavages that define political conflict in party systems around the world. But why are some party systems divided primarily along ethnic lines, whereas others are divided mainly along class, religious, linguistic, or regional ones? What determines which social cleavages become politicized and salient? In sum, what explains why we get the types of parties that we do? Unfortunately, comparative political scientists have only just begun to examine these sorts of questions in any great detail. As yet, they have not developed a fully worked out theory of politicized cleavages. Nonetheless, recent research suggests that the distribution of individual attributes in society and the electoral institutions in a country are likely to be key parts of any such theory (Chandra and Boulet 2003; Posner 2004, 2005; Chandra 2004, 2006).⁴ In what follows, we present the general contours of this research, drawing heavily on insights from Chandra and Boulet (2003).

The basic premise in this new research is that individuals are multifaceted and have a repertoire of **attributes**, such as religion, language, class, gender, skin color, and so on, that makes them eligible for membership in some **identity category** or social group. The attributes of individuals can obviously take on different values. For example, consider the attribute of religion. An individual might be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, atheist, or something else. In Table 13.4, we list some attributes that individuals might have and possible values that these attributes can take on. Chandra and Boulet (2003) take an individual's attributes as given, self-evident, and sticky (hard to change). In contrast, they assume that identity categories are socially constructed. In other words, whether identity categories or social groups form around all workers, just black workers, just male workers, or just black male workers who are tall and who happen to be political scientists, and so on is not something that is natural or objective but something that is determined by the choices of social actors over time (and the institutional context in which they make those choices). By taking attributes as given but identity categories as socially constructed, Chandra and Boulet (2003) provide a “thinly-constructivist” approach to political identity formation.

An **attribute** is a characteristic that qualifies an individual for membership in an identity category. An **identity category** is a social group in which an individual can place herself.

4. The roots of this recent research can be traced to Laitin (1986, 1992, 1998).

TABLE 13.4**Individual Attributes and Possible Attribute Values**

Attribute	Possible attribute values
Class	Worker, bourgeoisie
Skin color	Black, white
Nationality	English, American, Nigerian
Profession	Political scientist, plumber, doctor
Region	North, south, east, west
Origin	Foreign, native
Height	Tall, short

Assignment to an identity category or social group, either by oneself or by someone else, will involve a shared understanding about the ways in which possession of certain attributes corresponds to membership in particular groups. This shared understanding is likely to have been built up over many years, decades, centuries, or even longer. As an example, suppose that a country's population is divided according to the region (North or South) and language (French or Dutch) associated with one's parents and that a social understanding has developed over the years that "who you are" is related to your ancestral language and ancestral region. Potential identity categories in this country would, therefore, be drawn from the possible combinations of these two attributes. The attributes of individuals in this country will obviously be distributed in a particular way. In Table 13.5, we list the two attributes in our hypothetical country and the share of the population (a, b, c, d) embodying each possible combination of attributes.

In Table 13.6, we list all nine of the potential identity categories (social groups) that could be formed (socially constructed) in our hypothetical country. These "potential" identity categories are sometimes referred to as "latent" identity categories. But which of the potential identity categories shown in Table 13.6 will be "activated" or "politicized"? The answer to this question is not immediately obvious.

To some extent, how attributes map onto actual identity categories is likely to depend on the distribution and correlation of those attributes. For example, if the attributes are uncorrelated with each other and fairly evenly distributed across the population, then there may be a propensity for each combination of attributes to be thought of as a separate identity

TABLE 13.5**Attributes and Possible Combinations of Attributes in a Hypothetical Country**

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	a	b
Southerner	c	d

Note: Letters indicate the share of the population embodying each possible combination of attributes.

TABLE 13.6**Potential Identity Categories in a Hypothetical Country**

Potential identity category	Size (%)
Northerner	$a + b$
Southerner	$c + d$
French speaker	$a + c$
Dutch speaker	$b + d$
Northerner and French speaker	a
Northerner and Dutch speaker	b
Southerner and French speaker	c
Southerner and Dutch speaker	d
Everyone	$a + b + c + d$

Note: Letters indicate the share of the population embodying the potential identity category shown.

group and activated as such. For example, suppose that the attributes in our hypothetical country are uncorrelated and that the population is evenly distributed as in Table 13.7. In this scenario, our hypothetical country is said to have **cross-cutting attributes**. All other things being equal, the identity categories (Northerner, Southerner) and (French speaker, Dutch speaker)

A country with uncorrelated attributes has **cross-cutting attributes** (cleavages), whereas a country with correlated attributes has **reinforcing attributes** (cleavages).

are equally distinctive and, presumably, equally likely to be activated. Indeed, either of these cleavages—North versus South or French speaking versus Dutch speaking—are as likely to be activated and politicized as the four-way cleavage (French-speaking northerner, Dutch-speaking northerner, French-speaking southerner, Dutch-speaking southerner).

Now suppose that the attributes in our hypothetical country are highly correlated as in Table 13.8. When attributes are highly correlated like this, then the effective number of attribute repertoires is likely to be smaller. A country with highly correlated attributes is said to have **reinforcing attributes**. In regard to our hypothetical country in Table 13.8, this is because knowing that a person's family is from the North allows one to predict with a fair amount of confidence that his or her ancestral language is Dutch; similarly, knowing that a person's family is from the South allows one to predict that his or her ancestral language is French. In such circumstances it seems plausible, all other things being equal, to predict that

TABLE 13.7**Cross-Cutting Attributes**

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.25	0.25
Southerner	0.25	0.25

TABLE 13.8**Reinforcing Attributes**

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.03	0.57
Southerner	0.36	0.04

the identity categories that will be activated or politicized will be “French-speaking southerners” and “Dutch-speaking northerners.” In fact, a similar distribution of attributes to that shown in Table 13.8 is found in contemporary Belgium. Belgium is a country that is profoundly cleaved along ethno-linguistic and regional lines. Indeed, Belgians are constitutionally divided into three communities: a French-speaking community that lives primarily in the South (Wallonia), a Dutch-speaking community that lives primarily in the North (Flanders), and a German-speaking community that lives primarily in the East in a region that was part of Germany before World War I.

Clearly, the division of the people of Belgium into separate ethnic “communities” is the product of deep-seated historical processes. For example, the East-West line dividing French-speaking Wallonia from Dutch-speaking Flanders has been said to mark the northernmost reaches of the Roman province of Gaul in the fourth century. Thus, the line represents, in many ways, a historic dividing line between Frankish and Germanic cultures. If one drives through the region, one can immediately sense the change as one travels between towns such as Lille and Charleroi on the southern side of the line and Ghent and Leuven on the northern side. It is hard to overstate the cultural and political salience of such a boundary; a boundary, we should note, that is centuries older than the Mason-Dixon Line that is said to divide the North and South in the United States.

Although it is hard to overstate the salience of these types of boundaries, it is important to recognize that many such divisions exist around the world, and their salience rises and falls in different periods and different places. This variation in salience suggests that we should look for other factors that might influence which potential identity categories in a society get activated or politicized. The electoral rules that we examined in the previous chapter are one such factor. Different electoral rules can lead to the activation of different identity categories in countries that have identical distributions of attributes. For example, imagine that we have two countries, A and B, in which attributes are identically distributed as shown in Table 13.9. The only difference between the two countries is that the electoral institutions in country A

TABLE 13.9**A Hypothetical Distribution of Attributes**

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.40	0.10
Southerner	0.40	0.10

are such that gaining national office requires 50 percent of the vote and the electoral institutions in country B are such that gaining national office requires 60 percent of the vote. How do you think this difference in electoral rules will influence which identity categories will get activated or politicized in the two countries? If you were a political entrepreneur, which identity categories would you try to politicize if you wanted to gain national office?

One way to think about this is to recall the logic of building government coalitions that we presented in Chapter 11. Let's start by thinking about country A. According to the logic of "least minimal winning coalitions," French-speaking northerners in country A have strong incentives to form a coalition with Dutch-speaking northerners; similarly, French-speaking southerners have strong incentives to form a coalition with Dutch-speaking southerners. Both coalitions could expect to win the required 50 percent of the vote to win national office.⁵ In this scenario, each national election would effectively be decided by a flip of a coin. In fact, whoever was more effective out of the French-speaking northerners and French-speaking southerners at building ties with the Dutch speakers could expect to win every national election. This means that political parties in country A are likely to compete on the basis of how effective they are at generating interlinguistic cooperation. By doing this, though, the political parties would, in effect, be reinforcing regional divisions. As a result, the main politicized cleavage in country A is likely to be regional, and the party system is likely to be characterized by regional parties.⁶

What about country B? Recall that gaining national office in country B requires 60 percent of the vote. One possible scenario in country B is that a coalition will form between northern French speakers and southern French speakers. Such a coalition could expect to win 80 percent of the vote. In these circumstances, Dutch speakers would be a permanent minority.⁷ In this case, the main politicized cleavage (and the party system) would be linguistic rather than regional. The only thing that has changed between country A, where interlinguistic cooperation is likely, and country B, where the exclusion of linguistic out-groups is likely, is the electoral threshold.

The importance of electoral institutions to the politicization of social cleavages can also be seen if we examine how identity categories might be activated in countries that share the same electoral rules but differ in their distribution of attributes. For example, imagine that two countries, C and D, have the same electoral institutions such that gaining national office requires 60 percent of the vote. The only difference between the two countries is that the attributes in country C are distributed as shown in Table 13.9 and the attributes in country D are distributed as shown in Table 13.10. Following the same logic as before, we might expect the identity categories that will be activated or politicized to be linguistic in country C and regional

5. You might think that French-speaking northerners and French-speaking southerners would form a coalition together. However, this coalition would require that government resources and offices be split among 80 percent of the population rather than among 50 percent of the population. The lower average "payoffs" associated with this coalition help to explain why political entrepreneurs have incentives to form *least* minimal winning coalitions rather than just minimal winning coalitions.

6. Readers who see the United States as being divided between the "Blue coasts" and the "Red heartland" might see something familiar in this example.

7. We explore the potentially disastrous consequences of such a situation in Chapter 15.

TABLE 13.10**An Alternative Hypothetical Distribution of Attributes**

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.25	0.35
Southerner	0.15	0.15

in country D. Posner (2004) employs a similar argument to help explain why Chewas and Tumbukas are political allies in Zambia but rivals in Malawi (see Box 13.3 for more details).

What these examples illustrate is that politicized cleavages are likely to be the result of an interaction between latent social cleavages and electoral (and other) institutions. In other words, each country has a certain set of latent social cleavages that is determined by its distribution of individual attributes. Which of these latent social cleavages become politicized, though, is going to be influenced by the electoral institutions employed in that country. This causal story is illustrated in Figure 13.1. An implication of this story is that the cleavages that are politicized and, hence, the types of parties that exist in a country can change either because the underlying set of latent social cleavages changes or because the electoral rules change or both.

Box 13.3**ALLIES OR ADVERSARIES? CHEWAS AND TUMBUKAS IN ZAMBIA AND MALAWI**

In an article published in 2004, Daniel Posner examines why cultural differences become politicized in some contexts but not others. Specifically, he tries to explain why two ethnic groups, Chewas and Tumbukas, are allies in Zambia but adversaries in Malawi. Zambia and Malawi are two neighboring countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The border between the two countries was arbitrarily drawn by the British South Africa company in 1891. No attention was paid to the distribution of ethnic groups when the border was drawn, so roughly two-thirds of all Chewas and Tumbukas found themselves living in Malawi, whereas the remaining third found themselves living in Zambia.

In his study of the Chewas and Tumbukas, Posner examined life in four villages along the Malawi-Zambia border. Two of the four villages were Chewa villages—one was just inside Malawi and the other was just a few miles away across the border in Zambia. The other two villages were Tumbuka villages—again, one was just inside Malawi and the other was just a few miles away in Zambia. Using survey questions, Posner first attempted to see if the Chewas and Tumbukas really were distinct cultural and ethnic groups. On numerous important dimensions, he found that they were. For example, he found that Chewas speak Chichewa and dance the *nyau*, whereas Tumbukas speak Chitumbuka and dance the *vinbuza*. In addition, he found that although Tumbuka parents must pay seven cows to have their daughters married, Chewa parents need pay only one chicken. These cultural and ethnic differences between

Chewas and Tumbukas were equally strong in Malawi and Zambia. In other words, Chewas and Tumbukas represented distinct identity categories in both countries.

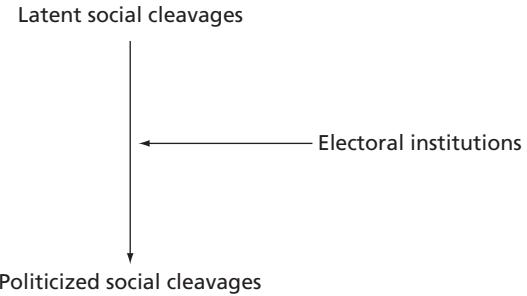
To examine whether these identity categories were actually salient and politicized, Posner asked other survey questions. One question asked whether the respondent would vote for a presidential candidate from the other ethnic group. Sixty-one percent of Chewas and Tumbukas in Malawi said that they would *not* vote for a presidential candidate from the other ethnic group; in contrast, just 21 percent of Chewas and Tumbukas in Zambia made a similar statement. A second survey question asked whether the respondent would marry a member of the other ethnic group. Fifty-five percent of the Chewas and Tumbukas in Malawi said that they would *not* marry a member of the other ethnic group; in contrast, just 24 percent of them made a similar statement in Zambia. These (and other) survey results clearly indicate that the cultural and ethnic differences between Chewas and Tumbukas were salient in Malawi but not in Zambia.

But why would these cultural differences be salient in one country but not in the other? Perhaps it has something to do with the electoral system, the colonial history, or the party systems in the two countries. As Posner notes, though, both countries employ a single-member district plurality (SMDP) electoral system, both countries are former British colonies, and both countries have experienced one-party and multiparty rule. As a result, Posner argues that we must look elsewhere for an explanation for why Chewa-Tumbuka relations are so different in Malawi and Zambia.

Specifically, Posner argues that we must look to the different distribution of Chewas and Tumbukas in the two countries. Chewas and Tumbukas represent relatively large ethnic groups in Malawi. For example, Chewas comprise roughly 57 percent of the population, whereas Tumbukas account for about 12 percent. Because groups of this size have a realistic chance of winning Malawi's SMDP elections, it makes sense for political entrepreneurs to politicize the Chewa-Tumbuka cleavage and form political parties around the two different groups. In fact, this is precisely what has happened. The Malawi Congress Party (MCP) is widely recognized as the Chewa party and the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) is seen as the Tumbuka party.

Contrast this situation to the one in Zambia, where Chewas and Tumbukas represent only very small segments of the overall population. For instance, Chewas comprise about 7 percent of the population, and the Tumbukas comprise just 4 percent. These relatively small ethnic groups in Zambia do not represent good political vehicles for winning office because such small groups have little realistic chance of winning SMDP elections. As a result, political entrepreneurs in Zambia have had to look for other cleavages to politicize rather than the Chewa-Tumbuka cleavage. The main politicized cleavage in Zambia is a regional one, pitting easterners (Chewas and Tumbukas together) against northerners, westerners, and southerners. In this political environment, Chewas and Tumbukas (easterners) have to work together, rather than against one another, if they are to have any hope of winning political power.

Posner's story illustrates how the logic of political competition focuses the attention of both voters and political entrepreneurs on some cleavages rather than others. His story also recognizes that political actors need to build winning coalitions to achieve their goals. If they are going to emphasize cultural or ethnic differences, they will choose divisions that define the most usefully sized building blocks. As a result, not all latent cultural and ethnic differences will become politicized. Which differences become politicized will ultimately depend on the interaction between institutions like electoral rules and the distribution of latent social cleavages.

FIGURE 13.1**Politicized Cleavages and the Role of Electoral Institutions****NUMBER OF PARTIES: DUVERGER'S THEORY**

Although comparative political scientists currently lack a strong understanding of *which* parties will form in a country, we know a fair amount about *how many* parties will form.

Social Cleavages

Our current understanding of the factors influencing the size of party systems is due, in large part, to the seminal work of a French political scientist, Maurice Duverger ([1954] 1963). Duverger argued that the primary engine behind the formation of political parties can be found in social divisions—the more divisions there are, the greater the demand for political parties to form (Afonso Da Silva 2006; Clark and Golder 2006).⁸ In effect, he believed that there is some natural tendency for cleavages within society, such as those discussed earlier, to be represented in the party system. We should recall from our earlier discussion, though, that it is not just the number of cleavages per se, but the way in which membership in society is distributed across those divisions that determines the pressures for distinctive representation.

For example, imagine that two societies, A and B, have the same number of identity attributes as each other. Let's suppose that the identity attributes are income, place of origin, and religion. Our two hypothetical countries might be from Latin America, where divisions between the rich and poor, European and indigenous populations, and Catholics and Protestants are common.⁹ In both of our hypothetical countries, let's imagine that exactly half the citizens are rich and half are poor, half have European ancestry and half have indigenous ancestry, and half are Catholic and half are Protestant.

8. Duverger ([1954] 1963, 205) claimed that “the most decisive influences [leading to more political parties] are aspects of the life of the nation such as ideologies and particularly the socio-economic structure.”

9. Actually, the Latin American “religious market” is much more complex than this. In addition to Catholics and Protestants, there are a substantial number of Mormons, as well as people who practice indigenous religions or religions that combine elements from various indigenous, European, and African faiths. For an interesting discussion of competition between Catholic and Protestant groups in Latin America, see Anthony Gill’s (1998) book *Rendering unto Caesar*.

In country A, we will assume that exactly half of the rich people are European and half are indigenous; half of the rich European people and half of the poor indigenous people are Catholic. The full distribution of identity attributes in country A is shown in Table 13.11. As you can see, the attributes that might contribute to the formation of identity categories are evenly distributed. This means that country A is entirely characterized by cross-cutting cleavages—there is no correlation between one's income level, one's place of origin, or one's religion. As a result, this means that there is a whole host of identity categories—rich, rich Catholic, rich Protestant, rich European, rich indigenous, rich Catholic European, rich Protestant European, and so on—that are equally distinctive and, presumably, equally likely to be activated.¹⁰ According to Duverger, and assuming that policy preferences are associated with wealth, place of origin, and religious confession, the “engine” of social forces in country A is propelling the party system toward a large multiparty system.

In contrast to country A, let's assume that some of the attributes that might map onto identity categories are perfectly correlated in country B. Specifically, we'll imagine that although exactly half of the rich and poor people are of European descent as in country A, all rich people are Catholic and all poor people are Protestant. The full distribution of identity attributes in country B is shown in Table 13.12. As you can see, the distribution of attributes reveals a mixture of both cross-cutting and reinforcing cleavages. As in country A, the income and place of origin cleavages are cross-cutting. In other words, knowing someone's place of origin is of no help in predicting that person's income. Unlike in country A, though, the income and religious cleavages are now reinforcing. In other words, knowing someone's religion allows one to predict which income group they are from. As the distribution of attributes in Table 13.12 indicates, there are now, in some sense, four latent identity categories to be represented by the party system: rich Catholic Europeans, rich Catholic indigenous people, poor Protestant Europeans, and poor Protestant indigenous people. In other words, the total number of latent identity categories is considerably lower in country B than in country A even though both countries have the same three cleavages—income, place of

TABLE 13.11**The Distribution of Identity Attributes in Hypothetical Country A (percent)**

	European		Indigenous		Total
	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	
Rich	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	50.0
Poor	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	50.0
Total	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	

10. We are deliberately ignoring the effect of the country's electoral system at this point.

TABLE 13.12**The Distribution of Identity Attributes in Hypothetical Country B (percent)**

	European		Indigenous		Total
	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	
Rich	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	50.0
Poor	0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	50.0
Total	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	

origin, and religion. It should be clear that if one's place of origin was also perfectly correlated with income—for example, if all rich citizens had European ancestry and all poor citizens had indigenous ancestry—then there would be only two latent groups needing representation: rich Catholic Europeans and poor Protestant indigenous people.

The key aspect of a country's social structure influencing the demand for the number of parties, therefore, is not necessarily the total number of cleavages in a country but rather the total number of *cross-cutting* cleavages. As you might suspect, most cleavages in a country will not be perfectly cross-cutting or perfectly reinforcing as in our example. The same logic as that outlined above, however, suggests that the social pressure for distinctive representation (and a large party system) depends on the number of cleavages in a country and increases with the degree to which these cleavages are cross-cutting rather than reinforcing.

Electoral Institutions

Although Duverger believed that social divisions create the demand for political parties, he argued that electoral institutions play an important role in determining whether this latent demand for representation actually leads to the existence of new political parties. Recall the earlier claim that European societies have seen the emergence of a new post-materialist cleavage since the 1960s (Inglehart 1977, 1997). If social cleavages were the only factor influencing the size of party systems, then all European countries should have experienced an increase in the number of parties competing for office. However, Kitschelt (1988) finds that there was a significant increase only in the share of votes going to “left-libertarian parties” in some countries. This should make one wonder why an increase in the number of cleavages would have a different effect on the size of party systems in different countries.

Although one explanation for this might be that the shift to post-materialist values was more pronounced in some countries than others, Duverger claims that it is likely to have something to do with the electoral institutions used in each country. In other words, he argues that the same value change can have a significant effect on the party structure of one country but not on that of another due to differences in electoral rules. The reason for this is that nonproportional electoral systems, such as the single-member district plurality system, act as a “brake” on the tendency for social cleavages to be translated into new parties. Put differently, Duverger's theory states that increasing the number of social cleavages in a country has less of an effect on party system size if the electoral system is nonproportional

than if it is proportional. There are two reasons, commonly known as the “mechanical” and “strategic” effects of electoral laws, for why nonproportional electoral systems have this moderating effect. We now examine each of these effects in turn.

The Mechanical Effect of Electoral Laws

The **mechanical effect of electoral laws** refers to the way that votes are translated into seats.

As we discussed in Chapter 12, the mechanical effect of all electoral systems systematically punishes small parties and rewards large parties. The extent to which small parties are punished and large parties are rewarded, however,

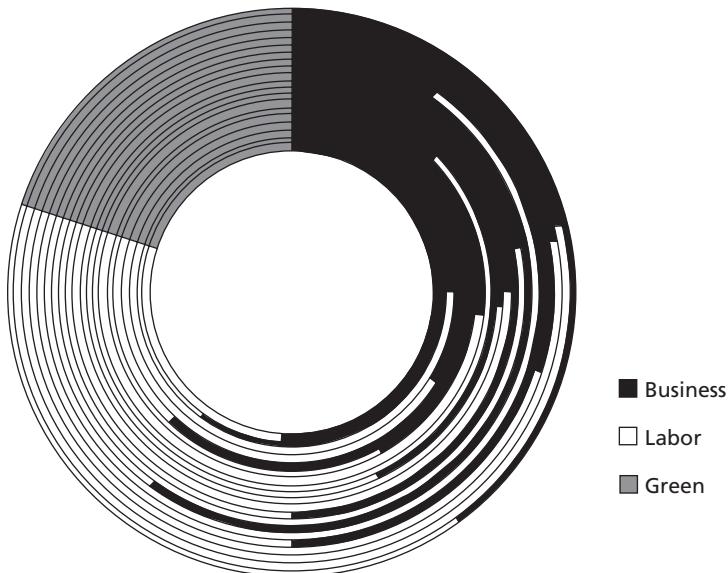
The **mechanical effect of electoral laws** refers to the way votes are translated into seats. When electoral systems are disproportional, the mechanical effect punishes small parties and rewards large parties.

depends on the proportionality of the electoral system. Specifically, small parties will find it harder to win seats, and large parties are more likely to be rewarded, when the electoral system is highly disproportional, as in an SMDP system. To illustrate how the mechanical effect of electoral laws affects parties of different sizes, consider the following two examples. One is based on a hypothetical country called “Duvergerland,” and the other is based on real-world electoral returns from the United Kingdom.

Duvergerland is a country that has historically been divided by a single class cleavage—the electorate has been divided fairly evenly between supporters of a workers’ party and supporters of a party that represents the interests of the business class. The 100-person legislature in Duvergerland is elected using an SMDP electoral system. Recently, social transformation has led to an increase in the number of voters holding post-materialist values. In recent elections, 20 percent of voters cast ballots for the newly formed Green Party, with the rest split in different ways between the Business and Labor Parties in each district. In Figure 13.2, we illustrate the distribution of electoral results across twenty of the one hundred districts using a “doughnut” graph.¹¹ Although the Green Party wins 20 percent of the vote in each district, at least one of the other parties always wins more votes than this. As a result, the Green Party does not win a single legislative seat under the SMDP electoral system.

In Figure 13.3a, we illustrate the distribution of legislative seats if the pattern in the twenty districts shown in Figure 13.2 is reproduced throughout Duvergerland. The Labor and Business Parties each get close to 50 percent of the seats in the legislature and the Green Party goes completely unrepresented even though it won 20 percent of the vote. Simply as a result of the way in which votes are translated into seats—the mechanical effect of the SMDP system—a party in Duvergerland that receives 20 percent of the population’s support receives 0 percent of the legislative seats being contested. Moreover, although there is clearly support for three parties in the electorate, there are only two parties in the legislature.

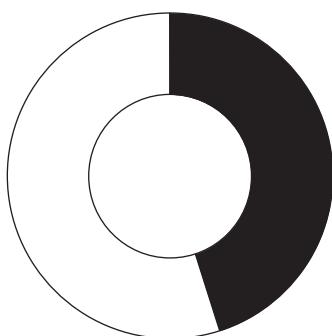
11. Interestingly, different disciplines have different habits when using such metaphors. Economists often refer to “dividing the dollar” or “dividing the pie,” whereas mathematicians often refer to “dividing the cake.” We suggest that “dividing the doughnut” is a fitting visual metaphor for political scientists to use when discussing distributional struggles, because political scientists should be reminded that it is not uncommon for powerless actors to be left holding nothing but the “hole” in the middle of the doughnut.

FIGURE 13.2**Duvergerland: A Hypothetical Polity Using an SMDP Electoral System**

Now contrast the way this same distribution of votes would have been translated into seats if Duvergerland had used a proportional representation system in a single national district. Given that the Green Party won 20 percent of the vote, it now obtains twenty legislative seats. This distribution of seats in this new legislature is shown in Figure 13.3b. As you

FIGURE 13.3**Distribution of Seats in Duvergerland under SMDP and PR Electoral Rules**

a. SMDP



b. PR



- Business
- Labor
- Green

can see, the fate of the small party—the Green Party—is substantially different under the two different electoral systems. The Green Party goes from controlling 20 percent of the legislative seats under PR to being excluded entirely from the legislature under SMDP. This reductive effect in the representation of the small party, as well as the electoral bonus given to the two large parties, is a direct result of the mechanical effect of the SMDP electoral system employed in Duvergerland.

The mechanical effect of the SMDP electoral system that reduces the number of parties in the legislature by penalizing parties that win smaller shares of the vote is not just a matter of theoretical interest. In Table 13.13 we report the electoral returns for the St. Ives constituency during the 1992 legislative elections in the United Kingdom. In these elections, the Conservative Party candidate, David Harris, edges out the Liberal Democrat candidate, Andrew George, by fewer than 2,000 votes. Harris, who won just under 43 percent of the vote, becomes the sole representative of the St. Ives constituency. In contrast, Andrew George, who was supported by 40 percent of the voters in his constituency, is awarded nothing.

If the type of situation that occurred in the St. Ives constituency is repeated in a large number of constituencies, the “winner-take-all” logic of SMDP systems can lead to the introduction of a large gap between the share of votes that a party obtains and the share of seats that it ultimately wins. In Table 13.14 we show some fairly typical national election results from the United Kingdom. One thing to notice about these results is that both of the two larger parties—the Conservatives (Tories) and Labour—won about 20 percent more seats than their percentage of votes would suggest that they should have won. In the case of the Conservative Party, this “electoral bonus” resulting from the mechanical way in which the SMDP system translates votes into seats was enough to turn an electoral plurality into a legislative majority.¹² The other thing to notice is that the smaller party—the Liberal Democrats—won only 3.1 percent of the legislative seats even though they won 17.8 percent of the vote. In Figure 13.4 we illustrate graphically how the mechanical effect of the SMDP electoral system used in the 1992 UK legislative elections rewarded the larger parties and punished the smaller ones.

TABLE 13.13**Legislative Elections Results, St. Ives Constituency, United Kingdom, 1992**

	Votes	% of vote
David Harris (Conservative)	24,528	42.9
Andrew George (Liberal Democrat)	22,883	40.1
Stephen Warr (Labour)	9,144	16
Graham Stevens (Liberal)	577	1
Harris is elected		

12. The tendency for this to happen is the reason why some scholars refer to SMDP systems as “majoritarian” systems despite the fact that only a plurality of the votes in a district, not a majority, is needed to win a seat.

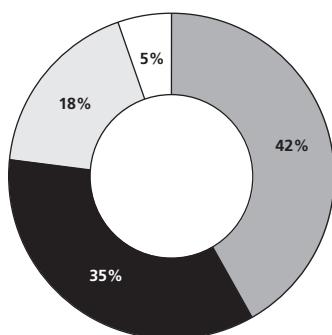
TABLE 13.14**Legislative Elections Results, National Totals, United Kingdom, 1992 (percent)**

	Votes	Seats
Conservative	41.9	51.6
Labour	34.9	41.6
Liberal Democrats	17.8	3.1
Others	5.4	3.7
Total	100	100

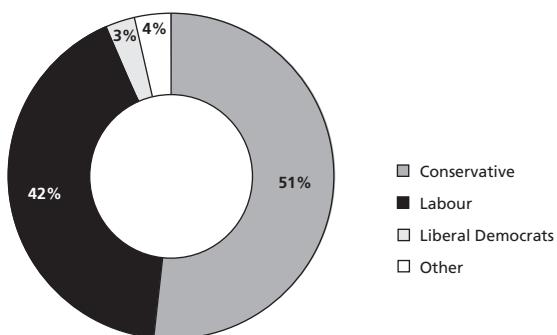
A quick comparison of the hypothetical case of Duvergerland and the real-world example from the 1992 UK legislative elections reveals that the extent to which nonproportional electoral systems such as SMDP punish small parties depends on the way that the votes for these parties are distributed across electoral districts. In Duvergerland, we assumed that the support for the Green Party was evenly distributed across all of the electoral districts. This particular distribution of support resulted in the Green Party's failing to win a single seat. Contrast this with the fact that the Liberal Democrats managed to win twenty seats (3.1 percent) in the 1992 UK elections even though they won a smaller share of the national vote than the Greens did in Duvergerland. The reason for this difference is that the size of the support for the Liberal Democrats varied across different districts. Although the support for the Liberal Democrats was not sufficient to produce victory in the St. Ives constituency, it was big enough to win seats in twenty other districts. This indicates that the extent to which the mechanical effect of the SMDP system punishes small parties is directly related to how dispersed their electoral support is. The Liberal Democratic Party (and its predecessor, the

FIGURE 13.4**Distribution of Votes and Seats in Legislative Elections in the United Kingdom, 1992**

Distribution of votes



Distribution of seats



Liberal Party) in the United Kingdom has generally been penalized quite heavily by the UK's SMDP electoral system because its support tends to be broadly distributed across many electoral districts. In contrast, small regional parties, such as Plaid Cymru in Wales, the Scottish National Party in Scotland, Sinn Fein and the Ulster Unionists in Northern Ireland, which garner a much smaller share of the national vote, have experienced very little disadvantage from the way in which the UK's SMDP system translates votes into seats. This is because the support for these parties is heavily concentrated in a small number of districts.

The Strategic Effect of Electoral Laws

As we have just seen, the mechanical way in which votes are translated into seats in nonproportional systems penalizes small parties and rewards large parties. The benefits that systems like SMDP bestow on large parties are further enhanced by a second institutional effect called the **strategic effect of electoral laws**. To

this point we have isolated the mechanical effect of electoral laws by taking the way votes are distributed as given. Now we must ask how voters and party elites are likely to respond to the mechanical effect of electoral systems. The strategic effect of electoral laws refers to how the way in which votes are translated into seats influences the "strategic" behavior of voters and political elites. When electoral systems are disproportional, their mechanical effect can be expected to reward large parties and punish small parties. Recognizing that this is going to happen, voters in these systems have an incentive to engage in strategic voting, whereas political elites have an incentive to engage in what is called strategic entry. As we will see, both of these actions—strategic voting and strategic entry—bestow even more benefits on large parties and further penalize small parties.

The **strategic effect of electoral laws** refers to how the way in which votes are translated into seats influences the "strategic" behavior of voters and political elites.

Strategic Voting

As you will recall, we discussed strategic and sincere voting in Chapters 10 and 12. Strategic voting essentially means voting for your most preferred candidate *who has a realistic chance of winning*. In contrast, sincere voting means voting for your most preferred candidate or party. To help refresh your mind about the logic of strategic voting in nonproportional electoral systems, such as SMDP, take a look again at the election results from the St. Ives constituency in the 1992 UK elections (Table 13.12). Imagine that you preferred the Labour candidate to the Liberal Democrat candidate and the Liberal Democrat candidate to the Conservative candidate, that is, L > LD > C. Imagine also that you had reliable polling data indicating that the Labour candidate was trailing the Conservative and Liberal Democrat candidates by a wide margin. If you cast a sincere vote, then you would vote for the Labour candidate. However, a sincere vote is likely to be "wasted" in the sense that it has little chance of affecting the outcome of the election given how far the Labour candidate trails behind the other candidates. As a result, you have an incentive to vote strategically for the Liberal Democrat candidate (who has a more realistic chance of winning) in order to try to stop the Conservative candidate (your least-preferred candidate) from winning.

As this example illustrates, supporters of small parties that have little realistic chance of winning seats due to the way that votes are translated into seats have an incentive to vote strategically. In other words, they have an incentive not to vote for their most preferred party—a small party—and, instead, give their support to one of the larger parties that they like. This incentive to vote strategically increases as the electoral system becomes more disproportional. As a result, small parties are not only penalized in nonproportional systems because of the way that votes are translated into seats but also because voters in these systems have an incentive not to vote for them in the first place. Similarly, large parties not only benefit in nonproportional systems due to the electoral bonus that they receive from the way that votes are translated into seats but also because voters who prefer other parties often have an incentive to strategically vote for them.

Strategic Entry

Although nonproportional electoral systems create incentives for voters to engage in strategic voting, they also create similar incentives for political elites to engage in what is called **strategic entry**. Strategic entry refers to the decision by political elites about whether to enter the political scene under the label of their most preferred party or under the label of their most preferred party that has a realistic chance of winning.

Strategic entry refers to the decision by political elites about whether to enter the political scene under the label of their most preferred party or under the label of their most preferred party that has a realistic chance of winning.

ferred party or under the label of their most preferred party *that has a realistic chance of winning*. Imagine that you are an aspiring political entrepreneur in Duvergerland who has an interest in environmental politics. If this is the case, then you confront a dilemma. On the one hand, you could run as a candidate for the Green Party. The Green Party is your most preferred party because it will likely share your attitudes on environmental policy. The problem is that you will not get elected as a candidate for the Green Party given the use of an SMDP electoral system and the way that the party's support is distributed across Duvergerland. On the other hand, you could decide to run in the “lesser of two evils” from among those parties that you estimate to have a realistic chance of winning seats. Furthermore, even if the party that reflects your policy preference (Green Party) is able to gain a few seats in the legislature, you must consider whether you can better further your policy agenda by representing that party or by working within a different party that actually stands a chance of commanding a legislative majority.

In contrast to political elites who compete under an SMDP electoral system, political entrepreneurs in proportional systems do not face such a stark trade-off. This is because even a small amount of electoral success in garnering votes can often allow one to win legislative seats. Indeed, if there are many parties in the legislature, leaders of small parties might even find themselves in the enviable position of being a kingmaker in the government formation process and a highly sought-after junior coalition partner. The difference in opportunities for small party leaders between the SMDP and PR systems is evident if we compare the post-war experience of leaders of the Liberal Party in the United Kingdom (under the SMDP system) with that of leaders of the Free Democratic Party (FDP) in Germany (under the pro-

portional mixed system). Although these two parties have historically shared similar ideological positions in their respective party systems, the FDP was a nearly constant fixture in German cabinets, whereas the Liberal Party in the United Kingdom was consigned to watch from the sidelines as the Conservative and Labour Parties rotated in and out of office. The different trajectories of these two parties would have to enter the calculations of ambitious young politicians. This suggests that small parties in SMDP systems will find it more difficult to attract and retain high-quality leaders than small parties in more proportional systems. For similar reasons, small parties in SMDP systems will also find it harder to attract private financial support. The lack of high-quality candidates and other resources in small parties that compete in SMDP systems will, in turn, make it harder for these parties to win votes.

Note that the example we have just presented assumed that the Green Party actually existed in Duvergerland. Now imagine that you are the same political entrepreneur as before with a strong interest in environmental politics. The social transformation that has seen an increase in the number of voters holding post-materialist values has just taken place. You must decide whether to form a Green Party to represent this new constituency or try to represent it within one of the established parties. Given that a Green Party is unlikely to win any seats in Duvergerland, you will have a strong incentive to work within one of the existing parties to achieve your political and policy goals. As this example illustrates, not only do disproportional electoral systems mean that small parties will receive a lower percentage of the vote because they are less likely to attract high-quality candidates and other resources, they also mean that these small parties are less likely to exist in the first place.

The dilemma confronting political elites in an SMDP system can be demonstrated in another way with the help of the following Strategic Entry Game. Suppose that there are two left-wing parties (L_1 and L_2) and one right-wing party (R). Let's assume that if both left-wing parties compete in the election, then the right-wing party will win for sure, because the vote of the left-wing electorate will be split between two parties. Let's also assume that the right-wing party will be defeated if only one left-wing party runs. Because each left-wing party prefers that the right-wing party be defeated for ideological reasons, its worst possible outcome occurs if both left-wing parties run. Note, though, that if only one of the left-wing parties is going to run, then each left-wing party would prefer that its own party be it. This is because an electoral victory would not only allow it to implement left-wing policies, but it also allows the party to consume the benefits that come with holding office. Without any loss of generality, we can assign to each party a value of 0 for its worst outcome (both left-wing parties run and the right-wing party wins) and a value of 1 to its most preferred outcome (the other left-wing party drops out and it, the remaining one, wins). We can use a parameter λ (lambda) to represent the value that each left-wing party places on seeing its fellow left-wing party run instead of it. Because having the other left-wing party win is better than having the right-wing party win but not as good as winning oneself, it follows that $0 > \lambda > 1$. Ultimately, the two left-wing parties must decide whether to run or not run. The normal form of this Strategic Entry Game is shown in Figure 13.5.

FIGURE 13.5**Strategic Entry Game: Coordination between Competing Left-Wing Parties**

		Left Party L ₂	
		Run	Don't Run
Left party L ₁		Run	0, 0
		Don't run	$\lambda, 1$
		$\lambda, 1$	0, 0

Notice that the two left-wing parties face a coordination dilemma. They share a common goal—defeat the right-wing party. They differ, however, on how that goal should be met—each party wants to be the party that rules in the event of a right-wing defeat.¹³ If you solve the Strategic Entry Game, you will find that there are two pure strategy Nash equilibria: (Run; Don't run) and (Don't run; Run). In other words, each party has an incentive to drop out of the race if the other player does not drop out. Such mixed-motive games present a dilemma that is often difficult for the actors involved to solve. In some countries, parties on the left (or right) realize that they have an incentive to withdraw from an electoral contest but cannot coordinate on which one should do it. As a result parties that do not “drop out” wind up contributing to the election of their most bitter rivals. A good example of this occurred in the 2002 French presidential elections (S. Golder 2006, 56–57). It had widely been expected that Jacques Chirac, the president and leader of the mainstream right, would make it through to the second round, along with Lionel Jospin, Socialist prime minister and leader of the mainstream left. The real question for months had been which of the two men would win the second round. Then, unexpectedly, the left vote was split among so many candidates that the Socialist leader came in third behind the extreme-right politician, Jean-Marie Le Pen. Although many people have naturally focused on the disturbing success of the extreme right, this political earthquake, as it became known, had as much to do with the inability of the French left to solve its coordination problems as it did with an increase in the strength of the extreme right. A similar example occurred in the 2000 U.S. presidential elections when the presence of Ralph Nader on the ballot split the left-wing vote, particularly in Florida, to such an extent that the right-wing Republican George W. Bush was able to defeat the left-wing Democrat, Al Gore, in the Electoral College.

13. As you will recall from the problems at the end of Chapter 4, this sort of game is commonly referred to as an asymmetric coordination game.

One way to prevent this type of worst case scenario is for the parties splitting the vote to merge into a single party.¹⁴ This is exactly what the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party did to create the Liberal Democratic Party in the United Kingdom in 1988. As several scholars have noted, the more disproportional the electoral system, the greater the incentive that small parties have to merge or form coalitions rather than compete as independent entities at election time (Strøm, Budge, and Laver 1994; Cox 1997; S. Golder 2005, 2006).¹⁵ It is worth noting that this incentive not only encourages mergers between small parties but can also even deter the entry of small parties in the first place. Even when disgruntled by the current direction of their party, forward-looking political entrepreneurs may decide that it is better to work within an existing party rather than break away to form a new party and risk contributing to the election of a party that they find less desirable than their current one. As all of these examples illustrate, small parties that represent relatively small segments of the population will be less likely to form or be successful in disproportional electoral systems because of the strategic incentives that these electoral rules create for both voters and political elites.

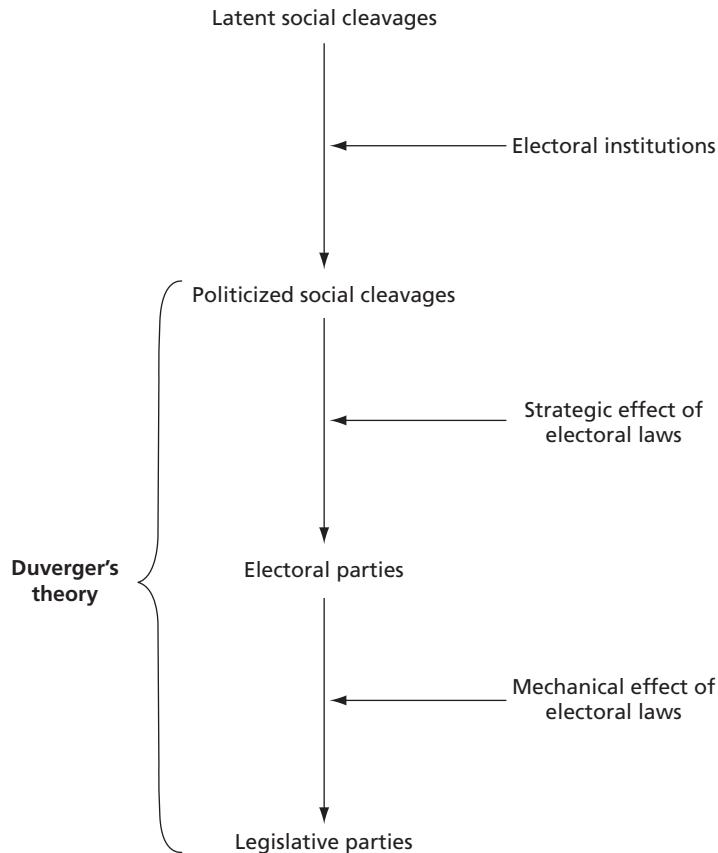
Summarizing Duverger's Theory

To sum up, **Duverger's theory** states that the size of a country's party system depends on the complex interplay of both social and institutional forces. The precise causal story underlying Duverger's theory is illustrated in Figure 13.6. Characteristics of a country's social structure provide the driving force behind the formation of parties. When there are many cross-cutting cleavages, there are many distinct positions that, in some sense, need to be represented. Whether these distinct positions are ultimately translated into distinct parties, however, will depend on the proportionality of the electoral system. Disproportional electoral systems translate votes into seats in such a way that small parties are penalized and large parties are rewarded. In other words, the "input-output" ratio by which votes are turned into seats in disproportional systems is smaller for small parties than it is for large parties. In contrast, proportional electoral systems translate

Duverger's theory states that the size of a country's party system depends on the complex interplay of both social and institutional factors. Social divisions create the "demand" for political parties and electoral institutions then determine the extent to which this demand is translated into parties that win votes (electoral parties) and parties that win seats (legislative parties).

14. An alternative strategy for avoiding this type of "worst case scenario" is for the parties splitting the vote to form a preelectoral coalition at election time rather than compete as independent entities (S. Golder 2005, 2006; Blais and Indriðason 2007).

15. Determining when and why some small political parties retain their separate identities rather than merge or coalesce into a larger party is a complex question. As we have already seen, it will depend to a large extent on the disproportionality of the electoral system. However, a number of other institutions are known to influence how likely it is that parties retain their separate identities. One such institution is the use of fusion candidates, where multiple parties can nominate the same candidate (S. Golder 2005, 2006). Fusion candidates were employed in many U.S. states in the nineteenth century. Although this practice continues in New York State, it was stopped in most other states more than a century ago. The end of fusion candidates contributed quite markedly to the evolution of a party system in which the Democratic and Republican parties were the only viable parties outside of New York State (Argersinger 1980). Two-round electoral systems are also thought to encourage parties to retain their separate identities since small parties might think that they can at least make it into the second round (Duverger [1954] 1963).

FIGURE 13.6**Party Systems: Social Cleavages and the Modifying Effect of Electoral Institutions**

votes into seats at a relatively constant rate. The way in which the mechanical effect of disproportional systems helps large parties and hurts small parties creates incentives for voters and political elites in these systems to engage in strategic voting and strategic entry. Supporters of small parties are more likely to see a vote for their most preferred party as a “wasted vote” in disproportional systems than in more proportional ones. Consequently, these voters are more likely to transfer their support to a larger party that is lower ranked in their preference ordering but that has a realistic chance of winning. Similarly, political entrepreneurs connected to policy positions that are not represented by existing parties or are associated with small parties have strong incentives to work within existing large parties if the electoral system is disproportional. As a result, disproportional electoral systems discourage the formation and electoral success of new parties in two related ways. First, the mechanical effect of these systems leaves small parties with fewer seats in the legislature than

the votes cast for them would have produced in a PR system. Second, the strategic effect of these systems leaves small parties with fewer votes than the latent support for their policies in the electorate would suggest they could attract.

Evidence for Duverger's Theory

Duverger succinctly summed up the observational implications of his theory in two statements that have become known as **Duverger's Law** and **Duverger's Hypothesis**:

Duverger's Law states that single-member district plurality systems encourage two-party systems. **Duverger's Hypothesis** states that proportional representation electoral rules favor multiparty systems.

Duverger's Law: Single-member district plurality systems encourage two-party systems.

Duverger's Hypothesis: Proportional representation electoral rules favor multiparty systems.

Unfortunately, it turns out that the simple prediction that we should expect to find two-party systems if SMDP electoral laws are employed is a valid inference from Duverger's broader theory only when some auxiliary assumptions are satisfied. As Duverger himself noted, the logic by which the mechanical and strategic effects of SMDP electoral systems produce two-party systems works only at the district, and not the national, level. To see why, recall our example from the St. Ives constituency in the United Kingdom. If voters know that the Labour Party has no chance of winning *in this district*, then the benefits of strategic voting accrue to the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats *in this district*. In other districts—indeed, in most districts in the UK—it is the Liberal Democrats who are the “also ran” party. As a result, it is the Conservative and Labour Parties that benefit in most districts from the strategic voting induced by the mechanical effect of the SMDP electoral system.

As you can see, the logic of Duverger's argument leads us to expect a national two-party system in SMDP countries only to the extent that the same two parties are favored by strategic voting across the lion's share of the electoral districts. It is possible, for example, for some parties to be favored by SMDP in some regions of the country and other parties to receive an electoral boost from SMDP in other parts of the country. The net effect of these off-setting distortions may leave the country with a multiparty system in which the national seat shares of several parties are very close to their national vote shares. In short, if the party system is not fully nationalized with the same parties advantaged in each district, SMDP electoral systems could very well have more than two parties. Among other things, the extent to which a party system is nationalized depends on a host of factors, including whether economic and political power is centralized in the national government, how this power is shared between the branches of government, and whether there are presidential elections (Chhibber and Kollman 1998, 2004; M. Golder 2006; Hicken, forthcoming).

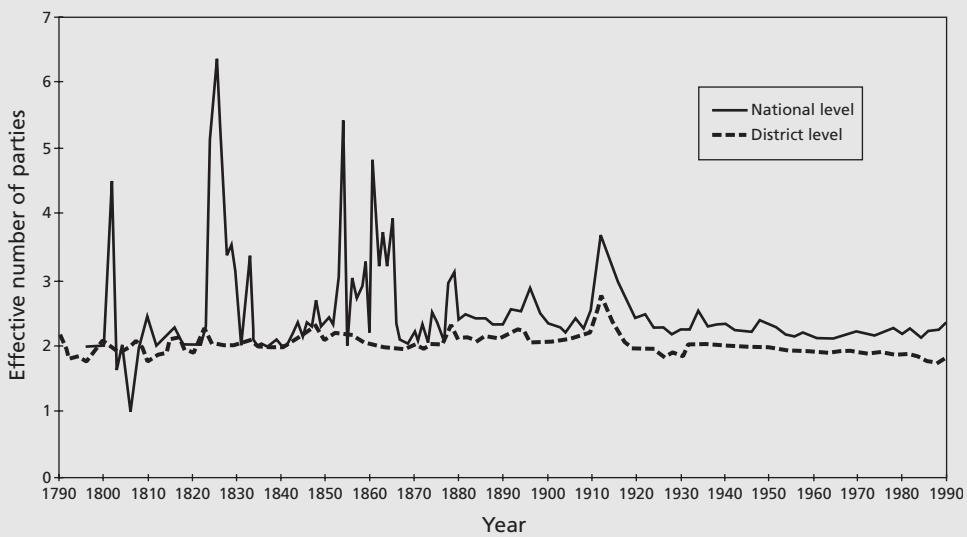
These cautions, however, do little damage to Duverger's broader theory. This is because his theory is more concerned with how changes in social conditions or electoral laws result in changes in the number of parties, and there is considerable evidence consistent with his predictions in this area (Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994; Amorim Neto and Cox 1997; Cox 1997; Clark, Gilligan, and Golder 2006; Clark and Golder 2006; Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2007).

Box 13.4**NATIONALIZING PARTY SYSTEMS**

Duverger's Law states that countries with SMDP electoral systems will be characterized by two-party systems. However, the logic by which the mechanical and strategic effects of SMDP electoral rules produce two-party systems really works only at the district level (Duverger [1954] 1963; Cox 1997). Because the SMDP system is a winner-take-all system, it is often the case that only the two largest parties in a district have a realistic chance of winning the seat. That two parties are likely to predominate in each district, though, does not necessarily mean that there is a two-party system at the national level. Whether this is the case or not depends on whether the same two parties predominate across the lion's share of the districts. In other words, there can be a discrepancy between the size of local party systems and the size of the national party system. In effect, there can be more parties competing nationally than there are, on average, competing in each district. Political scientists say that a country's party system has been nationalized if the local and national party systems are of a similar size.

Several factors have been found to influence the extent to which party systems are nationalized. For example, party systems are more likely to be nationalized when political and economic power is centralized in the national government (Chhibber and Kollman 1998, 2004). The logic is that as power is centralized, it becomes increasingly important to gain control of the national government. As a result, parties that have little chance of gaining control of the national government, even if they are one of the two largest parties in their district, are likely to find themselves abandoned by both voters and political entrepreneurs at election time. Parties that are able to compete nationally, rather than in just one or two districts, are likely to benefit from this strategic behavior. To illustrate this point, Chhibber and Kollman (1998) examine the size of local and national party systems in the United States from 1790 to 1990. Their data are shown in Figure 13.7.

As you can see, the average number of parties at the district level has been about two, as Duverger's theory predicts, throughout U.S. history. The size of the national party system has varied quite considerably over this 200-year period, however. Prior to the New Deal in the 1930s, the number of parties at the national level was frequently much larger than two. This reflects the fact that several minor parties were able to enjoy regional success throughout this period. For example, a minor party, such as Labor, the Progressives, the Socialists, the Prohibitionists, or Farmers, was one of the two locally dominant political parties in certain regions and time periods. Ever since the 1930s, though, there has been little difference in how many parties compete at the local and national level in the United States. In effect, the U.S. party system became nationalized in the 1930s with the same two parties—Democrats and Republicans—dominating both the local and national party systems. Minor parties have enjoyed relatively little success since this time. Chhibber and Kollman explain this dramatic change by the increased centralization of political and economic power in the U.S. national government that occurred in the 1930s. As they note, national government spending as a percentage of total government spending (including state and local spending) more than doubled in this period; national government spending increased almost tenfold as a proportion of gross national product as well. In effect, holding national office became increasingly important in the 1930s. Minor parties that were unable to credibly compete for national office were, therefore, at a strategic disadvantage, and the party system became nationalized.

FIGURE 13.7**Number of Parties at the National and District Levels in the United States, 1790–1990**

Source: Chhibber and Kollman (1998, 331).

Hicken (forthcoming) has recently built on this argument to suggest that the extent to which power is shared between different branches of the national government also matters. If political power is centralized in the national government and this power is not shared between different branches of government, the value of holding national office is particularly high. This creates even greater incentives for political parties to solve cross-district coordination problems, such as those highlighted in our Strategic Entry Game. The result is a party system in which Duvergerian dynamics are reflected at both the national and district level.

Another factor that influences the nationalization of party systems is the presence of presidential elections (M. Golder 2006). The presidency is nearly always the most important electoral prize in a presidential regime. There is typically, however, only a small number of viable presidential candidates because only one person can become the president. Given the importance of the presidency, parties that do not have a viable presidential candidate, even if they are electorally strong in their local regions, are likely to find themselves abandoned by both voters and political entrepreneurs at election time. Parties that have a national base and, hence, viable presidential candidates will naturally benefit from this strategic behavior. The end result is a nationalized party system where regionally based parties can struggle to compete. The extent to which presidential elections exert nationalizing pressures on a country's party system depends on how important it is to win the presidency and the temporal proximity between presidential and legislative elections. Specifically, party systems in presidential democracies are more likely to be nationalized if the president's power is large relative to that of other political actors and if presidential elections occur at the same time as legislative ones.

Another obvious factor influencing the extent to which party systems are nationalized has to do with the distribution of politicized cleavages in a country. If these cleavages are national in the sense that the same cleavages dominate political competition in each region, then the party system as a whole is likely to be national in character. If a country's politicized cleavages vary from region to region, however, the party system is likely to be less nationalized. As our discussion in this chapter makes clear, though, the extent to which regional cleavages are actually translated into distinct parties still depends on the permissiveness of the electoral system.

Duverger used the metaphor of a car to explain why some countries have many parties and other countries have few. Social structure is the “engine” that drives the multiplication of parties, whereas electoral laws serve as the brake pedal. Disproportional electoral systems, such as SMDP, depress the brake pedal and, therefore, prevent the engine of social division from producing multiparty systems. Another metaphor that describes this process focuses on how social divisions create a storm of policy demands and how the electoral system determines if those demands will be permitted to flow downstream and be translated into distinctive parties. Just as a dam in a river moderates the flow of water, electoral laws *moderate* the way social divisions get turned into parties (see Figure 13.6). When the dam is closed, it prevents some of the water from flowing downstream; when the dam is open, it permits more of the water to flow downstream. SMDP electoral systems are like a closed dam that, for the reasons described above, prevents some societal demands from being transformed into political parties. Proportional electoral systems are like an open dam in that they permit *more* of these demands to be translated into parties. It is for this reason that political scientists frequently say that proportional electoral systems are permissive and nonproportional ones are nonpermissive.

As we have seen, the effect of social structure on the size of a country’s party system depends on the permissiveness of the electoral system. Similarly, the effect of the electoral system on party system size depends on a country’s social structure. Consider the four different scenarios shown in Table 13.15. The case in which there are many social divisions—high social heterogeneity—and a permissive electoral system (top right) is like a river filled with storm water meeting an open dam. Because the dam is open, it has little effect on the current of the river, and most, if not all, of the water flows unimpeded downstream. In other words, social heterogeneity is expected to result in the formation of many parties when a PR electoral system *permits* it to. Contrast this with the case in which there are many social divisions and a nonpermissive electoral system (top left). This situation is like having a storm-filled river confront a closed dam—some of the water will not get to flow downriver and, instead, it will form a reservoir on the upstream side of the dam. In other words, some of the societal demands in a socially heterogeneous country that employs a nonpermissive electoral system will not be translated into political parties.

TABLE 13.15**The Interplay of Social Heterogeneity and Electoral System Permissiveness on Party System Size**

		Electoral system permissiveness	
		Low (SMDP)	High (PR)
		High	Few parties
Social heterogeneity	High	Few parties	Many parties
	Low	Few parties	Few parties

Now consider the two cases in which there are few social divisions—social heterogeneity is low (bottom left and bottom right). This situation is equivalent to having a dry season that results in an almost entirely dry river. We can imagine that the river is so low that water cannot reach the gates or valves in the dam. Clearly, little water will be getting downstream in this situation, irrespective of whether the dam is open or closed. In other words, when social heterogeneity is low, we do not expect much of a demand for political parties. As a result, few parties will be formed whether or not the electoral system is permissive.

A key implication of Duverger's theory, then, is that there are two reasons why a party system may have few parties. Some countries may have few parties, despite the fact that they are socially heterogeneous, because they have a nonpermissive electoral system that prevents this heterogeneity from being reflected in the party system. Alternatively, some countries may have few parties regardless of how permissive their electoral system is because they have few social divisions. In contrast, there is only one way, according to Duverger's theory, to end up with many parties—you need a heterogeneous society and a permissive electoral system.

Clark, Gilligan, and Golder (2006) present empirical evidence that is consistent with this interpretation of Duverger's theory. Their data, which are based on fifty-four democracies in the 1980s, are shown in Table 13.16. As is standard in the literature on party systems, party system size is measured by the effective number of legislative parties. As predicted by Duverger's theory, the average number of legislative parties is highest when high social heterogeneity is combined with a highly permissive electoral system.¹⁶ Specifically, the number of legislative parties in socially heterogeneous societies with multimember electoral districts is 3.88. In contrast, the number of legislative parties in socially heterogeneous countries

16. Electoral system permissiveness depends on whether a country employs single-member electoral districts (low permissiveness) or multimember electoral districts (high permissiveness). Social heterogeneity is measured by the effective number of ethnic groups in a country. Countries that have more effective ethnic groups than the median in the sample are coded as having high social heterogeneity; those with fewer ethnic groups than the median are coded as having low social heterogeneity. For more details, see Clark, Gilligan, and Golder (2006).

TABLE 13.16**The Observed Number of Parties under Alternative Conditions**

		Electoral system permissiveness	
		Low	High
		High	1.68
Social heterogeneity	High	1.68	3.88
	Low	2.52	3.06

Source: Clark, Gilligan, and Golder (2006, 15).

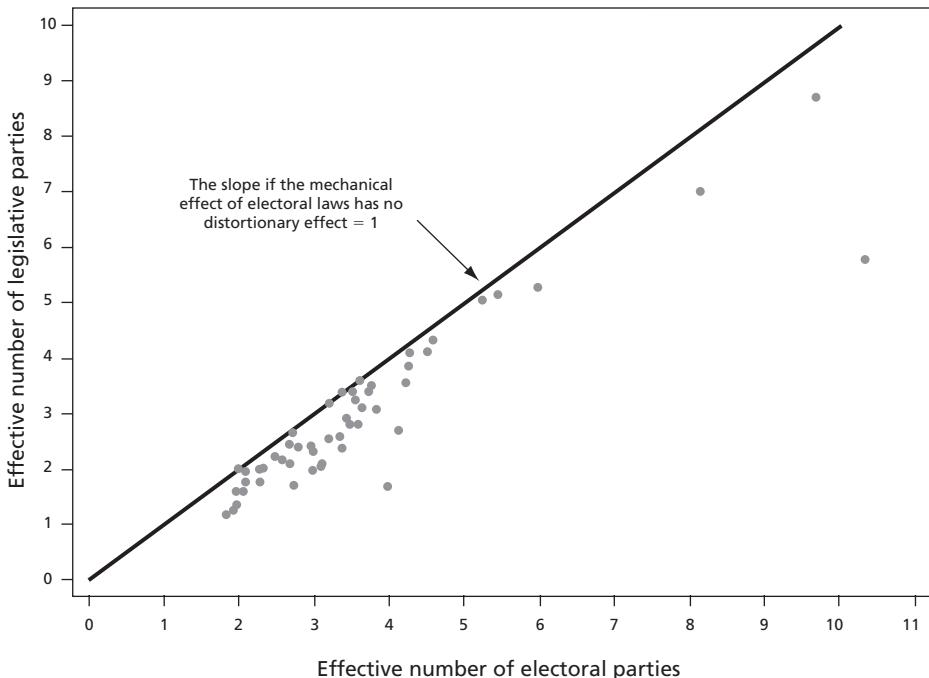
Note: Party system size is measured by the effective number of legislative parties. Electoral system permissiveness depends on whether a country employs single-member electoral districts (low permissiveness) or multimember electoral districts (high permissiveness). Social heterogeneity is measured by the effective number of ethnic groups in a country. Countries that have more effective ethnic groups than the median in the sample are coded as having high social heterogeneity; those with fewer ethnic groups than the median are coded as having low social heterogeneity. Data cover fifty-four democracies in the 1980s (Amorim Neto and Cox 1997).

using single-member electoral districts is just 1.68. The difference between these two numbers can be thought of as the reductive effect of nonpermissive electoral laws when social heterogeneity is high—this is the effect of closing the floodgates when the river is high. It turns out that the number of legislative parties is not significantly different between socially homogeneous countries that use single-member electoral districts (2.52) and socially homogeneous countries that use multimember districts (3.06). This suggests that closing the floodgates has a smaller effect on how much water gets downstream when the river is low than when the river is high. In other words, adopting a permissive electoral law will have little effect on party system size in socially homogeneous countries. This is exactly as predicted by Duverger's theory.

Another way to observe the important modifying effect that electoral laws play in influencing the size of party systems is to observe the way in which social cleavages are translated into votes for parties (electoral parties) and the way in which votes for parties are translated into seats (legislative parties). If an electoral system were perfectly proportional, political parties would receive the same share of seats in the legislature as the share of votes they receive in the electorate.

In Figure 13.8, we plot the relationship between the effective number of electoral and legislative parties in fifty-two democracies during the 1980s.¹⁷ If a country's electoral system translates votes into seats without any distortion, it will have the same number of legislative

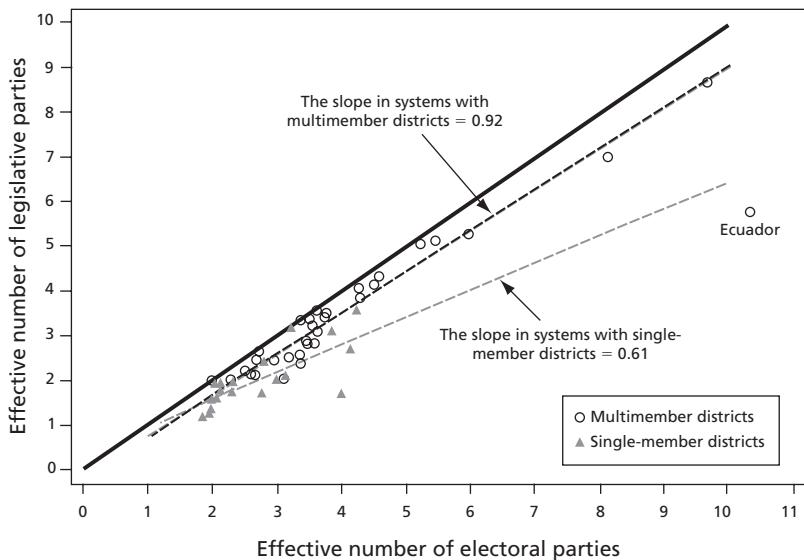
17. There are fifty-four observations in the original dataset (Amorim Neto and Cox 1997). Two of these observations, however, are recorded as having slightly more legislative parties than electoral parties. This is not actually possible, because there cannot be more parties that win seats than parties that win votes unless some seats are reserved for parties irrespective of how well they do at the polls. As a result, we drop these two observations here.

FIGURE 13.8**The Effective Number of Electoral and Legislative Parties in Fifty-two Democracies in the 1980s**

Source: Data are from Amorim Neto and Cox (1997).

parties as it does electoral parties. If this is the case, the country will fall somewhere on the 45-degree line in Figure 13.8. As you can see, some countries fall on or very close to this line. That most countries fall below this line, however, suggests that the mechanical process by which votes are turned into seats leads to a reduction in the number of parties as we go from parties with votes to parties with seats. The vertical distance between a country's position in Figure 13.8 and the 45-degree line can be thought of as a graphical representation of the "mechanical" effect of the particular country's electoral laws. In effect, this vertical distance is a measure of the distortion introduced by the process by which votes are turned into seats.

According to Duverger's theory, this distortion should be greater in countries that employ nonpermissive electoral systems than in countries that use permissive ones. In other words, the slope of the line that best fits observations from nonpermissive systems should be smaller (indicating more distortion) than the slope of the line that best fits observations from permissive systems. To see if this is the case, we split our sample into two groups—one with single-member districts (nonpermissive) and one with multimember districts (permissive). We then separately plotted the lines that best fits these two groups in Figure 13.9. As you can see, the slope of the line that best fits electoral systems with multimember districts is 0.92,

FIGURE 13.9**The Effective Number of Electoral and Legislative Parties in Nonpermissive and Permissive Electoral Systems**

Source: Data are from Amorim Neto and Cox (1997).

Note: Because Ecuador is a huge outlier, we ignored it when plotting the line that best fits the observations from countries employing multimember districts. Had we included it, the slope of the line for multimember districts would have been smaller (0.73) but still significantly larger than the slope of the line for single-member districts.

whereas the slope of the line that best fits electoral systems with single-member districts is 0.61. In other words, an additional electoral party is expected to result in 0.92 legislative parties in a permissive electoral system but just 0.61 legislative parties in a nonpermissive one. Put differently, the distortionary effect induced by the mechanical way in which votes are translated into seats reduces the effective number of parties by 8 percent in permissive electoral systems and by 39 percent in nonpermissive systems. On average, then, nonpermissive systems are almost five times more distortionary when it comes to translating votes into seats than are permissive electoral systems.

Duverger's theory indicates that the strong distortionary effect exhibited by nonpermissive electoral systems induces voters and political elites to engage in strategic behavior. The end result is that some social divisions are not represented in the party system. As we saw earlier in the chapter, there are many different social divisions in a given country that might create pressure for new parties. Political scientists interested in party system size, however, have tended to focus primarily on ethnic divisions. The number of ethnic divisions in a country is commonly measured in regard to the effective number of ethnic groups that exist.

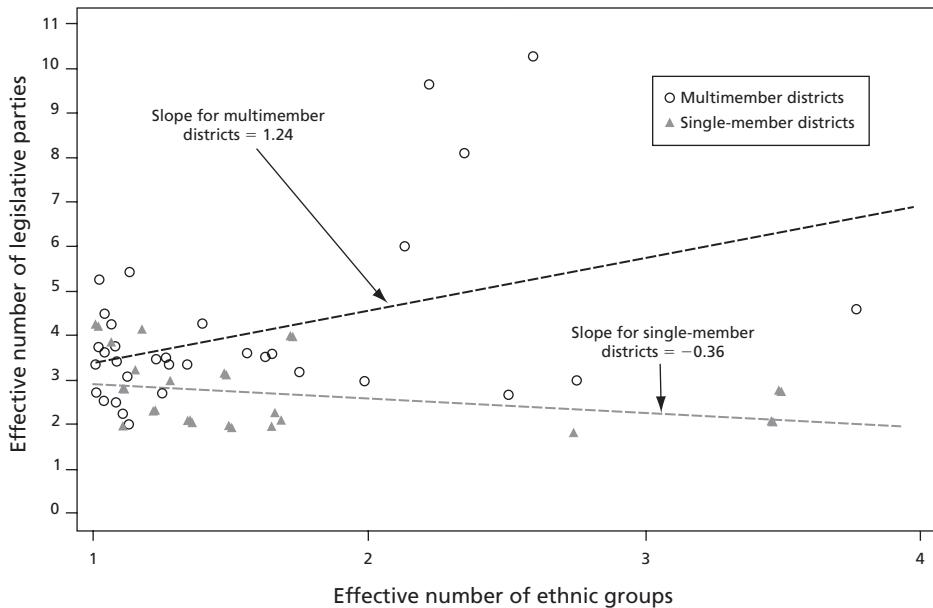
This measure is constructed in exactly the same way as our measures of the effective number of parties except that we use each ethnic group's share of the population in our calculations rather than each party's share of the vote or legislative seats. The effective numbers of ethnic groups for fifty-four democracies in the mid-1980s are shown in Table 13.2.

In a completely “permissive” electoral system, we might expect each ethnic group to have its own party. In contrast, Duverger’s theory indicates that nonpermissive systems will discourage the formation of small political parties to represent ethnic minorities. Since SMDP systems are “winner-take-all” systems, members of ethnic groups are likely to engage in what Chandra (2004) calls an “ethnic head count.” They will look to see if fellow group members are sufficiently numerous to win representation in their constituency. If they are, they are likely to form and vote for an ethnic party. If there are insufficient numbers of co-ethnics, however, they will either vote for a nonethnic party or redefine the boundaries of the ethnic group. As an example of this, Chandra (2004) describes how political entrepreneurs from the Kshatriya warrior caste in the state of Gujarat in India redefined the boundaries of their ethnic group to improve their electoral chances following India’s independence in 1947. Kshatriyas constituted just 5 percent of the Gujarat population, which made it extremely unlikely that they would win SMDP elections. “Rather than bowing to the ‘predetermined’ fate of a minority group . . . [Kshatriya entrepreneurs] engaged in a large-scale attempt to swell the numbers of their ‘own’ ethnic group by relaxing the strict criteria for membership. As one such entrepreneur openly admitted: ‘We have taken all the backward people who are martial by nature and called them Kshatriyas. Bhils, Ahirs, Bariyas and Dharalas are all Kshatriyas’” (Chandra 2004, 289).¹⁸

Nonpermissive electoral systems, such as SMDP, raise the bar on what constitutes a critical number of co-ethnics. Plurality rule means that an ethnic group has to be bigger than any other ethnic group in the district to win the seat. In contrast, ethnic parties looking to win seats in permissive systems just have to be big enough to surpass whatever natural or legal threshold exists. As a consequence, multimember district systems are permissive in that ethnic identity is likely to be translated into ethnic parties, whereas single-member district systems are nonpermissive in that they encourage ethnic voters and their leaders to cast their net more widely—by making cross-ethnic appeals or by defining their ethnic group more broadly. All of this implies that we should expect the existence of large numbers of ethnic groups to lead to a large number of parties in permissive electoral systems but not in non-permissive ones.

The information in Figure 13.10 provides considerable support for this prediction. In this figure, we plot the relationship between the number of ethnic groups in a country and the number of electoral parties. To see if this relationship depends on the type of electoral system used in these countries, we split our sample into the same two groups as before. We then separately plotted the lines that best fit those observations coming from countries

18. Another example of where ethnic boundaries are redefined in order to increase political influence can be seen in the United States, where Dominicans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and others are often mobilized as “Hispanics” or “Latinos.”

FIGURE 13.10
The Effective Number of Ethnic Groups and Electoral Parties in Nonpermissive and Permissive Electoral Systems


Source: Data are from Amorim Neto and Cox (1997).

using single-member districts and that best fit those observations coming from countries using multimember districts.

The first thing to note is that an additional ethnic group is associated with 1.24 additional electoral parties in permissive electoral systems. The upward sloping line in the figure indicates that more ethnic groups lead to more parties in countries with permissive electoral systems. In contrast, an additional ethnic group is associated with 0.36 fewer parties in nonpermissive electoral systems. This negative relationship in nonpermissive electoral systems is not statistically significant. As a result, the evidence in Figure 13.10 indicates that there is no relationship between the number of ethnic groups and the number of electoral parties in countries employing nonpermissive electoral systems. The difference in the slopes of the two lines can be seen as the differential impact of the strategic effect of permissive and nonpermissive electoral systems on how ethnic groups are translated into electoral parties. A second thing to note from Figure 13.10 is that the slope of the line best fitting those observations from countries employing permissive systems is greater than one (1.24). This indicates that each effective ethnic group is represented by more than one party. One way to interpret this,

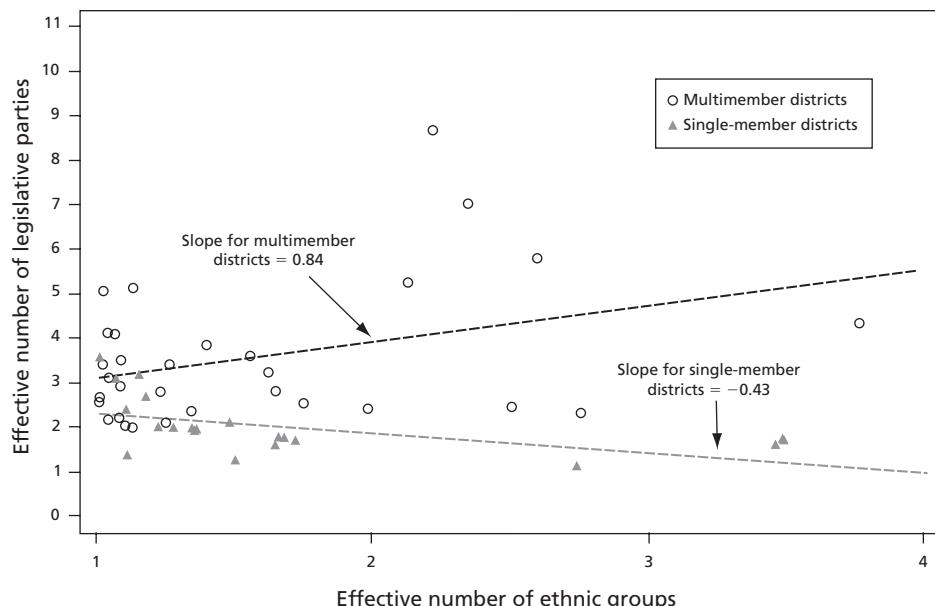
as our earlier discussion notes, is that ethnicity is just one source of conflict within society, and some parties are formed to represent different cleavages.

The best way to look at the *total* modifying effect of electoral laws—a combination of their mechanical and strategic effects—is to examine the relationship between the number of ethnic groups and the number of legislative parties. This relationship is plotted in Figure 13.11. As you can see, an additional ethnic group yields close to a full, effective party in the legislature in a permissive electoral system but essentially zero legislative parties in nonpermissive systems. In other words, ethnic heterogeneity increases the size of party systems in permissive systems but not in nonpermissive ones. This is exactly as Duverger's theory predicts.

So far, our analysis has been rather simple in that we have assumed that there are precisely two kinds of electoral laws—nonpermissive ones and permissive ones. Elsewhere in his classic work, Duverger says that the single most important dimension by which electoral systems differ is their district magnitude. Since single-member districts elect precisely one legislator, their district magnitude is obviously one. There is, however, a tremendous amount of variety in the district magnitude of multimember districts. Rather than simply distinguish

FIGURE 13.11

The Effective Number of Ethnic Groups and Legislative Parties in Nonpermissive and Permissive Electoral Systems



Source: Data are from Amorim Neto and Cox (1997).

between single-member and multimember districts, Clark and Golder (2006) use a country's average district magnitude to measure the permissiveness of the electoral system in a continuous, rather than a dichotomous, way. Results from their analyses, which are based on data from all democracies in the world from 1946 to 2000, are shown in Table 13.17. As you can see, increasing the number of ethnic groups by one when the average district magnitude is very large, such as in the Netherlands, yields about one and a half electoral parties and one and a quarter legislative parties. Increasing the number of ethnic groups by one when the average district magnitude is moderately large, such as in Greece, Spain, or Argentina, yields about 0.6 electoral parties and 0.5 legislative parties. Increasing the number of ethnic groups by one has no appreciable effect on party system size in countries that employ single-member districts; although there is an estimated increase of 0.11 electoral parties and 0.07 legislative parties in these countries, neither of these estimates is statistically distinguishable from zero. Overall, then, there is strong evidence that the size of a country's party system

TABLE 13.17
The Effect of an Additional Ethnic Group on the Effective Number of Electoral and Legislative Parties as District Magnitude Changes

District magnitude	Sample countries	Strategic effect Electoral parties	Mechanical effect Legislative parties
1	Australia	0.11	0.07
	Canada		
	United States		
	United Kingdom		
2 to 5	Chile	0.29 to 0.54	0.20 to 0.39
	Thailand		
	Ireland		
5 to 10	Greece	0.54 to 0.72	0.39 to 0.55
	Argentina		
	Spain		
	Honduras		
10 to 20	Portugal	0.72 to 0.90	0.55 to 0.72
	Finland		
	Brazil		
	Luxembourg		
120 to 150	Israel	1.37 to 1.43	1.24 to 1.31
	Netherlands		

Source: Clark and Golder (2006, 705).

depends on the interaction between social and institutional forces in the manner predicted by Duverger's theory.

CONCLUSION

Political scientists sometimes categorize democracies in terms of the type of party system that they employ. When they do this, they tend to focus on the number and size of the parties in a country. But what explains why some countries have many parties and others have few? As we have seen, party system size is shaped by the interaction between social heterogeneity and the permissiveness of electoral institutions. Social divisions provide the demand for distinctive representation and, hence, the driving force behind the multiplication of political parties. However, electoral laws modify the way that these social divisions are translated into parties that win votes (electoral parties) and parties that win seats (legislative parties). According to Duverger's theory, countries will only have large multiparty systems if they are characterized both by high levels of social heterogeneity *and* permissive electoral systems.

When electoral systems are permissive (high district magnitude), social heterogeneity is translated into electoral and legislative parties with very little distortion. In contrast, non-permissive (low district magnitude) electoral institutions are likely to produce party systems that are much smaller than the number of social cleavages in a country might lead us to imagine. In effect, nonpermissive electoral laws introduce a large amount of distortion in how social heterogeneity is translated into parties at the electoral and legislative levels. It is important to remember, though, that the precise amount of distortion that is introduced by nonpermissive electoral rules depends on the way that social heterogeneity is geographically distributed in a country. For example, if the supporters of small parties are distributed fairly evenly across electoral districts, then we should expect nonpermissive electoral laws to produce legislatures with many fewer parties than social cleavages. If the supporters of small parties are geographically concentrated, however, the reductive effect that nonpermissive electoral rules exercise on the number of parties will be greatly curtailed.

In this chapter, we also examined why it is that some party systems are divided primarily along ethnic lines, whereas others are divided mainly along class, religious, or linguistic ones. In other words, we looked at why countries have the types of parties that they do. As with party system size, we argued that the types of parties in a country are determined by the complex interplay of social and institutional forces. At some basic level, the patterns of social cleavages in a country provide the potential lines of conflict that could underpin the existence of distinct political parties. We also saw that institutions, such as electoral rules, are likely to determine which of these cleavages become activated or politicized. Overall, comparative politics scholars have made much greater progress in understanding the number of parties that exist in a country than in understanding the likely ideological or programmatic orientation of the parties. Given this, we hope that readers of this text will contribute to the construction and testing of theories relating to the types of parties found in different countries.

KEY CONCEPTS

- anti-clericalism, 556
- attribute, 565
- cross-cutting attributes**, 567
- Duverger's Hypothesis**, 585
- Duverger's Law**, 585
- Duverger's theory**, 583
- effective number of electoral parties**, 548
- effective number of legislative parties**, 548
- effective number of parties**, 548
- ethnic group, 563
- ethnic party, 564
- freezing hypothesis, 561
- identity category, 565
- laïcité, 556
- mechanical effect of electoral laws, 575
- Michels' iron law of oligarchy, 561
- multiparty system, 543
- nonpartisan democracy, 543
- one-party dominant system, 543
- party identification, 535
- political party, 534
- reinforcing attributes, 567
- single-party system, 543
- strategic effect of electoral laws, 579
- strategic entry, 580
- two-party system, 543
- whip, 540

PROBLEMS

The problems that follow address some of the more important concepts and ideas introduced in this chapter.

Party System Size

1. As we note in the chapter, the actual number of parties competing in an election or winning seats is not necessarily a good reflection of "how big" a country's party system is. As a result, political scientists often prefer to use a measure of the **effective number of parties** in a country to capture party system size. If you recall, the effective number of electoral parties when there are four actual parties is calculated as:

$$\text{effective number of electoral parties} = \frac{1}{v_1^2 + v_2^2 + v_3^2 + v_4^2},$$

where v_1 is the vote share of party 1, v_2 is the vote share of party 2, and so on. The effective number of legislative parties when there are four actual parties is calculated as:

$$\text{effective number of legislative parties} = \frac{1}{s_1^2 + s_2^2 + s_3^2 + s_4^2},$$

where s_1 is the seat share of party 1, s_2 is the seat share of party 2, and so on. These measures can easily be adapted to cases in which there are more parties or fewer parties. For example, the general formulas for the effective number of parties are:

$$\text{effective number of electoral parties} = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^P v_i^2},$$

and

$$\text{effective number of legislative parties} = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^P s_i^2},$$

where P is the total number of actual parties.

In Table 13.18, we show the results from the 2004 parliamentary elections in the Republic of South Africa. As you can see, nineteen parties won votes and twelve parties won seats. This would seem to suggest that South Africa has a large multiparty system. Answer the following questions.

TABLE 13.18

Parliamentary Election Results in the Republic of South Africa, 2004

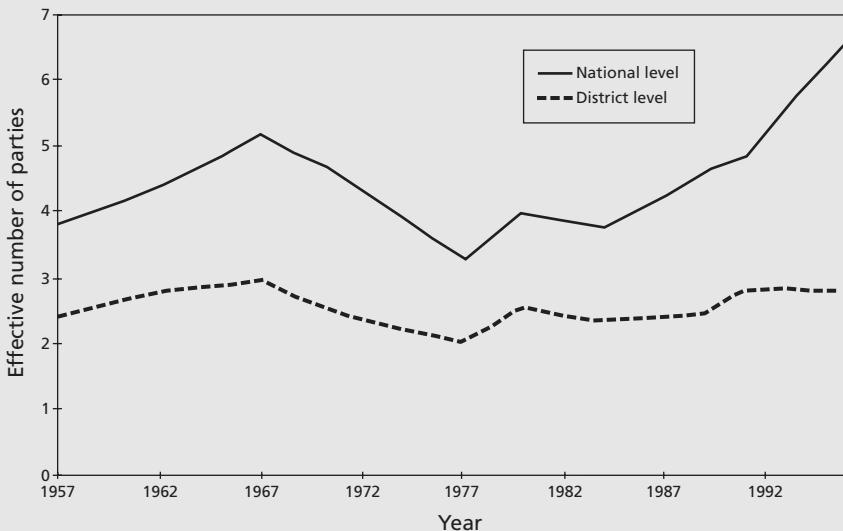
Party name	Votes (%)	Seats (no.)	Seats (%)
African National Congress (ANC)	69.70	279	69.80
Democratic Alliance/Demokratiese Alliansie (DA)	12.40	50	12.50
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	7.00	28	7.00
United Democratic Movement (UDM)	2.30	9	2.30
Independent Democrats (ID)	1.70	7	1.80
Nuwe Nasionale Party/New National Party (NNP)	1.70	7	1.80
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	1.60	7	1.80
Vryheidsfront Plus (VF Plus)	0.90	4	1.00
United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP)	0.80	3	0.80
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)	0.70	3	0.80
Minority Front (MF)	0.40	2	0.50
Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO)	0.30	1	0.25
Christian Democratic Party (CDP)	0.10	0	0.00
Nasionale Aksie (NA)	0.10	0	0.00
Peace and Justice Congress (PJC)	0.10	0	0.00
The Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA)	0.10	0	0.00
New Labour Party (NLP)	0.10	0	0.00
United Front (UF)	0.10	0	0.00
Employment Movement for South Africa (EMSA)	0.10	0	0.00
The Organisation Party (TOP)	0.00	0	0.00
Keep It Straight and Simple Party (KISS)	0.00	0	0.00

- a. What is the effective number of electoral parties in the 2004 South African elections? What is the effective number of legislative parties? (You should probably use a calculator for this.)
- b. Compare the effective numbers of electoral and legislative parties in these elections with the actual number of parties winning votes and seats. Which measure—the actual or effective number of parties—does a better job, in your opinion, of capturing the size of the South African party system? Why? Are there circumstances in which you would be more likely to use the actual number of parties as the measure of party system size? Are there circumstances in which you would be more likely to use the effective number of parties?
- c. Based on your answers to the previous questions and the information in Table 13.18, what do you think is the most accurate classification of the South African party system: nonpartisan, single party, one-party dominant, two party, or multiparty?
- d. Based on the effective numbers of electoral and legislative parties that you calculated, does the mechanical effect of South Africa's electoral system introduce much distortion in the way that votes are translated into seats? Based on your answer to this question, what type of electoral system do you think South Africa employs—a permissive or non-permissive one? Use Internet resources to find out whether South Africa really does use a permissive or a nonpermissive electoral system.

Party System Nationalization

2. India uses an SMDP electoral system to elect its legislators to the Lok Sabha, the Indian lower house of parliament. In the 2004 elections, nearly forty different political parties won seats. The effective number of legislative parties was 6.52.¹⁹
 - a. Given that India employs the highly nonpermissive SMDP electoral system, can you think of reasons why we don't see a two-party system similar to the ones found in the United States or Jamaica?
 - b. In Figure 13.12, we illustrate the effective number of parties at the district and national level in India from 1957 to 1995. As you can see, the effective number of parties at the district level always hovers around two. Explain why this is the case with reference to the mechanical and strategic effects of electoral laws.

19. See the Electoral Systems Web site at http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/ElSystems/index.php.

FIGURE 13.12**Number of Parties at the National and District Level in India, 1957–1995**

Source: Chhibber and Kollman (1998).

- c. Although the effective number of parties at the district level in India always hovers around two, the number of parties at the national level exhibits a considerable amount of variation, ranging from a low of about three in the mid-1970s to a high of over six in the 1990s. One thing that is noticeable in Figure 13.12 is that the size of the national party system in India was lower in the 1970s than in the 1960s or in the 1980s and 1990s. In effect, there is evidence that the Indian party system was more nationalized in the 1970s than in other periods. Without knowing anything in particular about Indian politics, can you try to explain this variation over time?

Political Identity Formation

3. In Table 13.19, we illustrate the distribution of attributes in a hypothetical Los Angeles community that is divided along language and race lines.

TABLE 13.19**Distribution of Attributes in a Hypothetical Los Angeles Community (percent)**

	English speaker	Spanish speaker	Korean speaker
Latino	20	31	0
Asian	17	0	14
Black	10	0	0
White	8	0	0

- a. If you know that someone is an English speaker, can you predict with much certainty what racial group he or she belongs to? If you know that someone is a Latino, can you predict with much certainty what language he or she speaks? If you know that someone is Asian, can you predict with much certainty what language he or she speaks? Based on your answers to these questions, would you say that the attributes in this hypothetical Los Angeles community are cross-cutting or reinforcing?
- b. Let's assume that in order to win political office in this Los Angeles community, a candidate needs to win 50 percent of the vote. Let's also assume that political entrepreneurs will try to mobilize voters along either racial or linguistic lines. If this is the case, what identity categories could be activated or politicized to win the election? In other words, what identity categories (racial or linguistic) form minimal winning coalitions? If you have answered this question correctly, you will find that there are two identity categories that form minimal winning coalitions. Which of these two identity categories do you think is most likely to be politicized and why?
- c. In the previous question, you found that there were two identity categories that could form minimal winning coalitions in this Los Angeles community. Are there any groups of individuals that are members of both minimal winning coalitions? If so, who are they? Do you think that being in both potential winning coalitions is politically advantageous? If so, why?

CHAPTER 13

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CHAPTER

6

CONSEQUENCES OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**BY WILLIAM ROBERTS CLARK, MATT GOLDER AND SONA NADENICHECK
GOLDER**

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Consequences of Democratic Institutions

Proportional representation will thus create a situation where everyone has his will represented exactly but where no one's will is carried out.

Dankwart A. Rustow, "Some Observations on Proportional Representation," 1950

- Democratic institutions reflect the interests of voters in different ways. Two fundamentally different perspectives on how democracy should work are known as the majoritarian and consensus visions of democracy. These two visions of democracy have important implications for things like accountability, government mandates, and representation.
- Political institutions influence economic policy and outcomes in different ways too. Research suggests that the choice of electoral institutions in a country has an important influence on who gets to govern and what types of economic policies they are likely to implement when given the chance.
- Electoral laws and federalism affect the likelihood of ethnic conflict. Comparative politics may have advice to offer constitutional designers in ethnically or religiously diverse societies.
- Particular institutional choices might influence the survival of democracy. In particular, we look at whether the prospects for democratic consolidation are greater in countries that adopt parliamentarism or in countries that adopt presidentialism.

As we have seen over the last four chapters, there is what sometimes appears to be a dizzying array of different democratic institutions around the world. For example, democracies can be presidential, parliamentary, or mixed. Democracies can employ majoritarian, proportional, or mixed electoral rules. Democracies can have many parties or just a few, they can be federal or unitary, they can be bicameral or unicameral, and they can allow constitutional review or not. Democracies can also have very different types of government: single-party majority, minimal winning coalition, surplus majority, minority coalition, or single party minority. Indeed, the list of democratic features presented here barely scratches the surface of the set of institutional choices that are available to designers of new constitutions. For instance, the decision to establish a parliamentary democracy with proportional electoral rules simply opens up a whole new round of institutional choices that need to be made: whether to require an investiture vote, whether to employ a constructive vote of no confidence, what district magnitude to use, whether to employ an electoral threshold, whether to use the single transferable vote or some party list system, and so on.

The immense variety of democratic institutions observed in the world should come as no surprise. As our discussion of Arrow's Theorem in Chapter 10 illustrates, there is no ideal decision-making mechanism; institutional choice is ultimately an exercise in the choice of "second bests" and likely depends on the particular context in which a country finds itself. This does not mean, however, that constitutional designers mix and match institutions with reckless abandon. As seen in the next section of this chapter, for example, particular sets of institutions repeatedly recur around the world. On the whole, constitutional designers choose particular sets of institutions to bring about the political, social, and economic outcomes that they desire. This presumes, of course, that they have a good idea about how different democratic institutions affect these outcomes. It is to the effects of particular democratic institutions that we now turn.

In this chapter, we introduce you to four different literatures, each of which examines the effect of particular democratic institutions on important political, social, and economic outcomes. In the first section of this chapter, we examine the way in which various democratic institutions reflect the interests of voters. Democracy gets much of its moral authority from being a form of government "of the people, for the people, and by the people." In Chapter 10, we examined the theoretical reasons why such a notion of democracy is complicated. In this chapter, we evaluate the extent to which different institutions facilitate this notion *in practice*. We then examine some of the ways in which the institutions that vary across democracies influence economic policy and economic outcomes. We report findings from this literature suggesting that the choice of electoral institutions has an important influence on who gets to govern and what types of economic policies they are likely to implement when given the chance. Later, we consider the effects of electoral laws and federalism on the likelihood of ethnic conflict in an attempt to discover whether comparative politics has any advice to offer constitutional designers in ethnically or religiously diverse societies. In the final section of this chapter, we use the knowledge we have learned in the second half of this book

about institutions to supplement some of the answers provided in the first half of the book about the economic and cultural determinants of the emergence and survival of democracy. We then ask if there are particular institutional choices, such as parliamentarism or presidentialism that might influence the survival of democracy.

COMBINING INSTITUTIONS: MAJORITY OR CONSENSUS DEMOCRACY?

As Arrow's Theorem makes clear, in the designing of institutions there is a fundamental tension between the desire to guarantee that a group of individuals will be able to make coherent and stable choices (group transitivity) on the one hand and the ability to guarantee the freedom of these individuals to form their own preferences (universal admissibility) and have those preferences influence group decisions (non-dictatorship) on the other. In effect, constitutional designers face an institutional "trilemma" (see Figure 10.10) in that they are only able to design institutions that satisfy at most two of these three desirable attributes—group transitivity, universal admissibility, and non-dictatorship. There is no way around it—constitutional designers have to make trade-offs.

Although constitutional designers could theoretically make different trade-offs for each individual institution that they create, a look at the real world suggests that they frequently make a particular trade-off for the system of government as a whole. In practice, constitutional designers have (implicitly) responded to Arrow's institutional "trilemma" in one of two ways—by creating institutions that disperse power or by creating institutions that concentrate it. Democracies in which power is concentrated are referred to as majoritarian democracies, whereas democracies in which power is dispersed are referred to as consensus democracies (Lijphart 1984).¹ Thus, although there are theoretically many possible combinations of democratic institutions that could occur in the world, political scientists often think in terms of two basic types of democracy: majoritarian or consensus (Steiner 1971; Powell 1982, 2000; Huber and Powell 1994; Lijphart 1999). We now describe these two types of democracy, compare their objectives in regard to producing citizen representation, and evaluate how well each performs in light of its objectives.

Majoritarian and Consensus Visions of Democracy

As we have noted elsewhere, policy decisions in contemporary democracies are not made by citizens themselves but rather by their elected representatives. If democracy is understood as a system in which citizens should be able to influence policy decisions, then it follows that elections must play an important role in any well-functioning democracy. Indeed, to the

1. Majoritarian democracies are sometimes referred to as "Westminster democracies" and consensus democracies are sometimes referred to as "proportional democracies." We believe that the terms *majoritarian* and *consensus* are more indicative of how these models of democracy are supposed to work in practice.

extent that elections allow citizens to participate in the policymaking process, they can be considered the primary “instruments of democracy” (Pitkin 1967; Cohen 1971; Powell 2000). It turns out that the influence that the citizenry should be able to exert over the policy decisions made by their elected representatives can be thought of from two entirely different perspectives, each of which has a long historical tradition in democratic theory. These two perspectives can be thought of as two different visions of how democracy should work (Powell 2000). These two visions of democracy see the role that elections play in giving citizens influence over the policymaking process in very different ways.

According to the majoritarian vision, elections are supposed to be events in which citizens get to choose between two alternative teams of politicians that are competing to form the government. Whichever team wins an electoral majority gets to form the government and is supposed to implement the policies that it ran on during the election campaign. In this majoritarian vision, citizens know that whichever team forms the government is responsible for the policies that do (or do not) get implemented during its tenure. As a result, citizens can use their evaluations of the policy record when deciding whether to reward or punish the incumbents in the following election. If citizens wish to reward the government for their performance in office, then they vote for the incumbent at election time. And if citizens wish to punish the government, then they vote for the opposition team. As this description of the majoritarian vision of democracy illustrates, citizens get to exert influence over policy decisions only at election time. In effect, citizens choose a team of politicians at election time to implement the set of policies outlined in the team’s campaign manifesto. Only when the next election rolls around do citizens get another opportunity to assert their influence over the policymaking process—they get to assert their influence by deciding whether the policies of the incumbent government should continue or whether they should be replaced by the policy proposals of the opposition. Thus, citizens are expected to exert no influence over policy decisions between elections in the majoritarian vision of democracy.

One of the central ideas behind the majoritarian vision of democracy is, as its name suggests, that policy should be determined by what the majority of citizens want; in effect, citizens who hold minority preferences should have no influence in the policymaking process. As Tocqueville ([1835] 1945, 264), an early proponent of this view, puts it, “The very essence of democratic government consists in the absolute sovereignty of the majority.” To make sure that only the majority rule, the majoritarian vision of democracy essentially requires that all policymaking power be concentrated in the hands of a majority government. Power is not to be dispersed among different political actors or institutions because this will almost certainly require the involvement of minority opposition members in the policymaking process; this is something that is seen as illegitimate. In fact, the ability of citizens to control their elected representatives and, hence, policy decisions through the electoral process requires that there be a clear concentration of power in the hands of a single majority team of politicians in the majoritarian vision of democracy.

According to the consensus vision of democracy, elections are supposed to be events in which citizens choose representative agents from as wide a range of social groups as possible, and these agents then go on to bargain over policy in the legislature. In this vision of democracy, elections are not designed to serve as some sort of referendum on the set of policies implemented by the government as they are in the majoritarian vision of democracy. Instead, elections simply provide citizens with the opportunity to choose representatives who they believe will be effective advocates for their interests when bargaining over policy finally begins after the election. With this in mind, one of the central goals of elections in the consensus vision of democracy is to produce a legislature that is, in some sense, a miniature reflection of society as a whole. Such an emphasis on having a legislature whose preferences accurately correspond to those of the nation as a whole has a long history in democratic theory, dating back at least as far as the seventeenth century (Pitkin 1967; Skinner 2005). For example, Burke ([1770] 1949, 28) writes that the “virtue, spirit, and essence” of a legislature lies “in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation,” whereas Mill ([1859] 1991, 116) claims that a legislature should be “an arena in which not only the general opinion of the nation, but that of every section of it . . . can produce itself in full light.”

It is important to note that the elected representatives in the consensus vision of democracy are *not* elected to enact a precise set of policies; rather, they are elected to bargain with each other in the legislature over what policies should be implemented. This frequently means the existence of shifting majorities in the legislature as political actors build different legislative coalitions, depending on the particular policy that is under consideration. It should be easy to see from this that the consensus vision of democracy has a view very different from that of the majoritarian vision of when citizens should be able to influence the policymaking process. Whereas we have seen that the ability of citizens to influence policy decisions essentially begins and ends at election time in the majoritarian vision of democracy, in the consensus vision of democracy citizens are able, through the ongoing bargaining of their elected representatives, to continue to exert influence over the policymaking process between elections. In effect, the consensus vision of democracy demands that policy decisions continuously respond to changes in the preferences of the citizens rather than just at election time.

One of the central ideas behind the consensus vision of democracy is that policy should be determined by as many citizens (and their representatives) as possible. Unlike the majoritarian vision of democracy, citizens with majority preferences are not to be given any privileged status in the policymaking process; instead, all groups of citizens, including minorities, should have the power to influence policy decisions in direct proportion to their electoral size. In line with this view, Dahl (1989, 104) writes, “If we accept the idea of Intrinsic Equality, then no process of lawmaking can be morally justified if it does not take equally into account the interests of every person subject to the laws.” One obvious objective of the consensus vision of democracy, then, is to prevent the majority from riding roughshod over the preferences of the minority. As proponents of this vision of democracy note, the best way

to guarantee that the majority take account of minority preferences is to disperse power in such a way that the minority has some valuable policymaking influence with which to defend its interests. If power becomes too concentrated, then there is always the risk that the majority will capture it and use it against the minority; this is something that is seen as illegitimate.

Mueller (1991, 334) summarizes the differences between the majoritarian and consensus visions of democracy in the following way: "Basically there are two alternatives: (1) the citizens can elect 'a government,' i.e. select that party whose policies they most prefer, that party they wish to see run the executive branch, or (2) the citizens can elect a truly representative body, i.e. a group of representatives that will vote as the citizens themselves would have voted had they taken part in a grand 'town meeting' of the entire electorate." Lijphart (1999, 1–2) provides an even more succinct summary of the differences when he argues that the two visions of democracy can essentially be defined in terms of the answer they give to the following question: "Who will govern and to whose interests should the government be responsive?" For the majoritarian vision, the answer is a majority of the people. And for the

The **majoritarian vision of democracy** is based on the idea that power should be concentrated in the hands of the majority. The **consensus vision of democracy** is based on the idea that power should be dispersed among as many political actors as possible.

consensus vision, the answer is as many people as possible. In effect, the **majoritarian vision of democracy** demands that political power be concentrated in the hands of the majority, whereas the **consensus vision of democracy** demands that it be dispersed among as many actors as possible.

Why might political actors wish to privilege one vision of democracy over another? Theoretically, one could argue that the majoritarian vision of democracy would be better in some circumstances and the consensus vision of democracy in others. Powell (2000, 8–9) notes:

Where the issues are clear-cut and a unified citizenry has an overwhelmingly clear set of preferences, voters might well prefer to take most of the choices out of the hands of the negotiators and be sure that the election results are in themselves decisive. But where the issues are complex, the citizens divided, and problems that the citizens cannot anticipate arise, each group of citizens may well prefer to be represented by trustworthy agents who can be relied upon to negotiate for their constituents. Citizens who fear being in the minority on the issues that dominate a single election outcome, but anticipate being part of a majority on other issues, may especially prefer to have representative agents bargaining for them anew on each separate issue.

Practically speaking, for a democracy to function efficiently it needs relatively stable rules, and so key institutions cannot be continuously restructured depending on whether the most important issues of the day are "clear-cut" or "complex." Thus, a choice about whether to set up a majoritarian- or consensus-style democracy must be made and this choice is likely to

endure. But how does one go about making this choice? Which institutions, or sets of institutions, create systems of government that most closely approximate one or the other of the two different visions of democracy? We now reexamine the institutions discussed in Chapters 11–14 in light of whether they concentrate or disperse power; that is, in light of whether they pull systems of government toward the majoritarian or consensus vision of democracy.

Majoritarian and Consensus Institutions

Every democracy has a set of rules that specify how policy gets made and who gets to make it. As we saw in Chapter 14, many of these rules are explicitly written down in a country's constitution. If a constitution encourages the election of single-party legislative majorities that can control the executive and concentrates power in the hands of a single-party government, then it can be considered majoritarian in nature. If the constitution encourages the equitable representation of multiple parties and the dispersal of policymaking power among these parties, however, then it can be considered consensual in nature (Powell 2000, 21). It is possible to think of the two visions of democracy as representing opposing end points of a majoritarian-consensus dimension that captures how widely power is dispersed. To a large extent, the institutions that we examined in Chapters 11–14 can be thought of in terms of whether they disperse or concentrate power. Depending on their characteristics, therefore, they influence the extent to which constitutions are majoritarian or consensual.

In Table 15.1, we illustrate when a particular "institution" can be considered more majoritarian or more consensual.² As we will demonstrate, the decisions to adopt majoritarian or consensus institutions are not entirely independent of one another. In other words, choosing to adopt certain majoritarian institutions can virtually guarantee having to live with other majoritarian institutions. Similarly, choosing to adopt certain consensus institutions virtually guarantees having to live with other consensus institutions. This is because many of these institutions are causally related. Indeed, it is this causal interdependence among institutions that helps to explain why constitutional designers are not mixing and matching institutions with reckless abandon and why democracies, despite their great institutional variety, tend to come in just two main types—majoritarian or consensus (Lijphart 1999; Powell 2000).

It is relatively easy to see how electoral systems fit onto a majoritarian-consensus dimension. As our discussion of electoral systems in Chapter 12 points out, majoritarian electoral systems tend to concentrate power in that only those candidates or political parties with the

2. The information in Table 15.1 gives the impression that institutions are either majoritarian or consensus. This, however, is somewhat misleading because the extent to which institutions disperse or concentrate power is best thought of as a continuum rather than a dichotomy. For example, some forms of bicameralism disperse power more than others. Similarly, some electoral systems are more proportional than others. The point here is that the extent to which particular institutions, such as the electoral system, bicameralism, federalism, and so on, disperse power depends crucially on exactly what form they take.

TABLE 15.1**Institutions and the Majoritarian-Consensus Dimension**

Institution	Majoritarian	Consensus
Electoral system	Majoritarian	Proportional
Party system	Two parties	Many parties
Government type	Single-party majority	Coalition/minority
Federalism	Unitary	Federal
Bicameralism	Unicameral	Bicameral
Constitutionalism	Legislative supremacy constitution	Higher law constitution
Regime type	Parliamentary	Presidential
Interest-group relations	Pluralism	Corporatism
Prototypical examples	Barbados, New Zealand (prior to 1996), United Kingdom	Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland

most votes win; indeed, in most majoritarian systems only one candidate wins. In contrast, proportional electoral systems tend to disperse power among candidates or parties in proportion to the share of electoral support that they win. As a result, even candidates winning minority support obtain some policymaking power. The more proportional the electoral system, the more it disperses power and the more it approximates the consensus vision of democracy. The size of the party system can also be conceptualized along a majoritarian-consensus dimension in a fairly straightforward manner. For example, power is concentrated in two-party systems in that there are two dominant political parties in the legislature and only these parties have a realistic chance of holding power. In contrast, power is dispersed in multiparty systems in that there are multiple parties in the legislature and more than two parties have a realistic chance of holding power. The more parties there are in the party system, the more that power is dispersed. The type of government in a country also fits neatly into our notion of a majoritarian-consensus continuum. For instance, power is concentrated in the hands of a single party in single-party majority governments but dispersed more widely among multiple parties in coalition or minority governments.³

3. That power is dispersed in coalition governments is largely self-evident in that there are multiple parties in the cabinet. It is important to recognize, however, that power is also dispersed in minority governments. This is even true of single-party minority governments, at least in parliamentary democracies. Although there is only one cabinet party in single-party minority governments, we know from our discussion of minority governments in parliamentary democracies that some other party or parties in the legislature must be supporting the government for it to remain in power. The ability of these “support” parties to bring the government down means that the government will have to share policymaking power with them if it wants to stay in office.

These three institutions—the electoral system, the party system, and the type of government—are all causally related. As our discussion of Duverger’s theory in Chapter 13 illustrates, majoritarian electoral systems tend to be associated with small party systems, whereas proportional electoral systems tend to be associated with large party systems (at least in countries with sufficiently high levels of social heterogeneity). And as our discussion of the government formation process in Chapter 11 illustrates, the size of the party system, in turn, influences the type of government that forms. Specifically, single-party majority governments are much more likely to form when there are few political parties, because small party systems increase the likelihood that a single party will win a legislative majority. In contrast, coalition and minority governments are much more likely to form when there are many political parties, because large party systems reduce the likelihood that a single party will win a legislative majority. As this indicates, the choice of a constitutional designer to adopt a particular type of electoral system—majoritarian or proportional—tends also to be a choice to have a particular type of party system and government. This is why we tend to see either (a) countries with a majoritarian electoral system, a small party system, and a high frequency of single-party majority governments, or (b) countries with a proportional electoral system, a large party system, and a high frequency of coalition or minority governments.

Federalism, bicameralism, and constitutionalism are three other institutions that can easily be conceptualized in terms of a majoritarian-consensus dimension. For example, federal states disperse power between at least two territorial levels of government; in contrast, unitary states concentrate power in the national government. Bicameral states disperse power between two legislative chambers; in contrast, unicameral states concentrate power in a single legislative chamber. Higher law constitutions disperse power by giving certain institutions, like constitutional courts, the authority to invalidate acts of government; in contrast, legislative supremacy constitutions concentrate power in the legislature and do not allow constitutional review.

To a large extent, federalism, bicameralism, and constitutionalism are also closely related. Why? Imagine that you are a constitutional designer for a country and that you see significant advantages to setting up a decentralized form of government to better take account of regional disparities in preferences. A problem, though, is that for decentralized forms of government to be stable and credible, it must be the case that regional governments do not try to take advantage of each other and, more important, that the central government does not try to usurp power from the regions. If these conditions do not hold, then some constituent regional units might decide that it is preferable to withdraw from the system of government altogether. But how can these conditions be achieved? One way you might think to do this is to explicitly write into the constitution that sovereignty is to be divided between governments from different territorial levels. In other words, you might think to write a federal constitution, thereby constitutionally protecting the decentralized system of government. Although this could help, you should ask yourself why actors would necessarily act in accordance with the federal system merely because it is written down somewhere in the constitu-

tion. Why, for example, would a central government interested in centralizing power comply with federal provisions in a constitution?

Concerns about compliance might lead you to create an institution like a constitutional court with the authority to punish attempts by political actors to violate constitutional federal provisions. But would the creation of something like a constitutional court be sufficient to make the federal system stable and credible? Not necessarily. For example, a legislative majority at the national level may emerge that wishes to amend the constitution so as to create a more centralized and unitary form of government.⁴ To prevent this from happening, you might decide to create a system of checks and balances that makes it harder for national majorities to form that wish to centralize power. One way to do this is to establish a bicameral legislature in which the upper legislative chamber is specifically designed to represent the interests of the different regions.⁵ This upper chamber would obviously have a stake in maintaining the federal system. By combining these institutions—federalism, bicameralism, and constitutionalism—it is possible to enhance the stability and credibility of decentralized systems of government (Bednar, Eskridge, and Ferejohn 2001; Bednar, forthcoming). The line of reasoning that we have just outlined helps to explain why constitutional designers who wish to disperse power in the form of a decentralized system of government frequently choose to adopt all three of these institutions.

As the information in Table 15.1 illustrates, the choice of whether to adopt a parliamentary or presidential form of democracy can also be thought of in terms of a majoritarian-consensus continuum. Presidential systems fall at the consensus end of the spectrum because power is dispersed between the executive and the legislature. Indeed, presidential systems are often referred to as “separation of powers” systems for precisely this reason. In contrast, parliamentary systems fall at the majoritarian end of the spectrum because power is concentrated in the hands of an executive that is supported by a legislative majority. Where, you might wonder, do mixed regimes fall on the majoritarian-consensus dimension? To a large extent it depends on whether there is cohabitation or not. Recall from Chapter 11 that cohabitation occurs when the president is from one political bloc and the prime minister is from another. Mixed regimes fall at the consensus end of the spectrum when there is cohab-

4. You might also wonder whether a constitutional court would be sufficiently independent of the national government to check its attempts at centralizing power. As we saw in Chapter 14, this concern arises because a constitutional court has to rely on other institutions to enforce its decisions (see Box 14.4, “Judicial Power and the Judicialization of Politics”). To the extent that a constitutional court is institutionally dependent on other national institutions to enforce its decisions, it may act like a creature of the national government and be reluctant to check its powers (Bednar, Eskridge, and Ferejohn 2001).

5. There are obviously other ways to help fragment political power at the national level so as to prevent the emergence of national majorities that might wish to centralize power. For example, electoral systems that inhibit the formation of unified and disciplined political parties could be adopted. As we saw in our discussion of electoral rules in Chapter 12, there are many ways, such as choosing open instead of closed party lists, that this might be done. Another is to adopt institutions that encourage the formation of regionally based, as opposed to nationally based, political parties (see Box 13.4, “Nationalizing Party Systems”). Indeed, several scholars have argued that having a decentralized party system is crucial for having a healthy federal system (Riker 1964).

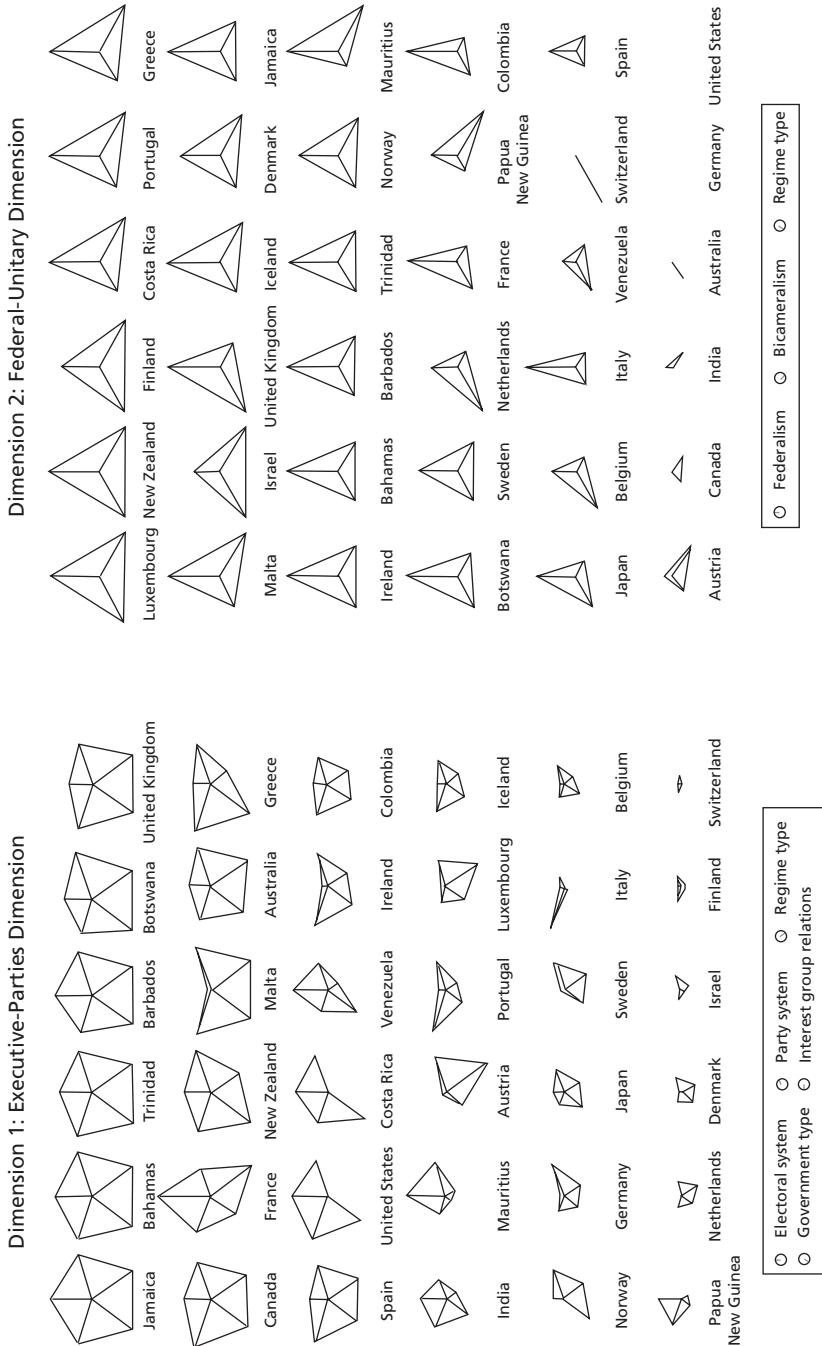
itation, because power is dispersed and divided between the president and the prime minister. Mixed regimes fall at the majoritarian end of the spectrum, though, when there is no cohabitation, because power is concentrated in the hands of the president, who effectively runs the entire show.

Finally, how interest group relations are organized can also be conceptualized in terms of a majoritarian-consensus dimension. Recall from Chapter 11 that corporatist interest group relations occur when key social and economic actors, such as labor, business, and agriculture groups, are integrated into the formal policymaking process. In contrast, pluralist interest group relations occur when interest groups compete in the political marketplace outside of the formal policymaking process. By bringing interest groups into the formal policymaking process, corporatism disperses power. And by excluding interest groups from the formal policymaking process, pluralism concentrates it. As our discussion of the government formation process in Chapter 11 also indicates, the structure of interest group relations in a country is causally related to the type of government that is likely to form. As we learned there, corporatism tends to encourage the formation of minority governments—another institution at the consensus end of the spectrum.

In Figure 15.1, using data from Lijphart (1999, 311–314), we provide additional information showing how majoritarian institutions tend to go together and how consensus institutions tend to go together. Lijphart examines thirty-six democracies around the world from 1945 to 1996 and codes their institutions in regard to how majoritarian or consensus-oriented they are. In Figure 15.1, we use star-plots (one for each country) to graphically portray this information for the eight institutions shown earlier in Table 15.1.⁶ Following Lijphart, we divide the eight institutions into two dimensions: executive-parties dimension and federal-unitary dimension. The executive-parties dimension, shown in the left half of Figure 15.1, includes information on the electoral system, party system, regime type, government type, and interest group relations. And the federal-unitary dimension, shown in the right half of Figure 15.1, includes information on federalism, bicameralism, and constitutionality. The lines radiating from the center of each star-plot represent the various institutions in each dimension. The lengths of these lines indicate how majoritarian these institutions are—the longer the lines, the more majoritarian the institution. This means that the area encapsulated by each star-plot provides a good visual representation of how majoritarian each country's institutions are as a whole. Countries with large star-plots are very majoritarian, and countries with small star-plots are very consensus oriented. On the executive-parties dimension, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Trinidad are the most majoritarian, whereas

6. Lijphart uses different scales to measure how majoritarian each institution is. For example, he measures how majoritarian the party system is by the effective number of legislative parties and he measures how majoritarian the government type is by the percentage of time that there is a single-party majority government. To make sure all of the institutions are measured on comparable scales, we standardize each of Lijphart's measures. It is these standardized measures that are plotted in Figure 15.1.

FIGURE 15.1 How Majoritarian Is Your Democracy?



Source: Data are from Lijphart (1999).
Note: The lines radiating from the center of each star-plot represent the various institutions. The lengths of these lines indicate how majoritarian these institutions are: the longer the lines, the more majoritarian the institution. Data are for the period 1945 to 1996.

Switzerland, Finland, and Israel are the least majoritarian. On the federal-unitary dimension, Luxembourg, New Zealand, and Finland are the most majoritarian, whereas the United States, Germany, and Australia are the least majoritarian. As Figure 15.1 illustrates, most countries tend to have either a relatively large star-plot (majoritarian) or a relatively small star-plot (consensus).

Historically, the prototype for majoritarian democracies has been the United Kingdom. Indeed, majoritarian democracies are sometimes referred to as Westminster-style democracies because the British House of Commons meets in the Palace of Westminster in the heart of London. According to Lijphart, though, the country that comes closest to the ideal type of majoritarian democracy during his period of study (1945–1996) is New Zealand. New Zealand fits the “Westminster” model even better than the United Kingdom does because two large parties dominated the parliament and one of the two always had a legislative majority. Unlike the United Kingdom, third parties barely managed to get representation in the New Zealand Parliament.⁷ In addition to having pluralist interest group relations, New Zealand is also unitary and unicameral. All in all, New Zealand’s institutions from 1945 to 1996 were extremely majoritarian. As we mentioned at the end of Chapter 12, though, New Zealand has recently adopted more consensus-oriented institutions and is no longer the prime example of a majoritarian democracy. Specifically, New Zealand replaced its single-member district plurality electoral system with a more proportional mixed electoral system in 1996. This has led to an increase in the size of the party system and an increase in the frequency of coalition, as opposed to single-party majority, governments. Even the United Kingdom is not the model of a Westminster system that it once was if you take into account recent policies toward devolution and the increasing strength of third parties. Today, the most majoritarian democracies in the world exist in the Caribbean in places like Barbados, the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The prototype for consensus democracies is Belgium. Belgium is federal (since 1993), bicameral (since 1995), and employs constitutional review (since 1984). Its PR electoral system encourages a large party system, which in turn generates broad coalition governments. Belgian cabinets are required to have an equal number of French- and Flemish-speaking ministers (not including the prime minister). Because the parties are split along linguistic lines, the language-parity requirement has the effect of increasing the number of parties in a typical Belgian cabinet. In order to implement any new policies in Belgium, many different actors must agree to the change. The positive spin on this state of affairs would be that politicians must build broad coalitions. This typically involves compromising with many different political actors and taking minority views into account. The negative spin would be to

7. Although the New Zealand case is close to being the ideal type of a majoritarian democracy, it is not perfect. One area in which it deviates from majoritarianism is in the special, larger districts that are reserved for the Maori, an indigenous group that make up about 12 percent of the population in New Zealand. The goal of the larger districts is to ensure minority representation (Lijphart 1999, 22).



Supporters for unity in Belgium demonstrate in Brussels on November 18, 2007. Thousands marched through Brussels in support of Belgium's survival, demanding an end to a deadlock that kept a government from taking office and stoking fears that this nation of 10.5 million Dutch and French speakers would break up after 177 years of at times uneasy unity.

simply cease to exist, splitting along linguistic lines into Wallonia and Flanders.

Given our discussion of the government formation process in Chapter 11, it should come as no surprise that a country with a large number of parties would experience delays in the length of time that it takes to form a government. Nor should it come as a surprise that the coalition governments that do form in such a country tend to be unstable and short lived. All institutional choices present trade-offs. We can have a broad representation of social groups, but this may lead to instability in the government. Or we can have a stable and efficient government, but at the cost of dramatically limiting citizens' choices at the ballot box. Whether you prefer the majoritarian vision or the consensus vision of democracy depends on how you value representation and meaningful choices versus efficiency and accountability. We now examine in more detail what the two visions of democracy mean for things like representation and accountability.

Evaluating Majoritarian and Consensus Visions of Democracy

As we have just seen, the institutional choices confronting a country tend to push it toward either a majoritarian or consensus vision of democracy. But how should we evaluate these different views of democracy? Our analysis of democratic decision-making procedures in

simply point out the difficulties that political actors in Belgium sometimes face in reaching agreements on any policy changes. After the June 2007 legislative elections for the lower house, for example, eleven different parties won seats. A new government did not enter office until December of that year, fully eight months after the election (Golder 2008).⁸ In the meantime, Belgian citizens had descended onto the streets to protest the absence of an effective government, and some European Union reports on the government formation crisis estimated that the bargaining delay was having deleterious effects on the Belgian economy. According to widespread media reports at the time, the government formation crisis even prompted some Belgians to think seriously about whether their country should

8. The deadlock was finally broken after King Albert II, the head of state, intervened to urge an interim government to take office for three months so that some pressing reforms could be addressed by the legislature.

Chapter 10 revealed that there is no perfect set of institutions. Rather, different types of institutions reflect trade-offs that are made along different dimensions. Here, we examine several attributes that seem particularly important for democratic governance and evaluate how well different institutional arrangements perform in producing these attributes. In particular, we focus on accountability, mandates, and representation. As you will see, majoritarian democracies value accountability and mandates over representation, whereas consensus democracies embody the opposite trade-off.

Accountability and Mandates

Accountability refers to the extent to which it is possible for voters to reward or punish parties for the policies that they introduce while in office. Put slightly differently, account-

ability is about how easy it is for citizens “to throw the rascals out.” Many view accountability as important because it provides incentives for politicians to pursue policies that will keep the voters—or, at least, a winning coalition of the voters—satisfied. Accountability basically requires that citizens look at how an incumbent party has behaved in the past in order to decide whether to reward or punish it at the next election. Such behavior on the part of voters is referred to as **retrospective voting** (Fiorina 1981; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002). If citizens decide that an incumbent party has performed sufficiently well in office, they will reward it by voting for it. In contrast, if citizens decide that an incumbent party has not performed sufficiently well, they will punish it by voting for another party. If accountability works well, incumbent parties that perform well are reelected into office and incumbent parties that perform poorly are removed from office.

Accountability is the extent to which voters are able to reward or punish parties for their behavior in office.

Retrospective voting occurs when voters look at the past performance of incumbent parties to decide how to vote in the current election.

The extent to which citizens can hold their governments accountable through elections varies from country to country. Consensus democracies tend to have relatively low levels of accountability. The reason for this is that voters in these countries typically do not get to directly choose the government. As you will recall from our discussion of the government formation process in Chapter 11, it is relatively rare for a single party to win a legislative majority when there are many parties. As a result, elections in consensus-style democracies almost never determine the identity of the government; instead, they usher in periods of negotiations in which party leaders bargain over the identity of the future government. The choices of these party leaders may or may not accurately reflect the preferences of the citizens. As we have noted elsewhere, it is also common for governments in these types of countries to be removed from office in interelection periods without the voters’ being directly consulted. This clearly diminishes the ability of voters to reward or sanction their elected officials (Hellwig and Samuels 2007). Another reason why consensus democracies tend to have low levels of accountability is that citizens may vote against a particular incumbent

party at election time and yet find that this party is still a member of the next coalition government because the other parties could not form a cabinet without it. There are numerous examples of parties losing votes and seats in consensus democracies but nonetheless finding themselves in the next government. Perhaps the most egregious case of this is Switzerland, where the four main parties have agreed since 1959 to form governments together irrespective of how the citizens vote; this arrangement is commonly known as the “magic formula” (Kerr 1987; Caramani 1996).⁹ In contrast to consensus democracies, it is much easier to throw the rascals out in majoritarian democracies that are characterized by single-party majority governments and two-party systems. If the citizens in a majoritarian democracy are dissatisfied with the performance of the party in power, they simply vote for the opposition party to replace it.

Clarity of responsibility is the extent to which voters can identify exactly who it is that is responsible for the policies that are implemented.

A concept that is closely related to accountability is **clarity of responsibility**. Clarity of responsibility refers to the ability of citizens to identify exactly who it is that is responsible for

the policies that are implemented (or not implemented). Clarity of responsibility is obviously a necessary condition for voters to be able to hold their government accountable. If citizens cannot identify who is responsible for the policies that get implemented, they will not be able to appropriately reward or punish those parties for their behavior in office.

As with accountability, clarity of responsibility varies from country to country. The more that power is concentrated, the greater the clarity of responsibility. One factor that affects clarity of responsibility is the type of government in a country. For example, clarity of responsibility is very high in those countries in which power is concentrated in the hands of a single-party majority government. In such countries, citizens know exactly whom to blame—the party in power—at election time. Clarity of responsibility is less high in countries in which power is dispersed among multiple parties in a coalition government, because it is not always obvious which coalition party is responsible for the policies that get implemented. Are all of the parties in the coalition government equally responsible for the government’s performance? Or are some parties more responsible than others? Does a party’s responsibility vary by policy area? Clarity of responsibility is even lower in minority governments, in which citizens may not know who is keeping the government in power and, hence, who is responsible for the policies that get implemented. Indeed, different parties in the legislature may be keeping the minority government in office at different points in time. The reason for this is that minority governments frequently build shifting legislative majorities on different issues to stay in power.

Other institutions that disperse power, such as bicameralism and federalism, also reduce clarity of responsibility. As we noted in Chapter 14, federalism can make it difficult for citi-

9. The original “magic formula” was replaced in December 2003 by a new formula in which the Swiss People’s Party gained an additional guaranteed cabinet seat and the Christian Democratic People’s Party lost one.

zens to know which level of government is responsible for policy successes and which is to blame for policy failures (Arceneaux 2005; Gomez and Wilson 2008; Maestas et al. 2008; Malhotra and Kuo 2008). For example, is the poor performance of the regional economy the result of policies adopted by the subnational government or of those implemented by the national government? In this type of situation, neither the subnational nor the national government will want to take responsibility for the poor economic performance and will likely try to blame the other. In this way, federalism facilitates blame shifting (and credit claiming), thereby making it difficult for citizens to know exactly who is responsible for what. Bicameral systems can have a similar effect, particularly if the two legislative chambers are equally powerful and controlled by opposing political sides.

Other factors also influence clarity of responsibility. One such factor is the length of time that a government remains in office.¹⁰ As we noted in Chapter 11, governments in nonpresidential democracies can fall in the middle of an interelection period. This means that voters can find themselves going to the polls to pass judgment on a government that has not been in power for a particularly long period of time. If several different governments have been in office since the previous election, who is responsible for the policies in place and the outcomes being experienced on the day the election is held? As we have shown elsewhere, such governmental instability is more likely to occur when there are many parties in the legislature and when these parties reflect a wide variety of policy positions. This is more likely to occur in consensus democracies than majoritarian ones. Similarly, in consensus systems, in which the opposition has a greater role within the legislature itself, the lines between the government and opposition can be blurred somewhat, thereby making the attribution of blame for policy even more difficult.

In Figure 15.2, we plot different political systems in a two-dimensional space capturing accountability and clarity of responsibility. In dictatorships, clarity of responsibility is very high because everyone knows that the dictator is responsible for whatever policies get implemented. Although clarity of responsibility is high in dictatorships, accountability is essentially nonexistent because citizens have almost no chance of throwing the dictator out through electoral means.¹¹ By concentrating power, majoritarian democracies tend to produce both high levels of accountability and clarity of responsibility. Not only do majoritarian institutions make it easy for voters to identify which political actors are responsible for the policies that get implemented, they also make it easy for voters to reward or punish these

10. The level of party discipline also affects clarity of responsibility. If the leaders of a party in government enjoy strong party discipline, they are the ones to be held accountable for the policies championed by the party. If the party is split into factions, or if the rank-and-file members are fairly independent of their party leadership, however, it is less clear who to blame within the party. It might be the case that a voter agrees with the policies pursued by the party leader but that party in-fighting prevented their enactment. In such a case, who is to be rewarded and who is to be blamed? If a voter does not have a chance, at the ballot box, to make such a distinction, how is she to vote?

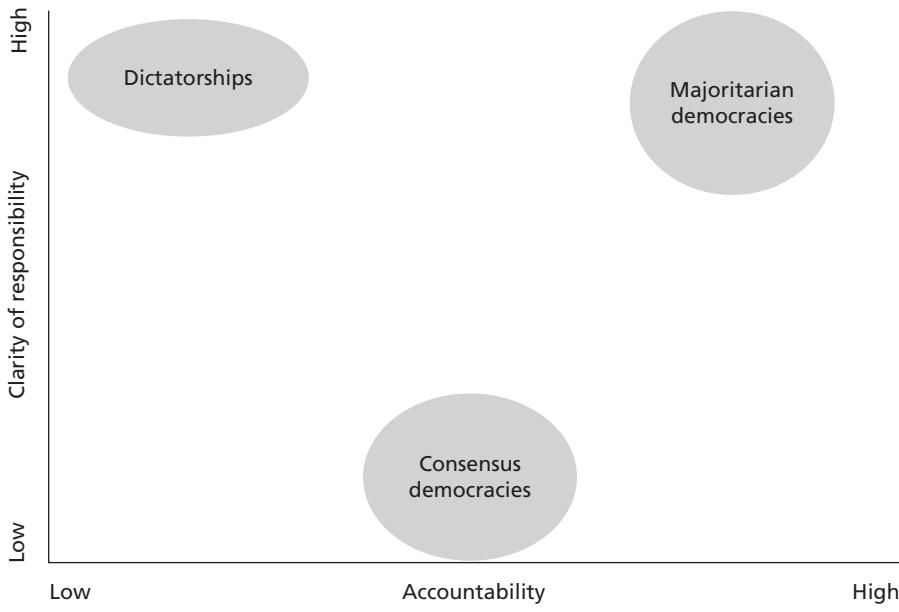
11. The Selectorate Theory that we examined in Chapter 9 points out that dictators *are* accountable to their winning coalition. This process of accountability, however, almost never works through electoral means, which is the focus here.

actors for their performance in office. By dispersing power, consensus democracies tend to produce relatively low levels of accountability and clarity of responsibility. Consensus-style institutions make it hard for voters to know exactly which political actors are responsible for the policies that a government enacts. And even if voters can figure this out, consensus-style institutions make it hard for voters to reward or punish these actors for their performance in office. Given that, as we have argued, clarity of responsibility is a necessary condition for accountability, there are no political systems with low clarity of responsibility and high accountability (bottom right in Figure 15.2).

If you think that accountability is an important attribute of a democratic system, then the evidence that we have just presented would suggest that you should prefer majoritarian institutions to consensus ones. But does this mean that consensus-style democracies are doing a bad job because they make it difficult for their citizens to hold governments accountable? We do not think so. Accountability is critically important in the majoritarian vision of democracy, and it would be a significant failing if majoritarian democracies could not provide it. As we noted earlier, however, accountability is not particularly important in the consensus vision of democracy. As a result, it is not clear that consensus-style democracies are failing if they do

FIGURE 15.2

Political Systems, Accountability, and Clarity of Responsibility



not do a great job of allowing their citizens to hold governments accountable. Implicit in this reasoning is that we should probably use different criteria to evaluate majoritarian and consensus democracies, because their democratic visions and goals are not the same.

Like accountability, mandates are extremely important in the majoritarian vision of democracy but not in the consensus vision. A **mandate** is a policy, or set of policies, that the government is both authorized and obligated to carry out once in office. In the majoritarian vision of democracy, parties that make policy commitments during an electoral campaign are authorized, and obligated, to carry out those policies once in office. In

A **mandate** is a policy that the government is both authorized and obligated to carry out once in office.

effect, elections in majoritarian democracies are not just about throwing the rascals out based on their past performance; they are also about giving the next government a mandate to implement the policies that they ran on during the electoral campaign. This means that voters in majoritarian democracies are expected to engage in prospective, as well as retrospective, voting. **Prospective voting** occurs when voters look at what parties say they will do while in office in order to form the expectations about future performance that help them decide how to vote. In contrast to the majoritarian vision of democracy, mandates are not that important for the consensus vision. Indeed, the consensus vision of democracy actually views mandates as being bad because they mean ignoring the preferences of the minority not in power.

Governments around the world frequently claim to have won a mandate at election time. But what exactly is required for a government to have a mandate? Presumably, a government should be able to claim that it has a mandate only if voters can meaningfully be said to have voted for it. This requires that voters be able to identify the different government alternatives when they go to vote. Political scientists refer to the extent to which voters can identify what government alternatives they are voting for at election time as **government identifiability**.

One factor that affects the degree of government identifiability in a country is the expected government formation scenario. As we illustrate in Table 15.2, government identifiability is highest in countries where a single-party majority government is expected to form. For example, a single party nearly always gets to form the government in countries like Greece, Spain, and the United Kingdom. As a result, when voters in these countries go to the polls to vote for a particular party, they know exactly what government and, hence, what set of policies they are voting for. Government identifiability is lower in countries in which a coalition government is expected to form. It is especially low in those countries, like Belgium and Finland, where the government formation process does not start until after the elections. Government identifiability is somewhat better in countries in which parties regularly form

Government identifiability refers to the extent to which voters can identify what government alternatives they are voting for at election time.

TABLE 15.2**Government Identifiability and Expected Government Formation Scenario**

Expected government formation scenario	Identifiability
Few parties; single-party majority likely.	High
Many parties, preelectoral coalitions.	
No preelectoral coalitions; certain government coalitions likely.	
Many parties; government coalitions known only after the election.	Low

preelectoral coalitions or in which voters have a good idea of what the likely coalitions will be. In Australia, France, or Germany, for example, it is common for parties to form preelectoral coalitions, indicating what the government will look like if they win. As a result, the voters in these countries have some sense of how their vote will affect which government ultimately forms. Even without preelectoral coalitions, voters in some countries have a fairly strong expectation about which parties are likely to be in government.

For example, if either the left-wing bloc or the right-wing bloc is expected to win a majority of the seats, then voters will expect the government to form from among the mainstream elements of whichever side wins the majority. This was the expectation prior to the 2006 legislative elections in the Czech Republic.¹² In general, government identifiability is higher in majoritarian democracies than in consensus-oriented ones.

Government identifiability is a necessary condition for mandates, but it isn't a sufficient condition. For a government to claim that it has a mandate for its policies, most people believe that it should also win, at a minimum, a majority of the votes cast. How can a government claim to have a mandate if a majority of the electorate did not vote for its policies? The problem is that although government identifiability is high in majoritarian democracies, it is extremely rare for a single party to actually win more than 50 percent of the vote. Although we regularly observe single-party majority governments in majoritarian democracies, these governments typically enjoy only what are called "manufactured majorities." A manufactured majority refers to a situation in which a party that does not win a majority of the votes manages to obtain a majority of the legislative seats because of the disproportional way that majoritarian electoral systems translate votes into seats. Obviously any incoming government in a majoritarian democracy has an incentive to claim that it has a mandate. But, given that a majority of voters have typically voted for other parties, do you think that it is entirely legitimate for it to do so?

12. Of course, the voters' expectations do not always turn into reality. As we discussed in Chapter 11, the left- and right-wing blocs in the Czech Republic won exactly the same number of legislative seats, leaving them deadlocked for months following the election.

Another thing to consider here is whether a government actually has the ability to implement a mandate, even if it can legitimately claim to have won one. If power is dispersed, as it is in consensus democracies, it will likely be difficult for the government to fulfill its mandate. For example, veto institutions, such as bicameralism or federalism, may block the ability of governments to implement their policy platforms. Thus, even if a government with a high level of identifiability were to come to power in a consensus democracy, it is not clear that it would be able to implement its campaign pledges, because other actors have the ability to influence or block legislation. In a majoritarian democracy, such difficulties with implementing the government's preferred policy are minimized.

In majoritarian democracies, then, government identifiability tends to be high and mandates are relatively easy to implement. A problem, though, is that governments in majoritarian democracies rarely win the support of a majority of the voters. This means that if someone wants to argue that governments in majoritarian democracies have mandates, then he must argue that mandates are acceptable even when governments win only a plurality of the vote. In consensus democracies, government identifiability tends to be poor. Moreover, governments that wish to implement any mandate will likely find it difficult to do so because of the presence of veto players. We should recall, though, that assigning mandates to governments is not one of the goals of the consensus vision of democracy.

Representation

Another attribute that is important for democratic governance is representation. We now examine what the goals of the two visions of democracy are with respect to representation and how close majoritarian and consensus democracies come to achieving those goals in practice.

Representation can usefully be conceptualized in terms of (a) responsiveness and (b) congruence.¹³ **Responsiveness, or dynamic representation**, refers to how well elected representatives respond to changes in the preferences of the electorate. Many political scientists look at responsiveness in terms of how well the policies of elected representatives respond to changes in the preferences of citizens (Page and Shapiro 1983; Page 1994; Burstein 2003; Ezrow 2007; Barabas 2008). For example, do policies shift in line with changes in public opinion? In what follows, though, we look at responsiveness slightly differently. Specifically, we look at responsiveness in regard to how accurately the policymaking power of legislative parties tracks changes in their electoral support. In other words, do parties see an increase in their ability to influence policy when their electoral support goes up? In contrast to responsiveness, **congruence, or static representation**, refers to how well elected rep-

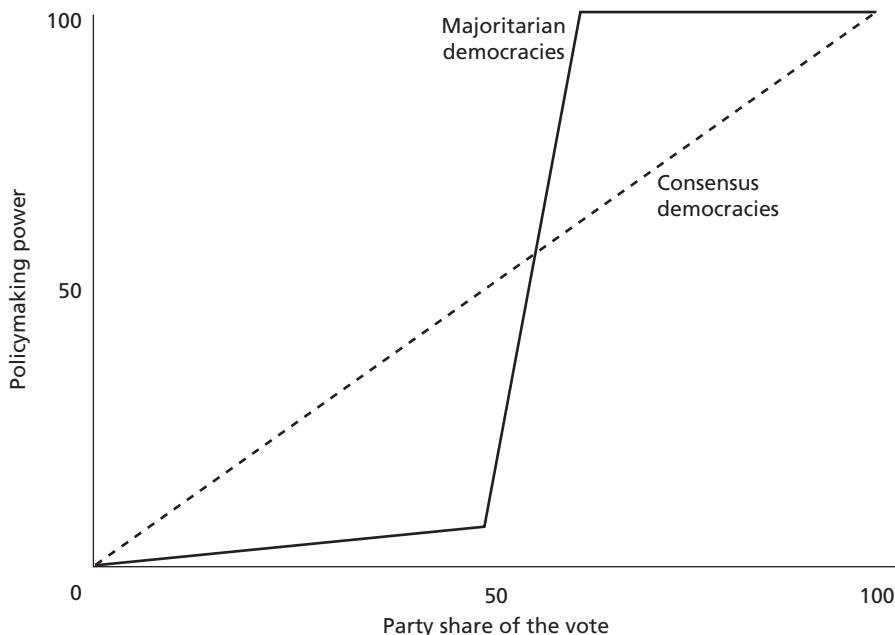
Representation can be conceptualized in terms of (a) responsiveness and (b) congruence. **Responsiveness, or dynamic representation**, refers to how well elected representatives respond to changes in the preferences of the electorate. **Congruence, or static representation**, refers to how well elected representatives match the preferences of the electorate.

13. There are many different ways to think about representation. For a useful introduction to the literature on representation, see Pitkin (1967).

representatives match the (static) preferences of the electorate. For example, does the government's policy position accurately match the preferences of the electorate? Does the legislature accurately reflect the full range of citizen preferences?

Let's begin with responsiveness. Responsiveness is an important goal for both the majoritarian and consensus visions of democracy. The exact way that responsiveness is conceptualized, however, differs quite markedly between the two visions of democracy. Recall that in the majoritarian vision, power is to be concentrated in the hands of the majority. This implies that a party should not gain control over policymaking power until it obtains 50 percent of the vote. In effect, a party with less than 50 percent of the vote should have no policymaking power, whereas a party with more than 50 percent of the vote should have all the policymaking power (at least until the next election). In contrast to the majoritarian vision, power is to be dispersed among as many political actors as possible in the consensus vision. Indeed, power is supposed to be distributed among political actors in direct proportion to their electoral size. As a result, in the consensus vision of democracy there should be a close connection between the percentage of votes that a party wins and the percentage of policymaking power that it enjoys. In Figure 15.3, we graphically illustrate the two ideals of responsiveness outlined by the majoritarian and consensus visions of democracy (adapted from Powell 2000, 126). As you can see, they are very different.

FIGURE 15.3 Two Ideals of Democratic Responsiveness (percent)



How well do majoritarian and proportional democracies approximate their respective ideals of democratic responsiveness? In line with the majoritarian vision of democratic responsiveness, most governments in majoritarian democracies are single-party majority governments that dominate the policymaking process. The problem, as we saw earlier, is that many of these single-party majority governments do not actually obtain a majority of the votes. Thus, all we can really say is that the party that wins the most votes almost always gets to form the government and control the levers of power in majoritarian democracies. As Powell (2000, 129) notes, “Analysts and defenders of the majoritarian vision . . . are seldom inhibited from replacing expectations about majorities with expectations about pluralities.” It is not clear whether this “inhibition” is appropriate, and we leave this judgment call up to the reader. Perhaps we should simply say that majoritarian democracies are fully responsive when the party with a majority of the votes controls the government, and they are only partially responsive when the party with a mere plurality of the votes controls the government.¹⁴

Consensus democracies come close to approximating their ideals on responsiveness in some respects but not others. On the one hand, the fact that consensus democracies employ proportional electoral rules means that there tends to be a close connection between the percentage of votes that a party wins at election time and the percentage of legislative seats that it obtains. On the other hand, the complicated nature of the government formation process means that there is only a weak connection between the percentage of seats (and votes) that a party wins and its share of government power. For example, it is not always the case that the largest party in the legislature is in the government. It is important to remember, though, that consensus democracies do not concentrate power entirely in the hands of the government; instead, they disperse it (to differing degrees) among both governmental and non-governmental parties. One way in which they do this is by having legislative committees on which opposition parties receive representation play a significant role in the policymaking process or by having corporatist interest group relations. Powell (2000) ultimately finds that consensus democracies come close to satisfying their ideals of responsiveness if one focuses on the actual policymaking power of political parties as opposed to simply looking at whether these parties are in the government or not. The bottom line is that both majoritarian and consensus democracies come close to, but fall short of, realizing their ideals of democratic responsiveness.

Whereas responsiveness is a *dynamic* measure of representation, congruence is a *static* measure of representation. For democratic theorists of most persuasions, congruence is an important characteristic to be encouraged—democratic governments and legislatures are

14. Of course, it does sometimes happen that the translation of votes into seats in a majoritarian democracy results in a situation in which the party with the most votes is not the party with the most legislative seats. This is a more troubling phenomenon from the perspective of the majoritarian vision of democracy. If this situation arises too frequently, it can undermine the voters’ faith in the responsiveness generated by the electoral system. Powell (2000, 130) estimates that this type of scenario occurred in about 20 percent of the forty-five elections in the six majoritarian democracies that he examines in his book.

supposed to reflect the preferences of their citizens (Mill [1861] 1991; Dahl 1956; Pitkin 1967).¹⁵ The simplest way to think about congruence is to think of a single citizen and a single representative. In this situation, congruence is just the proximity or absolute distance between the ideological positions of the citizen and the representative. The closer the representative is to the ideological position of the citizen, the higher the level of congruence. Most comparative scholars, though, focus on how congruent governments are with the preferences of their citizens. In most cases, scholars simply conceptualize congruence in regard to the ideological distance between the government and the median citizen. Theoretically, high levels of congruence could be achieved in both majoritarian and consensus democracies. For example, we should observe the two parties in the ideal majoritarian democracy converge to the position of the median voter (see Box 10.1, “The Median Voter Theorem and Party Competition”). Thus, congruence should be high. In a consensus democracy, the party closest to the median voter is likely to play an important role in the government formation process and, therefore, pull government policy toward the policy position of the median voter. Again, this should result in relatively high levels of congruence. Empirically, however, most studies suggest that governments are more congruent with the ideological preferences of the people in consensus democracies than in majoritarian democracies (Huber and Powell 1994; Powell 2000, 2006; Powell and Vanberg 2000; McDonald, Mendes, and Budge 2004; McDonald and Budge 2005).¹⁶

A slightly different way to approach the question of congruence is to shift the focus from the government to the legislature and ask how accurately the legislature as a collectivity reflects the ideological positions of the citizens. For example, if 10 percent of the population holds Communist policy preferences, is there a Communist Party that holds 10 percent of the legislative seats, and so on. As we saw earlier, having a legislature that is a miniature reflection of the society as a whole is an important objective of consensus democracies but not majoritarian ones. One simple way to conceptualize this type of ideological congruence is by the similarity between the distributions of citizen and representative preferences—the greater the similarity across the two distributions of preferences, the higher the level of congruence. In line with the consensus vision of democracy, a study by Golder and Stramski (2007) finds that legislatures in countries that employ proportional electoral rules (consen-

15. Although congruence is desired by most democratic theorists, they frequently disagree as to the exact form that congruence should take. Some emphasize the importance of “descriptive representation”; that is, how accurately legislatures and governments mirror the gender or racial makeup of the citizenry (Mansbridge 1999; Gay 2001; Pantoja and Segura 2003; Atkeson and Carillo 2007; Karp and Banducci 2007). Others emphasize “substantive representation”; that is, how accurately legislatures and governments mirror the ideological makeup of the citizenry (Huber and Powell 1994; Powell 2000, 2006; Powell and Vanberg 2000; McDonald, Mendes, and Budge 2004; McDonald and Budge 2005; Blais and Bodet 2006; Budge and McDonald 2007; Golder and Stramski 2007). In what follows, we focus on congruence in regard to substantive representation.

16. Two new studies (Blais and Bodet 2006; Golder and Stramski 2007) have challenged what appeared to be a growing empirical consensus that consensus democracies produce more ideological congruence between governments and their citizens.

sus democracies) do tend to more accurately reflect the diversity of ideological opinions in society than legislatures in countries that employ majoritarian electoral rules (majoritarian democracies).

A consensus has emerged in recent years that democracies employing majoritarian institutions are better at promoting mandates, accountability, government identifiability, clarity of responsibility, and the like, whereas democracies employing consensus institutions are superior at dispersing power, providing choice, and generating ideological congruence between citizens and their representatives. In effect, this consensus states that there is an explicit trade-off to be made by constitution writers when they are choosing between majoritarian and consensus institutions. For example, they can obtain high levels of government identifiability and accountability by adopting majoritarian institutions, but this may well mean sacrificing congruence between citizens and their representatives.

Throughout this section, we have focused solely on the ideal types of majoritarian and consensus democracies. A few countries, however, employ a mixture of majoritarian and consensus institutions. The most common institutional departure from the pure majoritarian and consensus models of democracy involves the choice of whether to adopt parliamentarism or presidentialism. For example, some democracies that have primarily majoritarian institutions happen to be presidential. As shown by the Belgian case discussed earlier, the converse is also true. It is not unusual, for example, for countries that have primarily consensus institutions to be parliamentary rather than presidential, even though parliamentarism is the more majoritarian of the two regime types.

The United States is probably the best example of a hybrid between the two ideal types of democracy. On the one hand, the United States is an extremely majoritarian democracy in its electoral system, its party system, its government type, and its interest group relations. On the other hand, the United States is an extremely consensus-oriented democracy in that it has constitutional review and it is presidential, federal, and bicameral. We leave it to you to evaluate the quality of democracy in the United States. One could imagine an argument that holds that the trade-off between accountability and representation implied by the choice between majoritarian and consensus institutions is optimized by systems that combine some majoritarian institutions with some consensus ones. There is, however, no consensus on this among scholars. Some see such combinations as “the best of both worlds,” whereas others are frustrated by polities that are “neither fish, nor fowl.”

From a normative standpoint, you probably have your own preferences by now for whether a country should adopt majoritarian or consensus institutions. If you are having trouble deciding which type of democracy you would recommend to the framers of a new constitution (should you find yourself in a position to be making such recommendations), however, perhaps you need some information about the substantive consequences that are likely to follow from the institutional choices that you would make. In the following three sections, we examine the effects of different institutional choices on economic policy, ethnic conflict, and democratic stability.

THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS ON FISCAL POLICY

There is an extremely large and expanding literature on the effect of institutions on economic policies and economic outcomes. Anything like an adequate review of this important topic would cover at least a whole book. Thus, we focus our attention in this section on the

Fiscal policy involves the manipulation of tax and spending decisions to accomplish governmental goals.

effects of democratic institutions on fiscal policy. **Fiscal policy** refers to the set of government policies related to the raising of revenues

through taxation and to the set of policies accomplished through government spending.

Historically, policymakers during the Great Depression of the 1930s began to view fiscal

policy through what is known as a Keynesian perspective.¹⁷ **Keynesianism**, named after the British economist John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946), is a particular view of how governments can use fiscal policy (taxing and

Keynesianism is a particular view of how to use fiscal policy (taxing and spending) and monetary policy (interest rates and the supply of money) to smooth out boom and bust cycles in the economy through countercyclical demand management.

spending) and monetary policy (interest rates and the supply of money) to control the trajectory of their economies. The essence of Keynesian economic policymaking is the idea that economies naturally experience cycles of booms and busts because of fluctuations in the demand for the goods and services an economy produces. When overall, or “aggregate,” demand for the goods and services an economy produces goes down, the economy sinks into a recession, national income goes down, and unemployment increases. In contrast, when aggregate demand increases rapidly, the result is inflation—a rise in the general level of prices—because, according to Keynesians, increased demand “bids up” prices. Inflation is considered to be an economic problem because all prices are not likely to change in lock step and, as a result, uncertainty about relative prices increases. This increase in uncertainty can discourage saving and investing, which are key sources of economic growth.¹⁸ Keynesian economics essentially promised to help governments smooth out these “boom and bust” cycles through the use of “counter-cyclical demand management.”

Prior to Keynesianism, the so-called “classical school” of economics held that these economic fluctuations would sort themselves out and that the economy would reach equilibrium on its own in the long run. In response to this argument, John Maynard Keynes ([1923] 2000, chap. 3) quipped that “in the long run, we are all dead”—meaning that while the economy was sorting itself out, a good deal of human suffering was likely to occur. Keynes argued that much of this suffering could be alleviated if governments “leaned against” the economy. During recessions, the government ought to use fiscal and monetary policy to stimulate aggregate demand, and during boom periods the government could avoid inflation by restricting aggregate demand. Fiscal policy could be used toward this end if the government cut taxes or increased government spending (or both) during economic downturns and took

17. See Hall (1989) for an excellent introduction to the way Keynesianism came to influence government policy.

18. Inflation also has important distributional consequences. The value of people’s savings erodes; but so does the value of people’s debts. Consequently, net creditors are hurt more by inflation than net debtors (who may actually be helped).

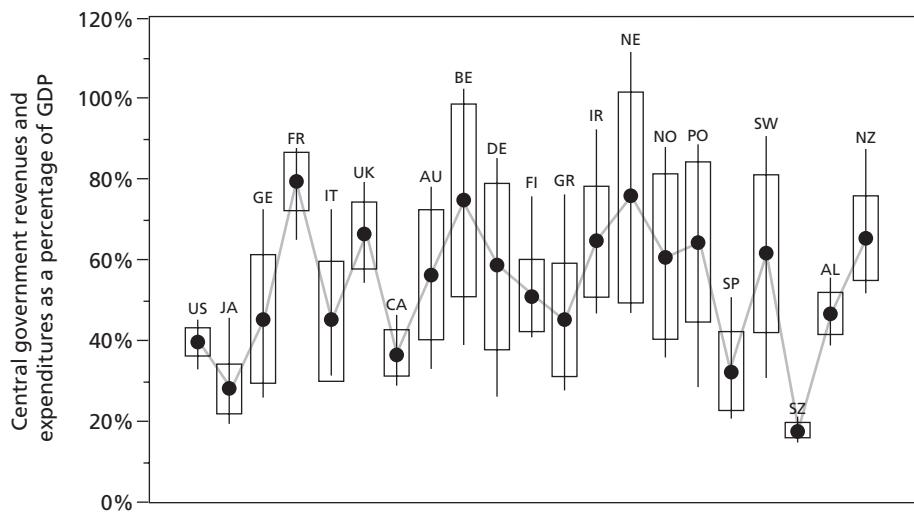
the opposite actions when the economy was thought to be heating up. Similarly, monetary policy could influence aggregate demand in a countercyclical fashion if interest rates were lowered and the money supply expanded during economic downturns, and if interest rates were raised and the money supply contracted as the economy neared the top end of the business cycle. Keynesianism held that if the manipulation of monetary and fiscal policy instruments was timed just right, governments could smooth out the business cycle and provide a foundation for high levels of growth and low levels of unemployment and inflation.

Keynesianism has been criticized on both theoretical and empirical grounds, but its influence over economic policy for more than half of the twentieth century cannot be debated. Indeed, its influence continues to this day. The utility of Keynesianism as a way of explaining macroeconomic behavior is, though, not our direct concern here. Instead, we are interested in understanding if and how the political institutions that we examined in Chapters 11–14 influence the way that governments manipulate the economic policy tools at their disposal. To examine these questions, we adopt what is known as a *political economy* approach. A political economy approach to understanding the political sources of economic policy is based on the recognition of two fundamental assumptions: (a) economic policy is typically made by elected officials (or technocrats appointed by elected officials) who may have goals other than the provision of “stable growth,” and (b) economic policies tend to have distributional consequences—that is, they do not affect all citizens in the same way. These two assumptions are central to almost all attempts to understand economic policy and outcomes from a political economy perspective.

In contrast to the political economy perspective, traditional, or “welfare,” economics typically assumes that economic policy is made by a “benevolent social planner”—a hypothetical policymaker who weighs the interests of all members of society and chooses the policies that best meet the needs of society as a whole. Because the benevolent social planner is a single individual, the problems that arise from group decision making, such as those we examined in Chapter 10, are assumed away. According to the political economy perspective adopted here, though, economic policy is fraught with conflicts of interests—between the government and citizens, between citizens themselves, and between members of the government representing different groups of citizens—that should not be assumed away. Although these conflicts of interest arise in all areas of macroeconomic policymaking, we restrict our attention in this section of the chapter to fiscal policy. We do this partly because of space limitations but also because fiscal policy is often explicitly used for the purpose of redistribution, because the raising of revenues is central to what it means to be a state, as we saw in Chapter 4, and because fiscal policy is frequently used as a measure of the overall size of government.

According to the traditional view of Keynesianism, governments everywhere should act essentially in the same way—during bad times they should cut taxes and increase spending in an attempt to put resources in the hands of consumers and, therefore, stimulate demand. And during economic booms they should take the opposite position—restrict demand by raising taxes and decreasing spending. A look at the real world, however, suggests that there

is a tremendous amount of cross-national variation in fiscal policy. In Figure 15.4, we present a “box and whisker plot” showing how total public fiscal activity—central government revenue and expenditures as a percentage of GDP—varies both within and between twenty-one advanced industrialized countries from 1947 to 1997 (Franzese 2002, 16). The black dots indicate the average level of total public fiscal activity for each country; the “boxes” and “whiskers” display how the level of total public fiscal activity varied within each country during the postwar period. When the boxes stay close to the country average, as in the United States and Switzerland, it means that total fiscal policy varied little during the postwar period. In contrast, when the boxes are large, as in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden, it means that total fiscal activity varied quite a bit in that country. The “whiskers,” or vertical black lines, indicate the maximum and minimum levels of total public fiscal activity in each country during the postwar period. The main thing to note from Figure 15.4 is that there is considerable cross-national variation in the level of fiscal activity. For example, in many countries, such as the United States, Japan, Canada, Spain, and Switzerland, the total fiscal

FIGURE 15.4**Total Public Fiscal Activity in Twenty-one OECD Countries, 1947–1997**

Source: Franzese (2002, 16).

Note: AL = Australia; AU = Austria; BE = Belgium; CA = Canada; DE = Denmark; FI = Finland; FR = France; GE = Germany; GR = Greece; IR = Ireland; IT = Italy; JA = Japan; NE = Netherlands; NO = Norway; NZ = New Zealand; PO = Portugal; SP = Spain; SW = Sweden; SZ = Switzerland; UK = United Kingdom; US = United States. The black dots indicate the mean level of total public fiscal activity for each country; the vertical black lines indicate the maximum and minimum levels of total public fiscal activity in each country; the vertical size of each box indicates one standard deviation above and below the mean in each country.

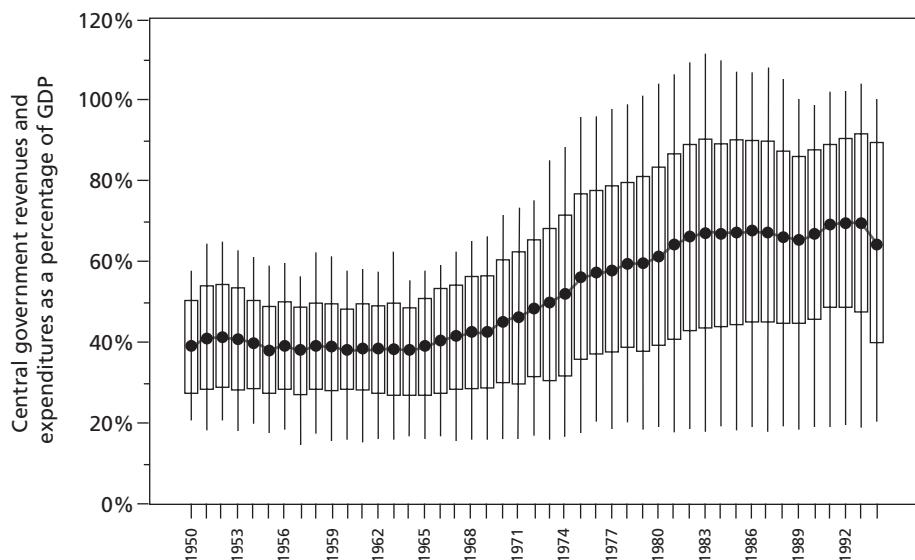
policy activity is relatively low, near or below 50 percent of GDP. And in many other countries, such as France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, the total fiscal policy activity is relatively high, above 75 percent of GDP. What explains this cross-national variation in fiscal policy? It is this question that we address in the remainder of this section. We begin by briefly examining economic and cultural determinants of fiscal policy. We then turn to our primary task, which is to examine the ways in which political institutions influence fiscal policy.

Economic and Cultural Determinants of Fiscal Policy

Total public fiscal activity is interpreted by many economists as the “size of government” because it gives an indication of the ratio of total government economic activity to overall economic activity within a country. The traditional explanation for the size of the government is “Wagner’s Law,” named after the German economist Adolph Wagner (1835–1917), who predicted that the size of government would grow as countries became more industrialized. Wagner’s Law is often interpreted to mean that the size of government increases as countries become wealthier. In the broadest sense, Wagner’s Law seems consistent with the facts—as European countries became richer and more industrialized, the role of the government in the economy did increase as predicted. For example, we illustrate in Figure 15.5 that there was, indeed, an upward trend in total public fiscal activity among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries during the postwar period, a period generally considered a time of economic growth and increased industrialization. This can be seen by looking at how the black dots, which represent the OECD average level of total public fiscal activity in each year, rise over time. Note, though, that not only do the black dots rise over time, but so do the lengths of the “boxes” and “whiskers.” This indicates that not only did the mean level of government fiscal activity among OECD countries increase during the postwar period, but so did the cross-national variance in the level of government fiscal activity.¹⁹ Wagner’s Law does not provide a straightforward explanation for this continued and increasing variation in the level of fiscal activity across countries that, in regard to wealth and industrialization, were probably becoming increasingly similar over time (Li and Papell 1999; Le Pen 2005).

What might explain this cross-national variation in the level of fiscal activity? One explanation that has been offered as an improvement over Wagner’s Law emphasizes the conflicts that exist between citizens over fiscal policy. Recall from our discussion of the Meltzer-Richard model in Chapter 9 that there are good reasons to believe that citizens will differ systematically in their views about fiscal policy (Meltzer and Richard 1981). One way to think about this is to consider what would happen in a hypothetical world in which the government taxed every citizen at the same rate ($0 < t < 1$) and then turned around and trans-

19. Franzese (2002) suggests that this increased variation in the level of total public fiscal activity is the result of governments’ choosing very different ways to respond to the oil crises of the 1970s.

FIGURE 15.5**Total Public Fiscal Activity by Year in Twenty-one OECD Countries, 1947–1997**

Source: Franzese (2002, 17).

Note: The black dots indicate the mean level of total public fiscal activity for each country; the vertical black lines indicate the maximum and minimum levels of total public fiscal activity in each country; the vertical size of each box indicates one standard deviation above and below the mean in each country.

ferred all tax revenues in the form of an equal subsidy (s) to every citizen. You can think of the subsidy that each citizen (i) receives as the dollar value that the citizen places on the public goods provided by the state. Because taxes are taken from citizens as a rate, the tax bill of each citizen (T) will be an increasing function of her gross income (y_i):

$$T = y_i t.$$

That is, although all citizens pay the same share of their income in taxes, those with large incomes will have larger tax bills than those with low incomes. This means that the overall benefit (B) of living under a particular tax and transfer system for citizen i will be:

$$B_i = y_i + s - y_i t.$$

If an individual's income is unrelated to the tax rate, by which we mean that taxes are *non-distortionary* in that they do not change an individual's level of income by affecting the trade-offs they make between work and leisure, then the citizen will be concerned only with the net effect of the government's tax and transfer regime ($s - y_i t$).

If we assume, for the purposes of illustration, that the government budget must be balanced over the medium run (that is, that the total subsidies paid out to the citizens must equal the total taxes collected from the citizens), then some citizens will be net recipients and some citizens will be net contributors to the government's tax and transfer system. In Figure 15.6, we plot the tax bill paid and the subsidy received by citizens at different levels of income for a given tax rate and subsidy size.²⁰ In this economy, the citizen earning slightly more than \$20,000, which is the average income in our hypothetical example, is indifferent with respect to the tax and transfer regime—her tax bill is exactly equal to the subsidy she receives from the government.²¹ All citizens with below-average incomes are net recipients—they receive more in subsidies than they pay in taxes. All citizens with above-average incomes are net contributors to the tax and transfer scheme—they pay more in taxes than they receive in subsidies.

The distributional implications of this particular tax and transfer system are clear. Low-income citizens (to the left of the vertical dotted line in Figure 15.6) are net recipients of the tax and transfer system and high-income citizens (to the right of the vertical dotted line) are net contributors. Consequently, citizens with high incomes would prefer a system with a tax rate of zero and no subsidies. In contrast, citizens with low incomes are quite happy with this tax and transfer system; in fact, low-income citizens can be expected to support even higher tax rates because they would get the full benefit (B) of a more aggressive tax and transfer system but pay only a fraction of the cost ($y_i t$). Put differently, the tax rate in our economy determines the slope of the line in Figure 15.6. If the tax rate goes up, then the slope of the "Tax bill" line increases (gets steeper). This results in an increase in the size of the net *bene*-*fits* going to citizens who have an income below the national average but an increase in the size of the net *contributions* paid by citizens who have an income above the national average.

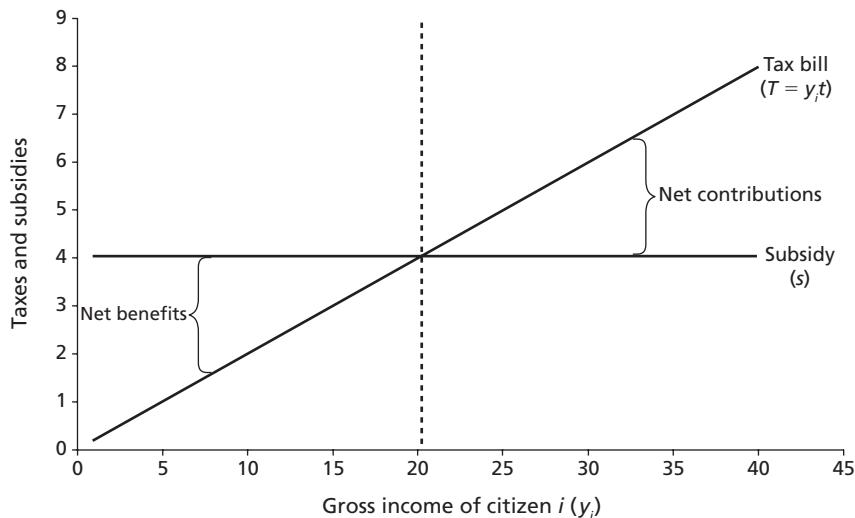
The analysis so far helps to show that fiscal policy preferences are likely to be related to one's income. High-income voters are likely to be less enthusiastic about increased taxation and spending than low-income voters. Some readers may be concerned that this result is derived from a model that differs in substantial ways from most observed tax and transfer systems in the real world. For example, real-world taxation systems do not apply a single tax rate to all earners. Similarly, governments do not spend equally on all members of society—some individuals receive more government services, subsidies, and so on, than others. These observations, however, do not challenge the usefulness of the analysis presented here unless it can be shown that changing our assumptions to reflect these realities changes our conclusions in a fundamental fashion. Although it is true that governments tend to choose differ-

20. In our specific hypothetical example, the tax rate is 20 percent and the subsidy is \$4,100 dollars. We should note, however, that any numbers would produce similar figures as long as subsidies weren't so high compared with revenues that everyone was a net recipient, which would produce unsustainable deficits, or tax rates weren't so high that everyone was a net contributor, which might lead to either a tax revolt or costly repression (Levi 1988).

21. The fact that the average earner breaks even in our example is a result of the assumption that the budget must balance.

FIGURE 15.6

The Relationship between Income, Taxes, and Government Subsidies in a Hypothetical Tax and Transfer System (thousands of dollars)



Note: Subsidy (s) = the total subsidy awarded to citizen i ; tax bill ($T = y_i t$) = the total tax paid by citizen i .

ent tax rates and subsidies for voters at different levels of income, the standard pattern is for tax rates to be progressive—that is, high-income earners typically face higher tax rates than low-income earners. Similarly, many government-spending programs are aimed at citizens with below-average income. The first of these insights would have the consequence of causing the line plotting individual tax bills in Figure 15.6 to curve upward as income increases. The second insight—that spending tends to be targeted at low-income voters—would have the consequence of causing the line plotting subsidies awarded to citizens to slope downward as income increases. Neither of these changes would alter the central result of our analysis that tax and spend systems necessarily divide the population into net contributors and net recipients, and that rich voters tend to fall in the former category and poor voters tend to fall in the latter category. The only tax and transfer systems that would not have this characteristic would be ones in which the tax system was regressive (the rich taxed at a lower rate than the poor), subsidies went disproportionately to the rich, or there was no budget constraint so that subsidies could be so large that all citizens were “net recipients.” Nothing like these systems is observed in modern polities.²²

22. One might think of a possible exception with respect to the last of these scenarios. For example, some oil-rich countries give out large subsidies to all citizens, thereby making large portions of the citizenry net recipients. But even here the subsidy given to all citizens is likely to be smaller than the tax bill of the richest citizens, and so the point of intersection of the lines in Figure 15.6 would move upward and to the right, but the general pattern of the lines would probably remain the same.

The Meltzer-Richard model predicts that the greater the income inequality in society, the greater the demand from citizens for a large tax and transfer system.²³ In the context of the current setup, we can better understand the Meltzer-Richard model by asking what would happen if actors at different income levels could dictate fiscal policy. The voter with the average income would be indifferent between the existing tax and transfer system and one in which the tax rate and subsidies are both zero. Voters with more income than the average-income earner would be increasingly anxious to *lower* taxes and subsidies. And voters with less income than the average-income earner would be increasingly anxious to *raise* taxes and subsidies. The Meltzer-Richard model shows why preferences over tax rates will be a function of a voter's income, and it assumes that the median voter, who is the citizen with the *median* income, will get to dictate fiscal policy. Because every country in the world has some degree of income inequality—there is a relatively small number of citizens at the top end of the income scale and a relatively large number of individuals at the bottom end of the income scale—the *median* voter always has less income than the *average*-income earner (he is always to the left of the vertical dashed line in Figure 15.6). As a result, the median voter is always a net recipient of redistributive taxation and is, therefore, enthusiastic about increased spending and the taxes that make such spending possible. The more income inequality there is in society (the greater the income gap between the median voter and the average income earner), the more enthusiastic the median voter will be for a large tax and transfer system.

As you can see, the Meltzer-Richard model helps us move toward an explanation of the cross-national variation in total fiscal policy activity—total fiscal policy activity increases with the level of income inequality in a country. Like Wagner's Law, however, the explanation provided by the Meltzer-Richard model is incomplete. Although there is a growing consensus that voter preferences over fiscal policy are likely to be tied to the voters' income levels, it is important to recognize that these preferences affect policy only after they are filtered through political institutions. Consider the implicit assumption in the Meltzer-Richard model that all earners vote. This assumption is contradicted by numerous empirical studies showing that high-income earners are much more likely to vote than low-income earners (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Leighley and Nagler 1992). Some studies have found little evidence for the positive association between income inequality and larger tax and transfer systems predicted by the Meltzer-Richard model (Iversen and Soskice 2006), but this may be because high-income earners are much more likely to turn out to vote than low-income earners and because voter turnout varies across countries. The fact that high-income earners are more likely to turn out than low-income earners means that the income gap between the average income *earner* and the median *voter* is likely to be smaller than the income gap between the average-income earner and the median-income earner. As a result, the demand for redistribution in the real world is likely to be smaller than that predicted in the Meltzer-

23. See also Romer (1975).

Richard model. In addition, since voter turnout is known to vary systematically across countries, the Meltzer-Richard model can be expected to fit the data better in high-turnout countries than in low-turnout countries. In fact, Franzese (2002, 62–125) finds support for exactly this when he examines the interaction between voter participation and income inequality in predicting total fiscal policy activity in OECD countries. Specifically, he finds that the effect of income inequality on the size of the tax and transfer system is largest when voter participation is high. This suggests that institutional factors that influence voter turnout, such as compulsory voting, voter registration rules, and the proportionality of the electoral system, should also have an influence on fiscal policy.

The connection between the proportionality of the electoral system and voter turnout might require a word of explanation. As we saw in Chapters 12 and 13, single-member district plurality electoral systems tend to reward candidates from large parties and punish candidates from small parties. As a result, voters who support a party that is unpopular in their district are likely to either vote strategically for a second-choice party or abstain from voting altogether. Consequently, voter participation rates tend to be higher in PR systems than in SMDP systems (Powell 1982). It is for this reason that we might expect total fiscal policy activity to be larger in countries with PR systems than in countries with plurality electoral laws. Although there is a growing consensus that PR electoral rules are linked with higher fiscal activity, as we will see, there is little agreement among scholars about exactly why this is the case.

So far, we have examined an argument that says that voters will differ in their evaluation of fiscal policy based on their incomes. High-income voters will seek to reduce the size of government, and low-income voters will seek to expand it. The Meltzer-Richard model, in essence, predicts that the size of the state will vary across countries and time as the size of these groups varies. Where income inequality is high, there are many more poor voters than rich voters and the state will, therefore, be large; conversely, where income inequality is low, there are relatively few poor voters compared with rich voters and the state will, therefore, be small. One problem with this approach is that it implicitly assumes that voter preferences are frictionlessly translated into fiscal policy. If, however, voter preferences are refracted through political institutions in complex ways, fiscal policy may have as much to do with cross-national differences in political institutions as it has to do with the distribution of voter preferences. As we learned in Chapter 13, voter preferences are typically aggregated through political parties. So one way to put a little bit of institutional structure on the Meltzer-Richard model is to ask what would happen if there were competing teams of candidates (political parties) that claimed to represent different segments of the income spectrum. This is exactly the approach taken by what is known as the **partisan model of macroeconomic policy**.

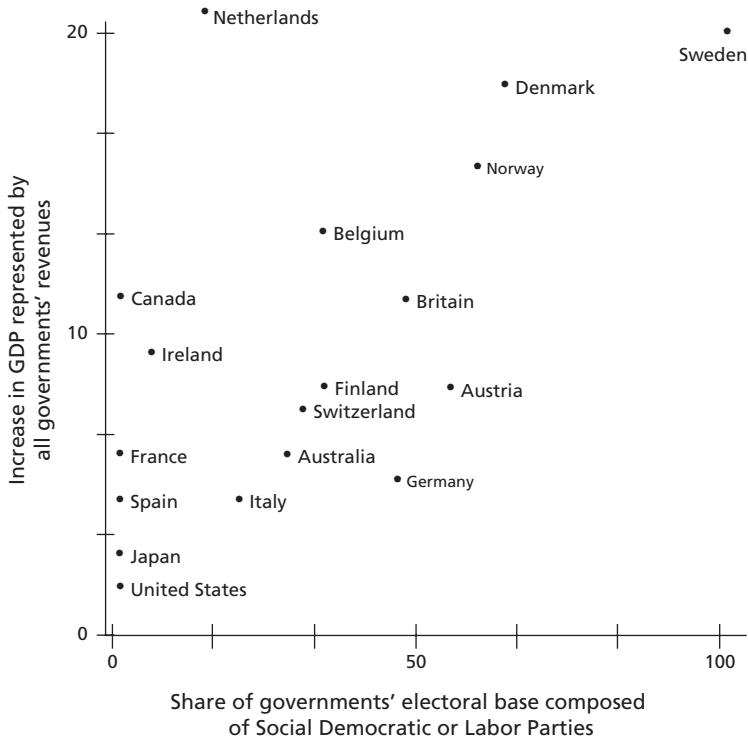
According to the partisan model of macroeconomic policy, left-wing parties represent the interests of low-income voters and right-wing parties represent the interests of high-income voters. The main prediction of the partisan model is that changes in the partisan control of the government will lead to changes in fiscal policy. Specifically, left-wing governments are

expected to be associated with a higher level of total fiscal policy activity and they are also likely to be associated with “expansionary” fiscal policies in general because such policies are thought to be favored by left-wing voters (Hibbs 1977).²⁴ Because space constraints prevent a review of the extensive literature aimed at testing various versions of the partisan model, we will simply state that the empirical evidence is somewhat mixed. Some scholars find evidence that left-wing parties do, indeed, adopt more expansionary fiscal policies than right-wing governments; some scholars find no relationship between the partisan orientation of the government and fiscal policy; and some find evidence that, if anything, right-wing governments are more expansionary than left-wing governments. Of course, difficulty in establishing a difference in fiscal policy behavior between left- and right-wing governments is not evidence in and of itself that these parties—and the voters they represent—do not wish to implement different policies. It may very well be the case that they would like to implement different fiscal policies but that the vagaries of political competition or the “structural dependence of the state on capital” (as discussed in Chapter 9) prevent them from effectively acting on these desires. In the former case, perhaps competition between the parties in a country leads parties of all stripes to reluctantly choose policies to win the support of the median voter. If this is true, then parties representing different constituencies may act very much the same.

Of course, there is the possibility that the relative policy preferences (income position) of the median voter might differ from one country to the next. If the median voter is farther to the left in some countries and this results in left-wing parties being in government more frequently in these countries, then we might expect to see evidence for a *cross-national* version of the partisan model. In other words, one version of the partisan model is about the differences in macroeconomic policy between parties *within* nations and another version is about the differences in macroeconomic policy between parties *across* nations. In a seminal article in the study of the politics of macroeconomic policy, David Cameron (1978) presents evidence to support the cross-national version of the partisan model. In Figure 15.7, we reproduce a scatter plot from Cameron’s article showing a positive association between the percentage of the government’s electoral base composed of left-wing parties between 1960 and 1975 and the growth of government revenues as a share of GDP during the same period. As you can see, Sweden and the United States represent polar extremes. Sweden was ruled by a left-wing party during the whole period (the Swedish Social Democratic Party) and it experienced a 20 percentage point increase in government revenues as a share of GDP. In contrast, the United States was ruled by a right-wing party during the whole period and it expe-

The **partisan model of macroeconomic policy** argues that left-wing parties represent the interests of low-income voters and that right-wing parties represent the interests of high-income voters. The main prediction of the partisan model is that changes in the partisan control of the government will lead to predictable changes in fiscal policy.

24. For a critical review of the partisan model of fiscal policy, see Clark (2003, 41–84).

FIGURE 15.7**The Partisan Composition of Government and the Expansion of the Public Economy, 1960–1975 (percent)**

Source: Cameron (1978, 1255, fig. 1).

rienced almost no growth in government revenues as a share of GDP.²⁵ Between these two extremes in fiscal policy, there is a fairly close relationship between the percentage of time that a country experiences left-wing rule and increases in the size of government.²⁶

The cross-national version of the partisan model suggests that cross-national differences in the partisan composition of governments reflect cross-national differences in voter preferences. So far we have presented very little evidence that voters' preferences vary across countries and, if it exists, we have little theory to explain this variance. Some scholars have suggested, however, that the absence of a "European style" welfare state in the United States can be explained by differing attitudes toward the poor in Europe and the United States. Alesina,

25. Like many comparativists, Cameron (1978, 1248 n. 12) considers both the Republican and Democratic Parties in the United States to be "center-right" parties compared with the parties in other developed democracies.

26. Canada, Ireland, and the Netherlands don't quite fit the pattern—they experienced a larger growth in the size of the government than the partisan composition of their governments would predict.

Glaeser, and Sacerdote (2001), for example, use data from the World Values Survey to show that Europeans are twice as likely as Americans to say they believe the poor are trapped in poverty, and almost twice as likely to say that luck determines income. Americans are twice as likely as Europeans to say that the poor are lazy. And Europeans are twice as likely as Americans to self-identify as leftists. To some extent, these data, which are shown in Table 15.3, suggest that differences in attitudes toward the poor might be what is driving broad differences in the left-right placement of citizens between the United States and Europe. Although there is some truth to this, Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote note that things are more complicated when we look at the individual level rather than the national level. It appears that many Europeans who are not leftists hold what might be thought of as charitable views toward the poor; indeed, the number of people holding these views is about twice as large as the number identifying as leftists.

There are at least two possible explanations for the lack of a close link at the individual level between attitudes toward the poor and self-identification as a leftist. One is that the presence of a large number of leftists in a country may shift the terms of debate about welfare in such a way that the attitudes they hold about the poor come to be accepted by some non-leftists as well. The second is that leftists may not have a monopoly on these attitudes about the poor. In most European countries, for example, there are parties and substantial numbers of voters that ascribe to what are sometimes called “Christian democratic” attitudes. Christian democrats often espouse a form of conservatism, not often articulated in the United States, which combines interventionist social welfare attitudes with morally conservative views on social issues. Thus, it may be that the large number of non-leftist Europeans expressing “charitable” views to the poor are Christian democrats.²⁷ For this reason, many careful studies of the partisan sources of fiscal policy divide parties into three categories—right-wing, left-wing, and Christian democratic—and typically expect parties of the last two varieties to act alike (for example, Huber, Ragin, and Stephens 1993).

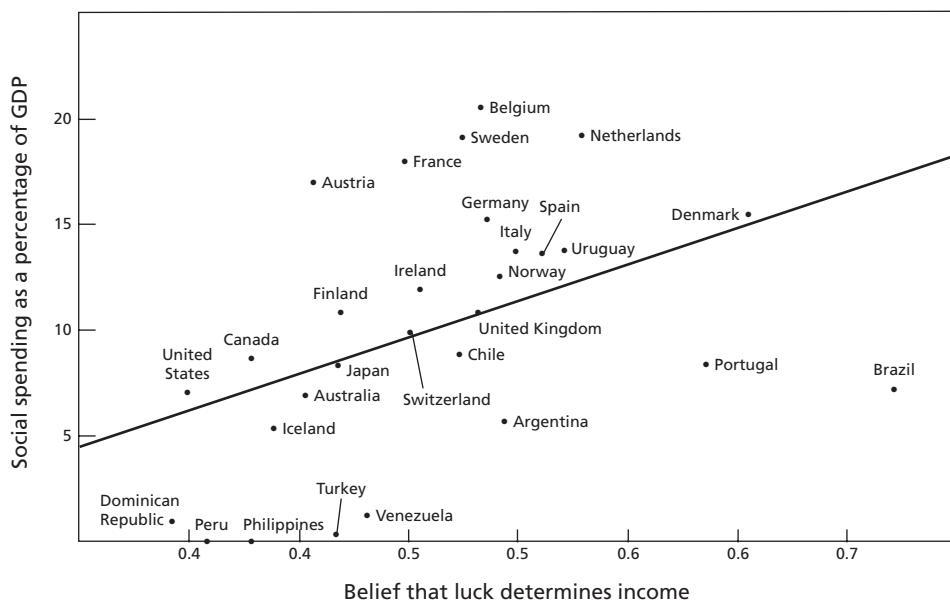
TABLE 15.3**European and American Attitudes toward the Poor (percent)**

Item	European Union	United States
Believe poor are trapped in poverty	60	29
Believe luck determines income	54	30
Believe the poor are lazy	26	60
Identify themselves as on the left of the political spectrum	30	17

Source: World Values Survey data from 1981–1997 as reported in Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote (2001, table 13).

27. See Kalyvas (1996) for an explanation of the rise of Christian Democratic parties in Europe and their relationship to traditional conservative parties.

There is also some empirical evidence that attitudes toward the poor are associated with fiscal policy that goes beyond the United States–European comparison that we have just presented. In Figure 15.8, we reproduce a scatter plot from Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote (2001) showing the relationship between the national average response concerning the belief that luck determines income and the national average share of GDP devoted to social spending. Although there is considerable variation in social spending for any given set of beliefs, countries in which relatively few people believe that income is determined by luck have substantially lower levels of social spending and, with the exception of Portugal and Brazil, countries in which most people believe income is determined by luck have substantially higher levels of social spending. Overall, the data presented by Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote (2001) suggest that fiscal policy is influenced not only by economic factors, such as income inequality, but also by cultural factors, such as attitudes toward the poor and beliefs about the extent to which luck determines income.

FIGURE 15.8**Relationship between Social Spending and the Belief that Luck Determines Income**

Source: Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote (2001, 244).

Note: Social spending as a percentage of GDP is the average for the 1960–1998 period; the belief that luck determines income is the mean value for a country, measured as an index from 0 to 1, for the 1981–1997 period.

We now turn to an examination of how political institutions influence fiscal policy. In particular, we focus on the relationship between electoral laws and fiscal policy.

How Electoral Laws Influence Fiscal Policy

Over the last decade or so, a steady stream of research has sought to explain that fiscal policy in countries that employ PR electoral systems differs from that in countries that employ majoritarian electoral systems. In particular, this scholarship has sought to explain why PR systems appear to be associated with more public goods, larger and more redistributive social welfare programs, and a larger overall size of government than majoritarian systems (Iversen and Soskice 2006; Persson and Tabellini 2004). Although there is a growing consensus that fiscal policy activity is higher in countries that employ PR electoral systems, there is little agreement as to exactly why this is the case. In what follows, we present three sets of arguments linking fiscal policy to the electoral laws employed in a country. The first set of arguments states that proportional representation election laws influence the amount of redistribution that governments engage in because it facilitates the election of left-wing governments. The second set of arguments states that fiscal policy is different under different electoral systems because some electoral systems encourage targeted spending in small districts, whereas others encourage spending on broader public goods. The third set of arguments states that proportional representation encourages government spending through its effect on the number of parties in government.

Proportional Representation Leads to More Redistribution by Facilitating the Election of Left-wing Governments

Although it is important to look at the way cross-national differences in attitudes affect the propensity to elect left-wing governments, as we saw earlier, many scholars have suggested that electoral laws may play an important role in determining the partisan composition of governments. Specifically, several studies have argued that proportional representation electoral systems encourage the election of left-wing governments and that majoritarian electoral systems encourage the election of right-wing governments (Iversen and Soskice 2006; Rodden 2006).

Rodden (2006) argues that electoral institutions influence “who rules” because of the geographic distribution of support for left-wing parties and the way electoral laws overlay this geographic distribution. He points out that left-wing parties have traditionally drawn their electoral support from concentrated pockets of voters in urban industrial areas and mining centers. This geographic concentration of support for left-wing parties is the product of industrialization in an era when transportation costs were sufficiently high that workers needed to live close to where they worked. This pattern of left-wing support has persisted, even after such large-scale social changes in recent decades as de-industrialization and gentrification. As Rodden (2006, 2) puts it, “Densely populated manufacturing and mining regions vote overwhelmingly for parties of the left and less industrial and rural areas for parties of the right throughout Europe, even in many settings where cities are affluent and rural

areas are mired in poverty.” Right-wing parties, in contrast, tend to draw their voters from a much broader geographic base. The higher geographic concentration of left-wing support, Rodden argues, is a much greater liability in single-member district plurality electoral systems than in PR systems. This is because of the distortionary effects of SMDP that we examined in Chapter 13. In Chapter 13, we emphasized that votes for a losing party in a district were, in a sense, wasted because they contributed nothing to the party’s representation in the legislature. Rodden’s argument emphasizes that votes can also be wasted in districts where parties succeed. In SMDP systems, the best a party can do in a particular district is to elect a single representative and to do so it merely needs to win more votes than any other party. Any additional votes are “surplus” and they contribute nothing to enhancing the party’s control of the legislature. Consequently, if support for left-wing parties is more geographically concentrated than support for right-wing parties, then left-wing parties will be electorally competitive in a smaller number of districts than right-wing parties, and a larger number of left-wing votes will be wasted than right-wing votes. In contrast, in PR systems, seats in legislatures are distributed in a manner that reflects underlying electoral support, and thus fewer votes are wasted and the bias for right-wing parties caused by left-wing geographic concentration is reduced (or even disappears).

There is, in fact, a strong association between the type of electoral system in a country and the propensity for left-wing parties to win enough seats in the legislature to control the government. In Table 15.4, we present data from seventeen advanced industrialized democracies between 1945 and 1998 showing that a left-wing government was in power about three-quarters of the observed time in countries with PR systems, but only one-quarter of the observed time in countries with majoritarian electoral systems (Iverson and Soskice 2006). Note that we are not necessarily claiming that the electoral system *causes* left-wing electoral success but merely that the two go together. This is important because several scholars have pointed out that ruling elites in European countries in which left-wing parties were strong replaced their majoritarian electoral systems at the beginning of the twentieth century with proportional ones (Boix 1999). This suggests that the causal relationship between PR and left-wing electoral success may run in both directions—countries in which left-wing parties are strong have tended to adopt PR and PR, in turn, is likely to reinforce the representation of left-wing parties in government.

TABLE 15.4
**Electoral Systems and the Number of Years
with Left and Right Governments, 1945–1998**

Electoral system	Government partisanship		Proportion of left governments
	Left	Right	
Proportional	342	120	0.74
Majoritarian	86	256	0.25

Source: Iversen and Soskice (2006, fig. 1).

Note: Data are from seventeen advanced industrialized democracies; centrist governments have not been included.

Rodden argues that the electoral system affects not only the probability of left-wing parties gaining power but also the way that left-wing parties behave once in power. Specifically, he claims that left-wing parties in SMDP systems are less aggressive in pressing for redistributive fiscal policies than they are in PR systems. The reason is that, to the extent that parties have incentives to court the median voter, parties have incentives to court the *national* median voter in PR systems but the *marginal constituency* median voter in SMDP systems. Marginal constituencies are basically constituencies in which the electoral support for the two biggest parties is evenly split. In SMDP systems, national parties have incentives to ignore voters in “safe districts”—ones where they are likely to win and ones that are “safe” for their competitors where they are likely to lose. Elections in SMDP systems are won and lost in marginal constituencies because that is where the “swing voters” are. Because of the geographic concentration of support for left parties mentioned earlier, the median voter in marginal constituencies is likely to be far to the right of the average voter of the left-wing party. As a result, left-wing parties in SMDP systems have an incentive to not be as redistributive in regard to fiscal policy as they would be in PR systems.

Iversen and Soskice (2006) make claims that are very much like those made by Rodden, but they provide a different causal logic. Iversen and Soskice agree that left-wing parties are likely to participate in government more frequently in PR systems than in SMDP systems. They argue, however, that this is because of the difference in coalitional bargaining across the two systems and not because of the geographic distribution of support for left-wing parties. Iversen and Soskice present a game-theoretic model in which there are three equal-size groups in society based on income level (*Low*, *Middle*, and *High*). According to their model, the preferred tax and transfer scheme of low-income voters is to tax the high- and middle-income groups at the highest possible rate and redistribute this wealth to themselves. The preferred tax and transfer scheme of middle-income voters is to tax the high-income group and divide this wealth between themselves and low-income voters. Finally, as in the Meltzer-Richard model, high-income voters prefer zero taxes and no redistribution.²⁸

Iversen and Soskice assume that because of the reductive effect of SMDP electoral laws on the number of parties gaining representation that we outlined in Chapter 13, there will be only two parties in the legislature of SMDP systems, with the middle-income group splitting its vote between the two other income groups: some middle-income voters will form a party with low-income voters, whereas others will form a party with high-income voters. We will call the two parties in SMDP systems the *Center-Left* and *Center-Right* Parties. Median voter dynamics lead both the *Center-Left* and *Center-Right* Parties to campaign on the poli-

28. We should note that these policy preferences are not assumed; instead, they are derived directly from their model. Two particular assumptions of their model lead directly to the policy preferences that we outline in the text. The first assumption is that the lump sum tax on the high-income group is larger than the tax on the middle-income group, which, in turn, is larger than the tax on the low-income group. The second assumption is that the entire system is nonregressive; that is, the difference between the benefits received and the tax paid ($s - \gamma_i t$) in our analysis at the start of this section is smallest for the high-income group and biggest for the low-income group.

cies preferred by middle-income voters. The problem is that neither the *Center-Left* nor the *Center-Right* Parties can credibly commit to implement these policies once the election is over. The problem basically arises from the fact that if middle-income voters split their support between the *Center-Left* and *Center-Right* Parties, then they will be a minority faction in each party.²⁹ The middle-income voters must, therefore, worry that after the election each party will implement the preferences of its majority faction.

Middle-income voters in SMDP systems are, therefore, confronted with a decision about how to vote under uncertainty. With probability p , each party will keep its campaign promise to implement policies preferred by the middle-income group: tax high-income voters and share the proceeds with low-income voters. Think of the probability p as being equal to the credibility of each party's campaign promise to implement centrist policies. With probability $1 - p$, each party will defect from its campaign promise to implement policies preferred by the middle-income group. If a party defects from its campaign promise, the *Center-Right* Party will implement policies preferred by the high-income group and the *Center-Left* Party will implement policies preferred by the low-income group. Thus, if we let L , M , and H stand for the value that middle-income voters place on the policies preferred by low-, middle-, and high-income voters, then the expected payoff to middle-income voters of *Center-Left* rule is $pM + (1 - p)L$ and the expected payoff to middle-income voters of *Center-Right* rule is $pM + (1 - p)H$. Given these equations, middle-income voters will prefer the *Center-Left* Party if:

$$pM + (1 - p)L > pM + (1 - p)H.$$

Because pM appears on both sides of the above inequality, we can ignore it. This means that the problem facing middle-income voters of whether to support the *Center-Left* Party or not essentially comes down to whether:

$$(1 - p)L > (1 - p)H.$$

Remember that $1 - p$ is the probability that either party defects from its promise to implement centrist policies. If both parties' campaign promises are perfectly credible ($1 - p = 0$), then middle-income voters will be unconcerned about what each party's "true preferences" are and they will be indifferent between the two parties because both parties will implement the preferences of the middle-income group. If the parties' campaign promises are not fully credible (but are equally credible), however, the middle-income voters' decision is driven by which bad outcome is least unpleasant; that is, whether L is greater or less than H . According to the setup of the model, it is easy to see that if middle-income voters cannot get their most preferred policies implemented, then they prefer the policies of high-income voters (zero tax, zero subsidy) to the policies of low-income voters (tax high- and middle-income voters,

29. This is true because of the assumption that the three groups of voters are of equal size.

and distribute to low-income voters). In other words, H is greater than L for middle-income voters. As a consequence, the expected payoff of *Center-Right* rule is greater than the expected payoff of *Center-Left* rule. This suggests that middle-income voters will have a greater tendency to vote for center-right parties in SDMP systems than center-left parties.³⁰

What about PR electoral systems? In PR electoral systems there is no barrier to representation of any of the three income groups in society and so the legislature is composed of three parties, each representing one of the three groups. We will call the three parties in PR systems the *Left*, *Center*, and *Right* Parties. All of the income groups are assumed to be of equal size, so no single party will control a majority and the three parties will likely have to negotiate the formation of a coalition government. Once again, the middle-income voters will be pivotal. The middle-income voters do not have to worry, however, that the *Center* Party will deviate to the left or right. They can be confident that the *Center* Party will represent the interests of middle-income voters during coalition negotiations with the parties of the left or right. Iversen and Soskice predict that, more often than not, the *Center* Party will form a coalition with the *Left* Party in these circumstances. Why? It is assumed that parties will bargain over policy when forming the government, and so the policy implemented by any coalition government will be a compromise between the most-preferred policy of each party in the coalition weighted by the bargaining strength of the parties.³¹ Because, by assumption, the tax and transfer system is nonregressive (that is, low-income voters cannot do worse than middle-income voters, who cannot do worse than high-income voters), it is possible for the *Center* Party to form a coalition with the *Left* Party that redistributes income away from the rich, but it is not politically feasible for the *Center* Party to form a coalition with the *Right* Party that redistributes income away from the poor. Roughly speaking, then, the *Center* Party's choice is between (a) a coalition with the *Left* Party that places some tax burden on high- and middle-income voters and distributes resources to low- and middle-income voters and (b) a coalition with the *Right* Party that distributes the same pot of resources among all three income groups. Because the *Center* Party gets, roughly, half of the government spending pie if it forms a coalition with the *Left* Party but only about one-third of the pie if it forms a coalition with the *Right* Party, the *Center* Party, and the middle-income voters that it represents, will do better by forming a coalition with the *Left* Party. As a result, there is a greater tendency to have center-left government coalitions in PR systems than center-right government coalitions. Iversen and Soskice (2006, 171) nicely summarize the implications of their model in the following way:

30. The model that Iversen and Soskice (2006) present is more subtle and elegant than the one we present here. Our goal, though, is to state the main thrust of their argument as clearly as possible.

31. The bargaining model used by Iversen and Soskice (2006) is called the Rubinstein bargaining model, a model that is named after economist Ariel Rubinstein. Simple versions of this model can be found in Dixit and Skeath (2004) and Morrow (1994).

Note that in a PR system the incentive of [the *Center Party*] to pick [the *Left Party*] as a coalition partner follows from the fact that [the *Left Party*] can never be entirely shut out from sharing in redistributive spending, even when [the *Left Party*] is not in the coalition. This implies that [the *Center Party*] has to share with both [the *Left Party*] and [the *Right Party*] in a [*Center-Right*] coalition, whereas [the *Center Party*] only has to share with [the *Left Party*] in a [*Left-Center*] coalition. [The *Center Party*] therefore has a common interest with [the *Left Party*] in soaking the rich. In a majoritarian system, by contrast, the main concern of [middle-income voters] will be to avoid being soaked by the poor.

Iversen and Soskice's model implies, therefore, that the electoral system will influence both the partisan orientation of the government and the level of redistribution in society. Using data from the Luxembourg Income Study that are based on national surveys of households in fourteen industrialized democracies, they present empirical evidence suggesting that this is, indeed, the case. These data provide measures of income inequality before and after the government's tax and transfer system that can be used as an indicator of the redistributive effect of fiscal policy. In short, the first measure of income inequality is based on people's "gross incomes" and then it is recalculated based on their "net incomes" (net of taxes taken out and benefits received). If these two measures of inequality are essentially the same, then we say that the tax and transfer system has little redistributive impact. But if the measure of inequality using "net" incomes is much lower than the measure of inequality using "gross" incomes, then we say that the tax and transfer system has a large redistributive impact. Consistent with their theoretical expectations, Iversen and Soskice find that right-wing governments are associated with less redistribution; that is, a smaller gap between income inequality before and after the government's tax and transfer system. Importantly, this is true even when the partisan orientation of the government is measured relative to the ideological orientation of the median voter. Thus, it is not simply the case that countries with right-wing voters elect governments that redistribute less. Whichever party gets into power, thanks in part to the electoral system, matters too. Iversen and Soskice also show that fiscal policy is more redistributive in countries with PR systems and that this is true even when taking account of the partisan orientation of the government. Thus, proportional representation does not lead to more redistribution just because it leads to more left-wing governments (although they show that it does have this effect). But, for the reasons outlined above, should a left-wing government come to power in an SMDP system, it is likely to engage in less redistribution than left-wing parties that are elected in PR systems.

Proportional Representation Leads to More Redistribution through Its Effect on the Size of Electoral Districts

Persson and Tabellini (1999, 2000, 2004) provide an alternative explanation for why countries with PR systems experience more redistribution than countries with SMDP electoral

systems. They argue that political competition is fiercer in SMDP systems and that party leaders have to focus on winning the votes of ideologically flexible swing voters through the use of targeted transfers. As a result, fewer government resources will be available for the provision of broader public goods, which, they assume, tend to be more redistributive. The notion that government spending will be focused on public goods in PR systems but on “pork-barrel projects” that favor local interests at the expense of broader national interests in majoritarian systems is expressed in many different ways in the political economy literature. Since Weingast, Shepsle, and Johnsen’s article (1981), this argument has been known as the “law of $1/n$.” In other words, if individual legislators care only about spending projects in their district but taxes are not directly linked to those spending projects (because, for example, taxes are proportional to income, as we have been assuming in this section), then taxing and spending decisions take on aspects of what is known as a **common pool resource problem**.³² A common pool resource problem exists if each legislator has an incentive to maximize government spending in his own district in order to please voters but the costs of that spending are spread across society as a whole. If there are n districts in a country, the people in each district get the full benefit of a spending project but pay only $1/n$ of the cost.³³

Because there tends to be a large number of small districts in SMDP systems and a small number of large districts in PR ones, this argument has important implications for the effect of electoral laws on fiscal policy. Specifically, legislators in SMDP systems can be expected to vote for lavish spending projects in their own districts and shift the cost of paying for such projects onto the legislature as a whole. If legislators adopt a norm called “universalism” in which each legislator is expected to support the spending proposed for her colleagues’ districts in exchange for her colleagues’ support for spending in her own district, then the result is a level of national spending that is higher than each of the legislators desires (Weingast 1979). The legislators are, in effect, trapped in a prisoner’s dilemma that is played out among hundreds of legislators. In contrast, if fiscal policy were controlled by a single actor that answered to a national constituency (such as a president), then that actor would pay the total cost of spending projects and only projects that yielded a national benefit greater than their total cost would be approved. Because legislators in PR systems are elected from a smaller number of larger districts, they bear a larger share of the total cost of spending projects and,

A **common pool resource problem** exists when actors can consume some commonly held resource and pay only a share of its cost. As a result, they consume more of the resource than is socially optimal; that is, they consume more than they would if they had to pay the full social cost of the resource.

32. Common pool resource problems have the same strategic dynamic as a prisoner’s dilemma (Chapter 4) played among N actors. See Hardin (1968) and Ostrom (1990) for treatments of the general problem. A similar problem has been described as a “collective action dilemma” (Olson 1968; Hardin 1982).

33. E. E. Schattschneider (1935) made a similar argument with respect to trade protectionism. McGillivray (2004) argues that whether spending is concentrated in marginal or safe districts, and whether redistribution would be greater in SMDP than PR systems, depends on the degree of party discipline.

therefore, refuse to pay for at least some projects that have little national benefit. As a result, we might expect legislators in SMDP systems to push for a large number of costly projects with concentrated benefits and legislators in PR systems to limit the overall level of government spending and to have a tendency to adopt only spending projects that produce broader benefits. To the extent that projects producing broader benefits are more redistributive than projects producing concentrated benefits, PR systems will, therefore, be associated with higher levels of redistribution.

It should be noted that the electorate model of politics discussed at length in Chapter 9 is related to this line of research (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). In a parliamentary democracy with SMDP electoral rules, such as the United Kingdom, a government needs to win a little more than half the votes in a little more than half the districts to stay in power. In other words, the winning coalition in an SMDP system like this is roughly 25 percent of the electorate. In contrast, in the archetypical PR system that has one nationwide electoral district, such as the Netherlands, the government needs to win about half the votes in the country to stay in power. In other words, the winning coalition in a PR system like this is roughly 50 percent of the electorate. As this comparison indicates, PR systems generally have larger winning coalitions than SMDP systems. As a result, they should provide more public goods and spend fewer government resources targeted at narrow minority groups than SMDP systems.

Franzese and Nooruddin (2004) argue that legislators making spending decisions might also consider the interests of the nation as a whole or, perhaps more realistically, the interests of a particular ideologically defined constituency, which they call the legislator's "partisan constituency." Franzese and Nooruddin suggest that legislators probably respond to both the constituency in their electoral district and their partisan constituency and that the weight they put on each of these constituencies is determined by the degree of party discipline that exists. Party discipline can be thought of as the degree to which party leaders are able to punish individual legislators who put the concerns of their local constituency over the concerns of the party leadership (which might be thought of as responding to the party's national constituency).³⁴ Consequently, when party discipline is high, legislators are likely to think about the broad group or class that the party represents, and when party discipline is low, legislators are likely to focus their efforts on meeting the needs of their electoral district. According to this line of reasoning, the law of $1/n$, therefore, describes the special case in which legislators feel little pressure to support partywide goals and instead focus on their geographically defined constituency.

34. A more complete understanding of what drives party leadership would, following Michels' iron law of oligarchy, recognize that leaders often develop interests that are distinct from any group they represent, but it would also recognize that party leaders sometimes have an interest in releasing legislators from voting the party line because forcing them to toe the party line might cause them to lose control of their constituency seats to a competing party.

Proportional Representation Affects Government Spending and Debt through Its Effect on the Composition of Governments

The common pool resource problem that we have just described has also been used to explain a related question—the overall size of government spending and, by extension, the size of government debt and deficits. Once again, many different arguments link electoral rules to overall levels of government spending and debt, each of which highlights a slightly different causal process.

One argument emphasizes the incentives that electoral rules create for legislators to cultivate a “personal vote.” A personal vote occurs when an individual votes based on the characteristics of a particular candidate rather than the characteristics of the party to which the candidate belongs. As we briefly mentioned in Chapter 12, there are many factors in addition to district size that influence the propensity for candidates to put the concerns of their district over their party and, therefore, cultivate a personal vote (Carey and Shugart 1995). The most important of these factors may be the type of ballot used in PR systems. In a closed list system, voters can express a preference only over parties, leaving party leaders the power to determine which candidates will fill the seats that the party wins. In contrast, in an open list system, voters can indicate the particular candidates they support, and these votes determine which candidates fill the seats won by the party. Clearly, candidates have an incentive to curry favor with the party leadership in closed list systems but to cultivate a personal vote by making direct appeals and distributing resources to voters in their own district in open list systems. Hallerberg and Marier (2004) argue that the common pool resource problem in fiscal policy will be most severe where legislative candidates have strong incentives to cultivate a personal vote. They go on to note, however, that the adoption of “centralizing” fiscal institutions can mitigate this problem. For example, they present evidence from twenty-five Latin American and Caribbean countries during the period 1988–1997 showing that an increase in an index measuring the personal vote is associated with larger government deficits when executive influence over budgets is at its minimum, but that this positive effect disappears as executive influence over the budget grows.

An alternative argument states that the relevant common pool resource problem in relation to fiscal policy occurs not in the legislature, as we have suggested up to this point, but in the cabinet. According to this argument, each minister seeks to maximize the size of her own ministry’s budget while shifting the costs of such spending on to the government as a whole (Hallerberg and von Hagen 1999; Bawn and Rosenbluth 2006). As a consequence, any factor that reinforces “fiscal centralization”—that is, spending decisions that encourage policymakers to consider the full cost, rather than a fraction, of spending—is expected to lead to lower levels of government spending, smaller deficits, and less government debt. The literature that makes this argument typically assumes that political parties have mechanisms to discipline only their own ministers, and so the severity of the common pool resource problem is really an increasing function of the number of parties in government. For example, single-party majority governments often delegate power to a strong finance minister who is

able to discipline overspending ministers (Hallerberg 2004). In contrast, coalition governments tend to find it much more difficult to reign in cabinet ministers, because some of them belong to different parties. Neither the prime minister nor the finance minister will necessarily control instruments to discipline cabinet ministers from outside his party.³⁵ As a result, we would expect that countries with a larger number of parties in government would be associated with higher spending levels, larger deficits, and bigger debt levels. Because we expect SMDP systems to have a reductive effect on the number of parties in the legislature (see Chapter 13) and to encourage the formation of single-party governments (see Chapter 11), this amounts to a specific argument about the way electoral laws influence fiscal policy. Many papers have explored the causal connections that we have just outlined, but perhaps the clearest evidence in support of this line of reasoning comes from a paper by Persson, Roland, and Tabellini (2007). This paper finds positive associations between PR systems and party system fragmentation, between party system fragmentation and coalition government, and between coalition government and higher levels of government spending.

George Tsebelis (2002, chap. 8) offers an interesting rejoinder to those studies that find evidence of a link between the number of parties in government and high levels of government spending or debt. He argues that veto player theory predicts that all policies requiring legislative approval will change more slowly when there are a large number of veto players. Because each party in the cabinet can be thought of as a veto player, we should expect fiscal policy to change more slowly when the number of parties in government is large. But can veto player theory explain the *level* of spending in addition to explaining the rate at which spending levels will change? Tsebelis argues that we ought to consider the fact that almost all of the countries included in studies finding a relationship between the number of parties in government and the level of government spending were greatly affected by the oil crises of the 1970s. Because of the oil crises, these countries were saddled with extremely high levels of spending and debt that were, in effect, exogenously determined. Countries with few veto players were able to reduce debt levels relatively quickly after the oil crises eased, whereas countries with a large number of veto players took longer to turn fiscal policy around and reduce debt levels. Consequently, the positive association found in many studies between fiscal policy and the number of parties in government may be the result of a historical accident (oil crises) that produced high levels of debt in many countries and the fact that the number of partisan veto players in a country determines the amount of fiscal policy inertia. This suggests that if analysts were to examine a different time period, one that did not include the effects of the 1970s oil crises, they might not find any association between the number of parties in government and the level of government spending and debt.

35. Some countries with frequent coalition governments have adopted fiscal policy institutions, such as “fiscal contracts” and “negotiated targets,” to help limit spending (Hallerberg 2004).

Summary

As we have demonstrated, there are good reasons to believe that political institutions in democracies have an important influence on macroeconomic policies.³⁶ For example, we presented evidence that PR electoral laws are associated with coalition governments and with having left-wing parties more frequently enter into government. Both of these factors were, in turn, shown to be associated with more extensive government redistribution and higher levels of spending, larger deficits, and higher debt levels. Although there remains considerable debate about the particular causal mechanisms at work here, there is little question that constitutional choices have important effects on the way that governments manage their economies. Central to our perspective throughout this section has been the idea that macroeconomic outcomes are distributional in nature—that is, they tend to help some citizens and harm others. It is not, therefore, possible to suggest on the basis of this literature what the best institutions for encouraging good macroeconomic performance would be. Our goal, rather, is to show that there are trade-offs to be made and that a knowledge of comparative politics can be useful in helping citizens and policymakers evaluate some of these trade-offs.

In the next section, we explore the effects of different democratic institutions on the likelihood of ethnic conflict. Because it is hard to find supporters of ethnic conflict, it might seem that comparative politics will be able to offer unqualified recommendations in this area. As you may have come to suspect, however, reality is a bit more complicated than that.

ELECTORAL LAWS, FEDERALISM, AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

In recent decades a debate has raged between political scientists regarding the effect of institutional choice, including the choice of electoral laws and federalism, on ethnic conflict. In the last few years the debate has taken on a great deal of urgency as the United States and various international organizations have become increasingly ambitious about nation building. Are there constitutional choices that might encourage successful democratic consolidation in ethnically divided countries such as Iraq? A firm understanding of the way the insti-

36. In this section, we have only had space to focus on the relationship between electoral institutions and fiscal policy. It is important to recognize, however, that this is merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the literature examining the effect of institutions on economic policies and outcomes. In an argument closely related to the constituency size hypotheses we discussed earlier, some scholars have argued that presidents in presidential democracies have an incentive to curb spending and, therefore, strengthen the position of the finance minister in budgetary negotiations (Persson and Tabellini 1999, 2004; Persson, Roland, and Tabellini 2000; Hallerberg and Marier 2004; Cheibub 2006). Clark, Golder, and Golder (2002) examine whether electoral laws influence the extent to which there are partisan differences in fiscal policy. Whereas we have focused in this section on the effect of institutions on fiscal policy, there is also a large literature showing that institutions influence the conduct of monetary policy as well. For example, Goodhart (1999) finds that governments are more likely to manipulate monetary policy for electoral purposes when a single party holds power, and Keefer and Stasavage (2002) find that the number of veto players in a country helps to determine the extent to which central bank independence reduces inflation. In addition, scholars have drawn links between electoral laws and trade policy (Rogowski 1987; McGillivray 2004) and the extent to which governments favor producers over consumers (Rogowski and Kayser 2002).

tutions we studied in Chapters 11 through 14 operate will be essential for answering these questions. But before examining whether there is an “institutional fix” for ethnic conflict, it is important to ask a prior question, and that is, are ethnically diverse societies inclined toward conflict in the first place?

Ethnic Diversity and Conflict

Although large-scale ethnic or religious conflict can be devastating, we should recognize that such conflict is the exception and that interethnic peace is the rule. This may be surprising, because when such conflict occurs the memory of its horror tends to stay with us. Indeed, when asked, it may be easy for people to provide a list of tragically violent interactions between ethnic or religious groups. For example, you might think of the conflicts during the 1990s between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda or between Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians in the former Yugoslavia. Or you might think of the current conflicts between Africans and Arabs in Sudan; between Shias, Sunnis, and Kurds in Iraq; or between various ethnic groups in post-Communist states, such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Russia. There are two problems, however, with simply enumerating ethnic conflicts in this way. First, it tends to ignore the even larger list of “non-events”—incidents in which groups of people with ethnic or religious differences live in relatively peaceful co-existence. Second, such enumerations frequently fail to ask the question, “Compared with what”? That is, if we say groups with ethnic differences tend to be conflict prone, we are implicitly arguing that they are *more* conflict prone than relations within an ethnic group or between nonethnic groups. That may be the case, but a list of conflicts between groups is not enough to establish this claim.

James Fearon and David Laitin (1996) argue that once we address these concerns, ethnic conflict can be seen as a relatively rare event. Table 15.5 reproduces their analysis of data from thirty-six countries in sub-Saharan Africa, an area of the world often thought to be particularly prone to ethnic violence. Fearon and Laitin rely on data from a study by Morrison, Mitchell, and Paden (1989) that examines four different forms of what might be considered ethnic violence: ethnic violence, irredentism, rebellion, and civil war. Morrison, Mitchell, and Paden (1989, 129) define “ethnic violence” as “an event of short duration . . . in which two identifiable communal groups are antagonists in violence to secure some short-term goal.” The other three forms of violence that they examine are also ethnically based in that they involve a conflict between an identifiable communal group and the state. They define “irredentism” as occurring when a communal group attempts to change its allegiance from the government of its current territorial unit to a government in which the ruling authorities share the communal identification of the irredentist group. They define “rebellion” as the use of violence by a communal group in an effort to gain greater autonomy from state authorities. And they define “civil war” as a communal group’s use of violence in an attempt to “form a new political system based on boundaries of ethnic community.” Fearon and Laitin summarize the data in an extremely helpful way that allows us to compare the number of actual incidents of ethnic violence with an estimate of the number of potential incidents of ethnic violence, yielding a ratio of actual incidents of violence to all

TABLE 15.5**Actual and Potential Communal Violence in Thirty-six Sub-Saharan African Countries, 1960–1979**

Type of communal violence	Number of incidents for all countries and years ^a	Country mean of incidents per year ^b	Number of potential incidents for all countries and years ^c	Country mean of potential incidents per year ^d	Ratio of all actual incidents to all potential incidents ^e
Ethnic violence	20	0.03	38,383	59	0.0005
Irredentism	29	0.04	18,757	26	0.0015
Rebellion	27	0.04	18,757	26	0.0014
Civil war	52	0.10	18,757	26	0.0028

Source: Fearon and Laitin (1996, 717), based on data from Morrison, Mitchell, and Paden (1989).

Note: See Fearon and Laitin (1996) for how the number of ethnic groups is determined.

a. Cases of communal violence that persist for three years are counted three times, once for each year. Two independent conflicts in the same year are coded as two incidents for that year.

b. The mean for all countries is all incidents in a country divided by the number of full years since independence through 1979; countries that became independent before 1960 are treated as if they became independent in 1960.

c. For irredentism, rebellion, and civil war, potential cases per year in each country are estimated as the number of ethnic groups in the country less one ($N - 1$), under the assumption that typically one group holds power and potential challengers come from all other groups. These numbers are then summed across countries and years to get the figures in this column. For potential cases of ethnic violence, a conservative estimate of the number of ethnic groups engaged in interactions, namely, the smaller of $2N$ and $N(N - 1) / 2$, is summed across countries and years. If there are N groups, then the total number of dyads is $N(N - 1) / 2$.

d. The mean for all countries of potential incidents per year.

e. Computed by dividing the number of incidents for all years and all countries by the number of potential incidents per year for all years and all countries.

potential incidents of violence across different forms of communal violence. Their summary of the data is shown in Table 15.5.

The comparison of actual to potential events is achieved by moving across the rows of Table 15.5. Beginning with the row “Ethnic violence,” we see that there were twenty incidents of ethnic violence in these thirty-six countries between 1960 and 1979. Although we would never seek to minimize the human suffering caused by such violence, it is important to keep these incidents in perspective. Because the sample includes thirty-six countries observed over nineteen years, there are approximately 680 country-years in the data set.³⁷ One way to estimate the frequency of ethnic conflict, therefore, is to take the ratio of the number of conflicts to the number of country-years in the data set. The third column shows that this figure is 0.03. This means that there have been three incidents of ethnic conflict for every one hundred country-years in this group of countries. This is, however, still an overestimate of the frequency of ethnic conflict because it assumes that each country-year represents just

37. There are actually somewhat fewer observations because some countries did not become independent until after 1960.

Box 15.1**ETHNIC CONFLICT IN SUDAN**

Apart from an eleven-year period between 1972 and 1983, Sudan has been at war continuously since independence in 1956.¹ A civil war broke out in 1983 when the government, dominated by northern Arabs, attempted to impose Islamic Sharia law across all of Sudan, including the south, which is dominated by Christians and animists. This civil war between the north and the south—Africa's longest-running civil war—which resulted in the deaths of more than 1.5 million people, finally came to an end after twenty-one years in late 2004 with the signing of a power-sharing peace agreement known as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Under the CPA, the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) agreed to enter a national unity government with President Omar al-Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP). Although the SPLA agreed to accept Sharia law in the north of the country (but not in the capital, Khartoum), they did manage to secure important government jobs, a larger share of Sudan's oil revenue, and they took de facto control in the south of the country. National elections are to take place in 2009 and a referendum on whether southern Sudan should form its own independent state is scheduled for 2011. Despite the peace agreement, which came into force in 2005, tensions between the north and the south have remained high, with both sides claiming that the other has reneged on its promises and commitments. In October 2007, the SPLA withdrew from the national unity government. Disputes over who should control the oil-rich Abyei region, which has had a special administrative status since 2005 and which can choose to join a possibly independent south in the planned 2011 referendum, pose the greatest threat to continued peace. Conflict broke out in May 2008 between Sudanese government troops and the SPLA in the town of Abyei. Government forces burned the town to the ground, completely destroying 95 percent of the homes; the United Nations reports that about 50,000 Sudanese have since fled the town. Rival troops from the north and south headed toward central Sudan in a move that threatened to further escalate violence and potentially restart the civil war.

As the civil war between the north and south was being waged, a separate conflict broke out in Darfur in western Sudan in 2003 when different rebel groups began attacking government targets. Tension over land, water, and grazing rights in Darfur had been high for many years. Like the rebel groups in the south, the rebel groups in Darfur claimed that the Arab-dominated government was oppressing the black African population in favor of the Arab population. In other words, like the north-south civil war, the conflict in Darfur is primarily between Arabs and non-Arabs. One difference, though, is that the rebel groups in Darfur are mostly Muslim non-Arabs, whereas the rebel groups in the south are mostly Christian or animist non-Arabs. Originally, there were just two rebel groups in Darfur—the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (Jem). These rebel groups have subsequently split to such an extent, however, that there are now over a dozen different rebel groups in conflict with the government.

1. For up-to-date information on the conflicts in Sudan, see the extensive coverage on the BBC News Online site at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/africa/2004/sudan/default.stm.

Given that the Sudanese government was already fighting a civil war in the south that threatened the unity of the country, it responded with considerable force in Darfur in an attempt to discourage secessionist tendencies from developing there too. This involved using aerial bombings and Arab militias, known as Janjaweed, to destroy African villages accused of harboring rebels. The term *Janjaweed* is an Arab colloquialism meaning “a man with a gun on a horse.” The Janjaweed are comprised of members of nomadic Arab tribes who have been in conflict with Darfur’s settled black African farmers for many years. Ever since independence in 1956, successive weak Sudanese governments have used Arab tribal militias around the country to exert their authority whenever problems arise because the country is too large for the national army to fully control on its own. Although Arab militias have been around for some time, the Janjaweed in its present form was reportedly set up by security agencies under the control of Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha in response to the 2003 attacks by rebel groups in Darfur. The Sudanese government has repeatedly denied that it controls or supports the Janjaweed. A BBC reporter reported in October 2004, however, that “in May, I saw him [President Omar al-Bashir] address a meeting of his supporters in Nyala, south Darfur, and salute the assembled Janjaweed fighters: ‘Long live the Mujahideen.’”² Numerous other individuals and organizations have also claimed that the Sudanese government is arming the Janjaweed militias.

The government’s use of aerial bombing and the Janjaweed to target African villages in Darfur has led to the establishment of dozens of refugee camps housing about 2.4 million internally displaced persons; a further 200,000 refugees have fled eastward into neighboring Chad.³ Individuals in the refugee camps report that after government air raids, the Janjaweed would ride into their villages on horses and camels killing men, raping women, and burning down homes in a form of scorched earth policy; the Janjaweed are accused of trying to cleanse black Africans from Darfur. The United States and several other national governments (but not the United Nations) have described what is going on in Darfur as genocide.⁴ By 2006 the death toll was estimated to be over 200,000. China, which buys about 60 percent of Sudan’s oil and sells it weapons, has played a key role in helping the Sudanese government avoid UN sanctions. Despite Chinese resistance, diplomatic pressure has forced Sudan’s gov-

2. BBC News Online, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3594520.stm>.

3. Relations between Sudan and Chad are extremely tense. Chad’s government recently accused Sudan of attempting to overthrow Chad’s president Idriss Deby in February 2008 by using rebels based in Darfur. Sudan, in return, has accused Chad of arming Jem, the Darfur rebel movement. It appears that Chad and Sudan are both fighting a proxy war using each other’s rebels to achieve their military objectives. The political tensions spilled into the nonpolitical realm when worried officials from FIFA (soccer’s world governing body) suspended the World Cup qualifying match between Sudan and Chad that was scheduled to take place on May 31, 2008.

4. In June 2008, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) compared aspects of the Sudanese government’s behavior with that of Nazi Germany, saying that state officials were covering up and denying crimes against humanity. The Sudanese government is currently refusing to hand over Ali Kushayb, a leader of the Janjaweed, and Ahmad Harun, Sudan’s current humanitarian affairs minister, to the ICC; the men are charged with fifty-one counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. For more information, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7436472.stm>.

ernment to let increasing numbers of international troops and observers in to monitor the situation in Darfur. Originally, in 2004, just 300 African Union troops were allowed into Darfur, and their role was limited to protecting the 120 unarmed observers that had been working in the region. By 2007 the size of the African Union observer mission in Darfur had risen to 7,000 troops. With only a limited mandate to intervene, though, the African Union observer mission has been unable to protect the civilians in the refugee camps and has itself come under repeated attack from the Janjaweed; civilians continue to be killed or raped whenever they venture out of the refugee camps. In late 2007, the United Nations agreed to replace the African Union observer mission with a 26,000 strong UN-African Union peacekeeping mission with a stronger mandate to protect civilians and aid workers. The full deployment of the new peacekeeping troops is not expected to be completed until late 2008, and many observers believe that their numbers are still too small to keep peace in a region the size of France.

Although numerous attempts have been made to reach a peace agreement between the rebel groups in Darfur and the Sudanese government, all have so far failed. At the time of writing this chapter, there seemed to be very little light at the end of the tunnel.

one potential incident of ethnic group conflict. In reality, because the typical country in this sub-Saharan sample has more than two dozen ethnic groups, the potential is there for far more than one ethnic conflict per country-year. Consequently, Fearon and Laitin estimate the number of potential incidents of ethnic conflict based on the number of ethnic groups in a country and find that the ratio of actual incidents of ethnic violence to potential incidents of ethnic violence is lower still (last column): there were just five incidents of ethnic conflict for every 10,000 potential incidents (roughly, ethnic-group-years).

Similar calculations can be conducted to gauge the frequency of the other three forms of violence. We see from the last column, for example, that although communal violence aimed at the state occurs with a greater frequency than group-on-group violence, it is still quite rare. Actual communal-based irredentism and rebellion occur about 1–5 times for every 1,000 potential incidents. Although communally based civil wars occur about twice as often as this, they are still quite rare—only 2.8 civil wars for every 1,000 potential civil wars. One could, of course, say that Fearon and Laitin (1996) have made these phenomena seem rare by dividing them into separate categories, but even if we combine all types of communal violence against the state they are still a tiny fraction of the number of potential events—just 5.8 actual incidents for every 1,000 potential incidents.³⁸

One thing is clear from Fearon and Laitin's analysis—even in very poor countries where the state has little capacity to rule effectively and the society is reeling from decades of colo-

38. The sum of irredentist, rebellion, and civil war incidents is 108. This, divided by the number of potential incidents (18,757), is 0.0058, or, for every 1,000 potential cases of communal violence against the state, just 5.8 actual incidents.

nialism that left a legacy of externally imposed borders, such as sub-Saharan Africa, ethnic heterogeneity does not lead inexorably to ethnic conflict—either between ethnic groups or between ethnic groups and the state. Simply looking at these data of violent incidents and thinking about how many incidents could have occurred if different ethnic groups were to engage in conflict should lead you to question popular notions about the nature of the link between ethnic heterogeneity and violence.

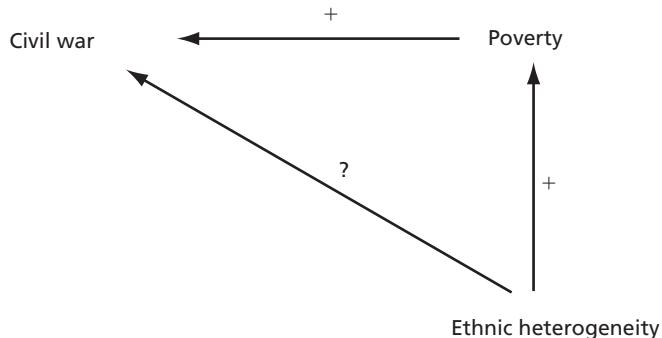
The above conclusion can be arrived at even before we begin to answer the question of whether ethnic violence is more common than other forms of violence. One way to judge whether ethnic conflicts are more common than other forms of conflict is to examine whether ethnic heterogeneity—having large numbers of ethnic groups—increases the likelihood of civil war. In a different article Fearon and Laitin (2003) analyze a data set that runs from 1945 to 1999 and includes 161 countries and 127 civil wars.³⁹ They find that, after taking account of wealth and a battery of other variables, countries that experience civil wars are no more ethnically or religiously diverse than countries that do not. Instead, what Fearon and Laitin find to matter most for civil war onset are factors that favor insurgency, such as poverty, oil-dependent export sectors, political instability, and rough terrain. These factors increase the probability of civil war by creating bureaucratically weak states and by creating environments favorable to rebel recruitment.⁴⁰ Although the study by Fearon and Laitin challenges the popular belief that having more ethnic groups in a country increases the likelihood of civil war, it is possible that ethnic heterogeneity does increase the risk of civil war, but through an indirect effect that goes undetected in their study. What might this indirect effect be?

Several economists have argued that ethnic heterogeneity has a deleterious effect on economic growth (Easterly and Levine 1997). If this is true, ethnic heterogeneity might contribute to the risk of civil war by helping to keep countries poor. Indeed, an analysis using Fearon and Laitin's own data shows that (a) ethnic diversity is positively associated with the onset of civil war when wealth (measured by GDP per capita) is dropped from their statistical model, and (b) there is a negative association between ethnic heterogeneity and wealth. Taken together, these results suggest that ethnic heterogeneity may not have a direct effect on civil war onset but that it does have an indirect effect by reducing wealth, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of civil war. This causal story is graphically illustrated in Figure 15.9.

Considerable disagreement remains among economists and political scientists as to the exact causal connection between ethnic heterogeneity and economic growth, which somewhat complicates the above discussion. Some economists maintain that ethnic heterogeneity and economic growth are not causally related. And even those that accept that there is a

39. Gary Bass (2005) wrote an accessible summary of this literature for the *New York Times Magazine*.

40. Poverty, which lowers tax revenue, and political instability weaken the state, thereby making it easier for rebel groups to challenge it successfully. Rough terrain, like mountainous regions, gives rebel groups hiding places and strongholds that hinder attempts by the state to crush them. Thus, poverty, political instability, and rough terrain increase the likelihood of civil war by increasing the probability that a challenge to the state will be successful. In contrast, the presence of oil increases the likelihood of civil war by increasing the value of gaining control of the state. All of these factors together increase the expected value of civil war on the part of rebel groups.

FIGURE 15.9**Possible Causal Paths by which Ethnic Heterogeneity Encourages Civil War**

Note: The positive signs indicate the direction of the causal effect. Thus, high levels of ethnic heterogeneity increase poverty, and high levels of poverty increase the likelihood of civil wars. It is unclear whether ethnic heterogeneity had a direct effect on civil war.

causal relationship often disagree about the exact causal process by which ethnic heterogeneity inhibits economic growth. Easterly and Levine (1997) show that ethnically heterogeneous African countries experience lower economic growth rates than more ethnically homogeneous African countries. They argue that this is the case because governments in ethnically diverse countries are often politically unstable and tend to choose policies that lead to low levels of schooling, underdeveloped financial systems, distorted financial exchange markets, and insufficient infrastructure. Easterly and Levine suggest that when various ethnic groups in a country have different preferences, they may derive less satisfaction from providing public goods than would be the case in a more homogeneous society. For instance, a public good like a school might lead to lower satisfaction in an ethnically diverse setting if the groups cannot agree on the main language of instruction, location, or general curriculum. The result is that the ethnically diverse society is less likely to end up building the school. Part of the problem is also that members of one ethnic group may not be willing to spend resources on providing public goods that members of other ethnic groups will get to consume. Whatever the reason behind the low level of investment in public goods, economic growth is likely to be inhibited. Evidence supporting this argument linking ethnic heterogeneity with lower levels of public goods provision can be found in a variety of settings, including advanced industrialized democracies. For example, Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly (1999) compare U.S. cities and find that governments in ethnically diverse cities tend to provide fewer public goods than governments in more ethnically homogeneous cities. Significantly, given our upcoming discussion of institutions, Easterly (2001) notes that what economists call “good institutions” (those that reduce bureaucratic delay, enforce contracts, reduce risk of nationalization, and provide sound infrastructure) can help to alleviate

the negative effects of ethnic heterogeneity on economic growth. In other words, if a country's institutions are of a sufficiently high quality, then ethnic heterogeneity may have no effect on the provision of public goods or on conflict.⁴¹

The arguments that we have examined so far focus on the claim that it is the number of ethnic groups in a country that increase the risk of conflict and violence. Recently, though, scholars have begun to argue that it is not the number of ethnic groups (ethnic heterogeneity) per se that matters for conflict but, rather, the distribution of ethnic group memberships. For example, some studies have suggested that it is *ethnic polarization* and not ethnic heterogeneity that increases the likelihood of things like civil wars (Estaban and Ray 1999, 2008; Reynal-Querol 2002; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005; Estaban and Schneider 2008). This literature suggests that the risk of civil war is higher when there are a few large ethnic groups with opposing interests than when there are many small ethnic groups. Along similar lines, Chandra and Boulet (2005) argue that democratic stability is put at risk not by ethnic heterogeneity but by the existence of a permanently excluded ethnic minority. The reasoning is that an ethnic minority that sees no democratic means by which it can ever come to power is more likely to break with democracy than one that foresees coming to power from time to time through the electoral process. Chandra and Boulet go on to claim that far from hurting democratic stability, having a large number of evenly sized ethnic groups in a country can help to stabilize democracy by making a variety of shifting ruling coalitions possible, thereby lowering the likelihood that particular ethnic groups will be permanently excluded from power. Empirical evidence for a corollary of this theory comes from Collier and Hoeffler (2004), who show that the risk of civil war is highest when one ethnic group comprises between 45 and 90 percent of the population. That is, they provide evidence that civil war is more likely when a single ethnic group is in a position to act as a permanent *majority*—presumably because for every permanent majority, there is at least one potentially disgruntled permanent minority.

As we will see, arguments about the effect of electoral laws on ethnic conflict are closely tied to arguments about the existence of permanent ethnic minorities. The main dispute is whether these minorities should receive a guarantee of permanent representation or should be encouraged to form coalitions with other groups and, thereby, avoid being placed in the position of permanent opposition. But before we examine the effect of electoral laws on ethnic conflict in detail, it is important to recognize that other factors influence how responsive voters are to ethnic-based appeals from politicians and, hence, how likely it is that there will be group-based conflict. For example, Varshney (2001, 2002) argues that the pattern of social ties between citizens is an important factor influencing the probability of group-based conflict. Specifically, he argues that peace is promoted when citizens form interethnic social ties. Interethnic civic engagement, he finds, promotes peace, and its “absence or weakness opens

41. Easterly (2001) uses four measures from the *International Country Risk Guide* in Knack and Keefer (1995) to construct his index of institutional quality. These measures are: (a) freedom from government repudiation of contracts, (b) freedom from expropriation, (c) rule of law, and (d) bureaucratic quality.

up space for ethnic violence" (Varshney 2001, 363). As he notes, though, not all forms of interethnic civic engagement are equally effective at promoting peace. For example, he argues that joining formal associations, such as interethnic business associations, sports teams, reading or film clubs, and labor unions, is more effective in promoting ethnic peace than more everyday forms of interethnic contact, such as regularly eating together or allowing children to play together. Although both forms of interethnic civic engagement promote peace, Varshney finds that the associational form is sturdier than everyday engagement, especially when politicians attempt to polarize people along ethnic lines. This evidence suggests that vigorous associational life, if it has an interethnic aspect, acts as a serious constraint on the ability of politicians to mobilize voters along ethnic lines, even when ethnic polarization is in their political interest. The more the associational networks cut across ethnic boundaries, the harder it is for politicians to achieve such polarization (Varshney 2001, 363).

Most of the studies on ethnic politics that we have examined so far take ethnic identities and how these identities are manifested in associational life as given. As we saw in Chapter 13, however, institutions, such as electoral laws, are likely to influence the type of ethnic identities that become politicized in the first place (Chandra and Boulet 2003; Chandra 2004, 2005; Posner 2004, 2005). Chandra (2005) argues that one reason why so many studies find an inherent tension between ethnic heterogeneity and things like democratic stability is that they treat ethnic identity as given rather than as something that is socially constructed. To demonstrate this point, Chandra presents a model of electoral competition under a single-member district plurality electoral system in which party leaders are free to define ethnic groups strategically. The results of the model show that there are conditions in which party leaders will choose to redefine group identity in order to attract voters across ethnic lines. In other words, it is not always the case that party leaders will choose to mobilize voters along ethnic lines. This is an important result because it suggests that the conflict

Ethnic outbidding is a process in which ethnic divisions are politicized and the result is the formation of increasingly polarized ethnic parties.

and extremism predicted by traditional models of **ethnic outbidding**, in which the politicization of ethnic divisions inevitably gives rise to one or more competing ethnic parties (Rabushka and

Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1985), are the result of assuming that ethnic identities are fixed rather than the mere presence of ethnic differences.

According to models of ethnic outbidding, once a single ethnic party emerges, it "infects" the political system because it results in a new and more extreme ethnic party emerging to oppose the first one. This, in turn, leads the first ethnic party to become more extreme, and so on, producing a downward spiral in which nonethnically based competitive politics is destroyed altogether. Essentially what Chandra (2005) shows is that this ethnic outbidding process need not occur if ethnic identities are not fixed. Interestingly, Chandra's study suggests that far from being a cause of concern, ethnic heterogeneity may actually help ensure democratic stability by increasing the number of dimensions along which interethnic alliances can form. In effect, majorities that are constructed along one dimension are

unlikely to be permanent and, hence, dangerous when there is ethnic diversity, because politicians from groups that comprise a minority on that dimension can try to mobilize voters along a different dimension, one in which they will be part of a majority.

We should note at this point, though, that Chandra has analyzed these dynamics under only one type of electoral system—single-member district plurality rule. Further analysis is required to support her conclusion that “some institutional contexts produce benign forms of ethnic politics, while others produce malign forms” (Chandra 2005, 245). Fortunately, there is a rather vigorous debate that we can draw on about the effect of electoral laws on the relationship between ethnic conflict and democratic stability. It is to this debate that we now turn.

The Hypothesized Effect of Electoral Laws on Ethnic Conflict

We learned in Chapter 13 that electoral laws influence whether or not social cleavages are reflected in a country’s party system. PR electoral laws with a high district magnitude allow social cleavages to be translated directly into the party system. In contrast, less permissive electoral systems, such as SMDP rule, create incentives for political entrepreneurs and voters to put aside some of their differences in an attempt to capture a difficult-to-obtain electoral prize. Anticipating the effect of electoral rules, members of ethnic groups are likely to engage in what Chandra (2004) refers to as an “ethnic head count”—they will look around to see if there are enough members of their ethnic group, given the electoral rules in place, to make a plausible ethnic-specific bid for a legislative seat. If there are, they will be encouraged to support a party that appeals mainly to their specific ethnic group. But if the perceived electoral threshold exceeds their subjective assessment of the size of their ethnic group, then they will likely support a more broadly based party—either a nonethnic party or an ethnic party that defines the ethnic group in a more inclusive manner. Political entrepreneurs play an important role in all of this. For example, political entrepreneurs may try to influence voters’ perceptions about the presence of their co-ethnics by organizing cultural, religious, sporting, and sometimes even explicitly political events that encourage ethnics to reveal their group membership. But political entrepreneurs will also be aware of how electoral thresholds interact with group size to determine the likelihood that such strategies will succeed. Because electoral thresholds are directly affected by electoral laws, the propensity for elites to make ethnic-specific appeals or make interethnic alliances, and the likelihood that voters will respond to such appeals or eschew them and support more broadly based parties, will be a function of the interaction between group size and electoral laws.⁴²

42. Suggesting that actors condition their behavior on the probability of success in achieving their goals is controversial for some. An alternative view is that actors sometimes choose behaviors because they see such behaviors as the “right thing to do,” independently of expected consequences (Varshney 2004). This is, to some extent, true; the difficulty, though, comes in determining *ex ante* when individuals will and will not make such sacrifices. Work on suicide bombings has demonstrated that even these acts of self-sacrifice can be understood from within a standard rational actor framework (Berman and Laitin 2006).

Scholars wishing to influence the design of constitutions in societies characterized by ethnic heterogeneity do not disagree about the role played by electoral institutions. They all recognize that, given high levels of social heterogeneity, the choice of electoral laws will play an important role in determining whether many ethnically homogeneous parties or a smaller number of broadly based parties, each drawing support from multiple ethnic groups, will form. Rather, the debate is whether democratic stability is best ensured by taking ethnic groups as given and ensuring that minorities are guaranteed adequate representation, or by assuming that group identities are malleable and can be successfully channeled into regime-supporting, rather than regime-challenging, behaviors.

Arend Lijphart is the most recognized champion of the view that we should take ethnic groups as given and ensure that minorities receive adequate representation. His approach to

Consociationalism is a form of government that emphasizes power sharing through guaranteed group representation.

dealing with ethnic heterogeneity has come to be known as **consociationalism**. According to Lijphart (2004), ethnic minorities pose an

acute danger to democratic stability when they are excluded from participation in formal political institutions. But if ethnic minorities are able to gain access to formal institutions and those institutions are designed to reflect the interests of as broad a set of the population as possible, then these minorities will have a stake in the continued survival of the democratic system. According to Lijphart, it is important that there also be multiple checks on governmental power so as to minimize the likelihood that the state can be used to systematically abuse minority rights. As you can see, consociationalism is closely related to the consensus vision of democracy. As outlined earlier in this chapter, the consensus vision of democracy envisions the adoption of institutional mechanisms that divide power and make it necessary for the government to seek input from as wide a range of citizens as possible. In effect, consociationalism is a particular strategy for implementing the consensus vision of democracy that involves the adoption of institutions guaranteeing the representation of minority groups.

Consociationalism has its roots in the religious and social conflicts experienced by the Netherlands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These conflicts eventually resulted in the division of Dutch society into four “pillars,” representing Calvinist, Catholic, Socialist, and liberal citizens. Each pillar had its own schools, hospitals, university, newspapers, political parties, and institutional guarantees of representation. Another famous application of consociationalism is Lebanon, where Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shia Muslims are guaranteed representation by the constitution written in 1943, following Lebanon’s independence from France. The 1943 National Pact stipulated that the president was to be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of parliament a Shia Muslim. In addition, representation in parliament was to reflect a six-to-five ratio between Christians and Muslims; this ratio was based on the 1932 census. The fifty-four Christian seats were further divided, with a fixed number of seats allocated to Maronite (thirty), Orthodox (eleven), Catholic (six), Armenian (five), and other (two) Christian

groups. Similarly, the forty-five Muslim seats were divided among Sunni (twenty), Shia (nineteen), and Druze (six) politicians. Ministerial portfolios, as well as many government positions in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, were also allocated along religious lines. Even positions such as those of judges and teachers were divided up, with some attention paid toward sectarian quotas (Banerman 2002). Lebanese **confessionalism**, as consociationalism is known when it is applied to religious groups, was initially thought to be highly successful. Demographic changes, the inflow of Palestinian refugees starting in 1948, and conflicts over regional politics, however, led to a protracted and violent civil war in Lebanon that started in 1975 and ended in 1990. The October 1989 Taif Agreement, or Document of National Accord, that helped end the civil war changed the ratio of parliamentary representation to a fifty-fifty Christian-to-Muslim ratio.

Confessionalism is a form of government that emphasizes power sharing by different religious communities through guaranteed group representation.

You will probably have noticed that consociationalism's goal of institutionalizing ethnic (religious) groups is precisely the type of policy that Chandra (2005, 245) argues against on the grounds that it tends to "impose an artificial fixity on ethnic identities." In what follows, we do not engage in a protracted examination of the pros and cons of consociationalism per se. Instead, we focus on the effect of two institutional choices—PR and federalism—that are typically part of consociational arrangements. We begin by examining the effect of electoral laws on ethnic divisions and conflict. We then examine the use of federalism for guaranteeing minority rights and preventing conflict.

Lijphart (2004, 99) states that "the most important choice facing constitution writers is that of a legislative electoral system." He goes on to state that "for divided societies, ensuring the election of a broadly representative legislature should be the crucial consideration" and that PR is "undoubtedly the optimal way of doing so" (100). To demonstrate his point, Lijphart claims that there is a scholarly consensus in the literature against the use of majoritarian electoral laws in deeply divided societies on the grounds that they can lead to the indefinite exclusion of significant societal groups. Not only are PR electoral systems better in divided societies than majoritarian systems according to Lijphart, but they are also better than the mixed electoral systems that are increasingly being adopted around the world. As you will recall from our discussion of electoral rules in Chapter 12, mixed electoral systems combine both majoritarian and proportional components. The extent to which such systems yield minority representation tends to depend on the extent to which the proportional component is compensatory; that is, the extent to which the PR component is specifically designed to counteract the disproportionality produced by the majoritarian component. If the PR component is not compensatory, "the results will necessarily be less than fully proportional—and minority representation less accurate and secure" (Lijphart 2004, 100). If the PR component does override the majoritarian component, though, these mixed systems are, according to Lijphart, essentially proportional with the same benefits as straight PR systems. Some countries, such as Colombia, Croatia, and Pakistan, seek to deal with ethnic diversity

by providing guaranteed representation for specified minorities.⁴³ For Lijphart, however, guaranteed minority representation is inferior to simply using PR electoral rules, because it requires governments to address the difficult and politically incendiary question of which minorities require special representation guarantees and which do not. PR, in contrast, treats all groups the same and, if done correctly, produces the desired minority representation.

The basic assumptions behind Lijphart's argument is that ethnic and other deep-seated conflicts can be mitigated as long as all the relevant parties to a dispute receive adequate legislative representation and that proportional electoral rules are the best way to achieve this representation. As we saw in Chapter 12, though, scholars have pointed to several drawbacks to proportional electoral rules. For example, some point to how PR systems sometimes facilitate the election of small antisystem parties that become locked in cycles of legislative conflict, which can then spill over into violent social conflict. The most dramatic and troubling example of this occurred in Weimar Germany, whose highly proportional electoral system helped Hitler's Nazi Party come to power. Others point to how PR systems frequently wind up giving small parties a disproportionate influence in the government formation process. Because it is rare for parties to obtain a legislative majority in PR systems, large parties often rely on the support of smaller parties to get into government. These smaller parties can frequently use their leverage to wring concessions from the larger party. Some of these concessions can be quite radical and lack the support of an electoral majority. In Israel, for example, ultra-religious parties have won support for many of their policies by threatening to pull out of the government.

More important, some scholars claim that the representation of distinct groups is neither necessary, nor sufficient, to bring about intergroup peace (Barry 1975). For instance, Horowitz (1991, 119) argues that even if highly proportional systems guarantee that small parties win seats in parliament, this is not the same as saying that "minority interests will receive attention in the legislative process." Indeed, if conflicts exist in divided societies, one might wonder why simply using PR systems to replicate the societal divisions that led to these conflicts in the legislature will be of any help if there are no incentives for cross-party cooperation and accommodation. What is needed, according to these critics, is an institutional mechanism that encourages compromise and moderation. Many of these scholars believe that majoritarian electoral laws provide such a mechanism.

Donald Horowitz (1985, 1991) presents the most widely recognized alternative to PR for deeply divided societies: the alternative vote. Recall from Chapter 12 that the alternative vote is, essentially, an "instant-runoff" system in which one legislator is elected from each district and voters have the opportunity to rank order all the candidates. The candidate who wins an absolute majority of the first-preference votes is elected. If no candidate wins an absolute

43. Golder (2005) notes that after 1985, for example, Pakistan provided ten guaranteed seats in the legislature for specific religious minorities: Christians (four), Hindus (four), Sikhs (one), and Ahmadis (one).

majority, the candidate with the lowest number of first-preference votes is eliminated and her ballots are reallocated among the remaining candidates according to the indicated second preferences. This process continues until a candidate receives an absolute majority of votes. Unlike with SMDP systems, voters have little incentive to vote strategically because voters know that their vote will not be wasted if their most preferred candidate is unlikely to win; their vote is simply transferred to the next candidate. This means that voters motivated by ethnic identity are likely to indicate a co-ethnic as their first preference and the least unsavory candidate from an alternative ethnic group as their second preference. In highly diverse districts, candidates realize that their electoral success will likely depend on the transfer of second preferences from other ethnic groups. Consequently, successful candidates will typically be those who are effective at making broadly based centrist appeals that cross ethnic lines. It is for this reason that many scholars believe that the alternative vote encourages moderation and compromise across ethnic lines (Horowitz 1985, 1991; Reilly 1997, 2001). Empirical evidence to support this belief comes from Australia, where the major parties frequently attempt to negotiate deals with smaller parties for their second preferences prior to an election (Reilly 2001, 55–56). Additional evidence that the alternative vote encourages the building of coalitions across ethnic groups comes from Papua New Guinea and Fiji (Horowitz 2004, 513–514).

To sum up, you can think of the choice between PR and the alternative vote as being a choice between replicating ethnic divisions in the legislature hoping that political leaders will cooperate after the election (PR) and creating institutional incentives that seek to weaken or even transcend the political salience of ethnicity altogether (AV). Given the centrality of the above debate to questions of institutional design, it is surprising that few attempts have been made to use systematic empirical evidence to adjudicate the competing claims put forward by Lijphart and Horowitz. On the whole, the literature is full of evidence from a small number of cases presented by partisans of one view or the other to support their claims; systematic evaluations of the purported benefits of PR or the majoritarian alternative vote for divided societies are relatively rare.

Some studies find support for the claim that PR systems reduce the likelihood of violent conflict (Cohen 1997; Reynal-Querol 2002; Saideman et al. 2002). There are, however, several reasons to be cautious about these results. First, these studies rarely make a direct comparison between PR and majoritarian democracies. For example, many of the studies cited above combine both democratic and undemocratic countries. As a result, PR democracies are being compared with a heterogeneous mixture of majoritarian democracies and dictatorships in the sample. The study by Reynal-Querol (2002, 37) appears to compare parliamentary democracies that use either proportional or majoritarian electoral rules with presidential and mixed democracies as well as dictatorships. Again, this is not the appropriate comparison to evaluate the competing claims put forward by Lijphart and Horowitz. Second, although various scholars have looked at the association between PR and conflict, none has examined whether PR systems *modify* the way that ethnic heterogeneity influences

the probability of conflict. In other words, none of them is testing the precise causal story put forward by Lijphart, which is that ethnic heterogeneity leads to conflict in majoritarian democracies but less so or not at all in proportional democracies.⁴⁴ Finally, it should be noted that none of these studies distinguishes among the variety of majoritarian electoral systems that exists. As a result, we have little to no systematic evidence as to whether the alternative vote produces the sort of moderating effects that reduce violence in divided societies that Horowitz claims that it does. One reason why so few studies have focused specifically on the impact of the alternative vote is that so few countries around the world actually use this electoral system—this makes conducting statistical analyses problematic. There is no great barrier, however, to evaluating the broader comparison between majoritarian and proportional democracies. It is a little puzzling, therefore, as to why this comparison has been so rarely made in the existing literature.

We expect that future studies on the impact of electoral rules on ethnic conflict and democratic stability—perhaps some that begin as undergraduate research projects—will likely result in clearer policy recommendations for constitutional designers. It is likely that such recommendations will have to take account of how electoral rules might interact with other institutions. It is to one of these institutions—federalism—that we now turn.

The Hypothesized Effect of Federalism

Recent events in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to a renewed debate among political scientists as to the role that federalism can play in stabilizing democracy in divided societies. Historically, comparative political scientists have seen incongruent and asymmetric federalism as a particularly appealing form of government for those countries in which policy preferences differ in significant ways across geographically concentrated ethnic groups.⁴⁵ By bringing the government closer to the people, increasing opportunities to participate in government, and giving groups discretion over their political, social, and economic affairs, incongruent and asymmetric federalism is thought to reduce ethnic conflict and dampen secessionist demands, thereby stabilizing democracy. In effect, federalism helps ethnic groups to protect their interests and concerns—such as language, education, culture, security, and economic development—at the regional level. By providing increased autonomy to regional governments in which national minorities might constitute majorities, federalism effectively shifts power to minorities, thereby making them more content to live within a unified state despite being permanent minorities in the national electorate. These purported advantages have led many scholars to view federalism as the most promising means for hold-

44. The study by Reynal-Querol (2002) represents a partial exception. Reynal-Querol finds evidence that “inclusive democracy”—by which she appears to mean parliamentary systems that use PR—reduces the likelihood that “religious polarization” will lead to civil war.

45. Recall from Chapter 14 that incongruent and asymmetric federalism occurs when the political boundaries of the sub-national units are specifically aligned with the geographic boundaries of social groups and when some territorial units enjoy more extensive powers than others relative to the central government.

ing heterogeneous and conflict-ridden countries together (Riker 1964; Lijphart 1977, 1996, 1999; Tsebelis 1990; Horowitz 1991; Stepan 1999; Lustik, Miodownik, and Eidelson 2004). In support of this line of reasoning, it is commonly accepted that federalism has played an important role in stabilizing democracies in ethnically diverse countries, such as Belgium, Canada, India, Spain, and Switzerland.

Several scholars have recently called for the adoption of federalism in Iraq as an institutional means for dealing with the ethnic conflict between Kurds, Sunnis, and Shias. For example, Brancati (2004, 7–8) states:

[B]y dividing power between two levels of government—giving groups greater control over their own political, social, and economic affairs while making them feel less exploited as well as more secure—federalism offers the only viable possibility for preventing ethnic conflict and secessionism as well as establishing a stable democracy in Iraq . . . [A federal] system will help the United States not only to build democracy in Iraq but also to prevent the emergence of a Shi'a-dominated government in the country. Without this form of federalism, an Iraq rife with internal conflict and dominated by one ethnic or religious group is more likely to emerge, undermining U.S. efforts towards establishing democracy in Iraq as well as the greater Middle East.

Although federalism has historically been seen as helpful in dampening the flames of ethnic conflict and secessionism, several studies have challenged this view. Some of these studies even go so far as to suggest that federalism might actually intensify, rather than reduce, ethnic conflict. One way in which federalism is thought to do this is by reinforcing regionally based ethnic identities (Hardgrave 1994; Kymlicka 1998). Rather than encouraging the construction of political coalitions across ethnic lines, federalism creates incentives for the politicization of ethnic identities by officially recognizing particular ethnic groups and giving them a sense of legitimacy. In this way, federalism leads to the strengthening, rather than the weakening, of ethnic divisions.

Another way that federalism is thought to intensify ethnic conflict is by providing access to political and economic resources that ethnic leaders can then use to bring pressure against the state. In other words, decentralizing power to the regional level by establishing a federal form of government may have the unfortunate consequence of supplying groups with the necessary resources—regional legislatures, regional police forces, and regional forms of media—to more effectively engage in ethnic conflict and secessionism in the first place (Roeder 1991; Kymlicka 1998; Bunce 1999; Leff 1999; Hechter 2000; Snyder 2000). Indeed, leaders of multiethnic states like Sri Lanka and Indonesia have historically opposed federalism on precisely these grounds, seeing political decentralization as a slippery slope that is only likely to strengthen secessionist groups and generate demands for additional autonomy. A third way in which federalism is thought to encourage ethnic conflict is by making it easier for ethnic groups at the subnational level to produce legislation that discriminates against regional minorities (Nordlinger 1972; Horowitz 1991).

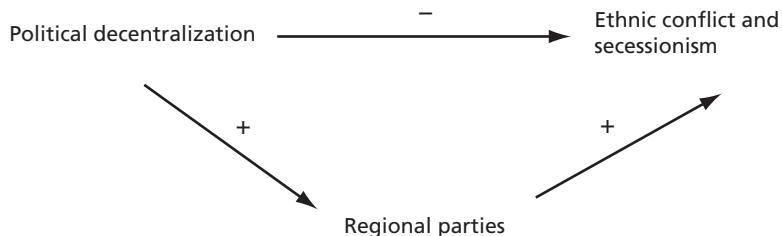
Several recent cross-national studies that support this line of reasoning present suggestive evidence that federalism may not be the panacea for ethnic conflict in divided societies that it is traditionally thought to be. For example, some studies find that although federalism tends to decrease outright rebellion, it increases protest activity among minority groups (Hechter 2000; Lustik, Miodownik, and Eidelson 2004). Another study finds that federalism has no effect on the level of attachment that minority (or majority) groups feel toward the state (Elkins and Sides 2007).

To a large extent, scholars have viewed the impact of federalism on ethnic conflict in black-and-white terms—it either always reduces the likelihood of ethnic conflict or it always increases it. In reality, though, we believe that most political scientists would accept that political decentralization has been helpful in curbing ethnic conflict and secessionism in some countries, such as Belgium and India, but that it has proved to be a failure in other countries, such as Nigeria and the former Yugoslavia. This suggests that the question we really need to ask ourselves is why federalism seems to be helpful in some contexts but not in others.

Brancati (2006) provides one potential answer to this question. She suggests that much has to do with the strength of regional parties in a country. Specifically, she argues that political decentralization reduces ethnic conflict when regional parties are weak but that it can increase ethnic conflict when regional parties are strong. Her causal story is graphically illustrated in Figure 15.10. On the one hand, Brancati believes that political decentralization reduces ethnic conflict by bringing the government closer to the people, increasing opportunities to participate in government, and giving groups discretion over their political, social, and economic affairs. On the other hand, though, she claims that political decentralization increases ethnic conflict by strengthening regional identity-based parties.

As we saw in Chapter 13 (see Box 13.4, “Nationalizing Party Systems”), political decentralization increases the strength of regional parties through the opportunities it provides these parties to win elections and influence policy in regional legislatures (Chhibber and

FIGURE 15.10 **Political Decentralization and Ethnic Conflict**



Note: Causal story posited by Brancati (2006).

Kollman 1998, 2004). According to Brancati, this strengthening of regional parties has a detrimental effect on ethnic conflict because these parties frequently reinforce regionally based ethnic identities, produce legislation that favors certain groups over others, and mobilize groups to engage in ethnic conflict and secessionism or support terrorist organizations that participate in these activities. Regional parties, by their very nature, tend to reinforce regional and ethnic identities by making people who share certain attributes or who live in particular areas think of themselves as a group with shared needs and goals. For example, the Northern League, a regional party in Italy, has gone to great lengths to make the people of northern Italy think of themselves as Northern Italians rather than simply as Italians. The Northern League even produces and distributes special identification cards for residents of the “Free Republic of Padania.” Regional parties also frequently attempt to pass laws that discriminate against regional minorities. As an example, regional parties in Moldova exacerbated ethnic tensions with minority Romanians in Transnistria in 2004 when they passed a law closing schools that did not use the Cyrillic alphabet, thereby preventing Romanians in this region from being educated in their language. Regional parties also sometimes help violent insurgent groups in their activities against the state. For instance, regional parties in Northern Ireland and Spain, such as Sinn Féin and Herri Batasuna, have helped such organizations as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque Euskadi Ta Azkatasuna (ETA) in their secessionist campaigns against the state. As Brancati notes, Batasuna has supported ETA financially by collecting the proceeds of ETA’s “revolutionary tax” on local businesses, has used Basque media to support ETA and its goals, and has even used its offices to store ETA’s guns and ammunition.

In sum, Brancati argues that whether federalism is helpful in reducing ethnic conflict or not depends on the extent to which decentralization leads to the strengthening of regional parties. If she is correct, then the key for policymakers interested in reducing ethnic conflict and stabilizing democracy is to combine incongruent and asymmetric federalism with other institutional features that lower the likelihood that regional parties will form and do well. As we saw in Chapter 13 (again see Box 13.4), one factor influencing the success of regional parties is the presence and timing of presidential elections (Golder 2006). As we noted then, the presidency is nearly always the most important electoral prize in a presidential democracy. Typically, however, there are only a small number of viable presidential candidates because only one person can become the president. Given the importance of the presidency, parties that do not have a viable presidential candidate, even if they are electorally strong in particular regions, are likely to find themselves abandoned by both voters and political entrepreneurs at election time. Parties that have a national base and, hence, a viable presidential candidate, will naturally benefit from this strategic behavior. The end result is a nationalized party system in which regionally based parties are likely to struggle to compete. The extent to which presidential elections exert nationalizing pressures on a country’s party system will depend on how important it is to win the presidency and the temporal proximity between presidential and legislative elections. Specifically, party systems in presidential democracies

are more likely to be stacked against regional parties if the president's power is large relative to that of other political actors and if presidential elections occur at the same time as regional ones (Hicken, forthcoming).

Electoral laws can also be written to discourage the emergence and success of regional identity-based parties. As we saw in Chapter 12 and as we noted earlier in this section, for example, preferential voting systems such as the alternative vote should encourage political parties to make broadly based centrist appeals beyond their core set of supporters, because their electoral success is likely to depend on the transfer of preference votes from other groups. In effect, preferential voting systems attempt to weaken or even transcend the political salience of regional as well as ethnic identities (Horowitz 1985, 1991; Reilly 1997, 2001). As a result, they are likely to discourage the emergence and success of parties that focus their campaigning on a particular identity (regional or ethnic) group. An alternative strategy to penalize regional parties would be to impose cross-regional vote requirements that force parties to compete in a certain number of regions and to win a certain percentage of the vote in these regions if they wish to be elected to the federal government. Russia, Indonesia, and Nigeria have explicitly adopted such cross-regional voting laws in an attempt to prevent identity-based parties from forming (Brancati 2004). Overall, it appears that incongruent and asymmetric federalism can help reduce ethnic conflict and stabilize democracy in countries with geographically concentrated ethnic groups. But this might be the case only if it is combined with institutional mechanisms designed to prevent regionally based identity parties from dominating the subnational governments.

PRESIDENTIALISM AND DEMOCRATIC SURVIVAL

To finish this chapter, we bring our discussion back to the question that dominated Part II of this book: why are some countries democratic, whereas others are not? In Chapters 6 and 7 we examined economic and cultural explanations for the emergence and survival of democracy. Having studied at some length the different institutions that democracies can adopt, we are now in a position to look at a third set of explanations for the survival of democracy: institutional explanations. Institutional approaches to democracy ask the following question: if democracy emerges, are there institutions, or combinations of institutions, that make the survival of democracy more or less likely? Although many institutional choices are thought to affect the prospects of democratic survival, one that has generated an enormous literature in comparative politics is the choice of whether to adopt a presidential or parliamentary form of democracy (Linz 1990a, 1990b, 1994; Shugart and Carey 1992; Mainwaring 1993; Stepan and Skach 1993; Jones 1995; Gasiorowski 1995; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997; Przeworski et al. 2000; Bernhard, Nordstrom, and Reenock 2001; Cheibub 2002, 2007; Valenzuela 2004). It is on this institutional choice that we focus in this section.

Considerable historical evidence suggests that democracy is less stable in presidential regimes than in parliamentary ones. Indeed, Przeworski et al. (2000, 129) present evidence

showing that the expected life of democracy under presidentialism (twenty-one years) is about three to five times shorter than it is under parliamentarism (seventy-three years). This type of evidence has led some to talk of the “perils of presidentialism” (Linz 1990a). For many years comparative politics scholars have debated whether the fragility of democracy in presidential regimes is really due to something inherent in the structure of presidentialism itself or not, and, if so, what this might be. Answers to these questions are important because, despite the historical pattern showing that democracy is less likely to survive in presidential regimes, many new democracies have adopted presidential constitutions. Indeed, as Figure 11.2b in Chapter 11 illustrates, the percentage of democracies with presidential constitutions has recently doubled from 16 percent in 1978 to 32 percent in 2002. If the survival of democracy is inherently problematic in presidential regimes, this does not bode well for some of these newly democratic countries. In what follows, we suggest that some presidential democracies, specifically those with multiparty systems, are more unstable than others. As we go on to note, though, ongoing economic development around the world is making all presidential democracies more stable than they were in the past.

The Perils of Presidentialism

What are the consequences of presidentialism and parliamentarism for how the executive and legislative branches make policy? The first thing to note is that presidents are different from prime ministers. Unlike prime ministers, presidents fuse the symbolic attributes of the head of state with the pragmatic powers of the head of government. This creates “an aura, a self-image, and a set of broader expectations which are all quite different from those associated with a prime minister, no matter how popular he might be” (Linz 1990a, 53).⁴⁶ Supporters of presidential democracy argue that presidents provide an important check on the legislature that does not exist in parliamentary democracies. They point out that whereas presidents are accountable to the nation as a whole, legislators are typically elected by only a subset of the electorate and thus have particularistic interests that may run contrary to the interests of the nation as a whole. Having a president, it is claimed, can help to ameliorate and discipline the particularistic tendencies of legislators.

Shively (2001) summarizes what are commonly thought to be five of the main consequences of presidentialism. First, presidentialism is thought to lead to a situation in which policymaking power is concentrated in the hands of the president. At first glance, this claim might seem counterintuitive, given that presidentialism is typically thought of as a mechanism for the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of the government. But the president, through his ability to appeal directly to voters and fuse the powers associated with the head of state and head of government, is able to wield a degree of

46. Linz (1990a) traces this characterization of the presidential role back to the nineteenth-century constitutional scholar Walter Bagehot.

power unavailable to most prime ministers, who, by comparison, are “first among equals” in the legislature. Second, presidentialism is thought to make it difficult for citizens to identify who is responsible for policies; that is, it is thought to produce low clarity of responsibility. In effect, the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches in presidential democracies allows each to blame the other when outcomes are bad and each to engage in credit claiming when outcomes are good. Third, presidentialism is thought to make it difficult for policy to be made quickly. In presidential democracies, new legislation in response to exogenous changes in a country’s environment must work its way through the legislature and be accepted by the president before it can be enacted. Such negotiations are often protracted because, unlike in parliamentary democracies, a presidential government can face a legislature controlled by parties that do not support the president’s legislative goals; as we saw in Chapter 11, a parliamentary government cannot survive without the support of a legislative majority.

Fourth, presidentialism is thought to produce a pattern of executive recruitment very different from that found in parliamentarism. In many parliamentary democracies, prime ministers tend to be selected from the leadership of a party’s legislative delegation. As we illustrated in Chapter 13, membership in that leadership is typically restricted to parliamentarians who have worked their way up from lowly “backbench” positions by gaining policy expertise, honing their debating skills, and demonstrating their loyalty to the party. In contrast, presidential candidates are often drawn from outsiders who are seen to be free from commitments to the party elite.⁴⁷ Significantly, this means that presidential candidates are also frequently free of legislative experience and policymaking expertise. Fifth, presidentialism is thought to make it difficult to produce comprehensive policy. As we have already mentioned, the policymaking process in presidential democracies typically involves complex bargaining between the executive and legislative branches of government. A result is that some policies in presidential systems get adopted simply because they are crucial to gaining acquiescence from another branch of government on an unrelated matter. In contrast, because, by definition, the cabinet in a parliamentary democracy enjoys the confidence of the legislature, it is thought that parliamentary governments have a better chance of putting together comprehensive, rationalized, legislative programs.

As you might imagine, most of these purported consequences of presidentialism are viewed as liabilities. To be fair, though, it is important to recognize that many of these purported consequences are not unique to presidentialism—they occur in some parliamentary systems as well. For example, parliamentary democracies that have coalition governments are also likely to experience difficulty in (a) making policy quickly, (b) locating responsibil-

47. In presidential democracies, it is possible for complete political outsiders to win the presidency. This is precisely what happened when the academic and TV presenter Alberto Fujimori surprisingly won the 1990 presidential elections in Peru. The election of such a candidate to the “equivalent” position of prime minister in a parliamentary democracy is almost unthinkable.

ity for policy, and (c) making comprehensive policy. Indeed, we often hear people make the case that presidentialism, far from being a cause for concern, is, in fact, the solution to these problems in parliamentary democracies. Rather than talk about the “perils of presidentialism,” some scholars choose to focus on the “problems of parliamentarism.”

The problems of parliamentarism are, perhaps, best illustrated by the French Fourth Republic (1946–1958). As many scholars have noted, the French Fourth Republic was characterized by high levels of **immobilism** and government instability (Rioux 1989). In the twelve years of its existence, the French Fourth Republic witnessed twenty-four different governments under sixteen different prime ministers (Huber and Martinez-Gallardo 2004). A consequence of this instability was that French governments were unable to deal with the main issues of the day, particularly those having to do with its colonies in Indochina and Algeria. Much of the problem lay with the Fourth Republic’s proportional electoral system that helped to produce a highly fragmented and polarized legislature. For example, roughly 30 percent of the seats in the National Assembly regularly went to parties on the extreme right (Gaullists and Poujadists) and the extreme left (Communists) that were not viewed as viable government coalition partners. This meant that the five or six small moderate parties that existed in the center of the policy space were forced to try to build legislative majorities from the remaining 70 percent of seats, something that proved extremely difficult. Governments typically had to choose between immobility—doing nothing and remaining in power—and attempting to push forward with their legislative program, which normally resulted in their quick removal from office. In May 1958 a majority of legislators in the National Assembly eventually voted themselves and the constitution out of existence, and delegated power to General Charles de Gaulle to write a new constitution. One of the goals of de Gaulle’s new constitution was to concentrate power in the hands of a strong president so that he could override the stalemates that dogged the Fourth Republic and rule in the interest of the nation at large. For de Gaulle, a stronger president was the solution to the problems of parliamentarism as exhibited in the Fourth Republic.

Immobilism describes a situation in parliamentary democracies in which government coalitions are so weak and unstable that they are incapable of reaching an agreement on new policy.

Other parliamentary systems have experienced the same sort of chronic government instability and immobilism that plagued the French Fourth Republic. For example, another well-known case of a country characterized by endemic cabinet instability is postwar Italy. Between 1948 and 1991, the average duration of an Italian cabinet was less than a year (Merlo 1998). As with the French Fourth Republic, many scholars put this cabinet instability down to a proportional electoral system that helped to create highly fragmented and polarized legislatures. These legislatures, in turn, made it difficult for party leaders to form stable government coalitions or get much done. Explanations of immobilism nearly always start with the use of proportional electoral systems. As Rustow (1950, 116) put it, PR, “by facilitating cabinet crises, parliamentary stalemates, and legislative inaction, will tend to prevent any exercise of power whatever.”

We should recall at this point, though, that a focus on government instability can often lead us to overstate the actual amount of political instability in a country. As we noted in Chapter 11, for example, government instability need not imply a lack of political or portfolio experience among cabinet ministers (Huber and Martinez-Gallardo 2004, 2008).⁴⁸ Consider the case of Italy again. Although postwar Italy has been ruled by shifting and unstable government coalitions, there has always been a great deal of political continuity just below the surface. For example, the Christian Democratic Party, the largest party in parliament for most of the postwar period, participated in every cabinet from 1948 to 1992 in coalition with a rotating set of junior partners comprised of the Liberal, Republican, Social Democratic, and Socialist Parties. As several scholars have noted, each new cabinet was essentially composed of the exact same people from the previous cabinet. According to P. A. Allum (1973, 119), “behind the façade of continuous cabinet crises, there [was] a significant continuity of party, persons, and posts” in postwar Italy. Scholars of French politics make an almost identical argument in regard to the government instability in the French Fourth Republic. In short, it is important to remember that cabinet instability in parliamentary democracies need not imply ministerial instability. More significant, *cabinet* instability, as we will see, does not imply *democratic* instability either.

So where does this leave us? Are the dangers of parliamentarism greater than the dangers of presidentialism, or vice versa? Although the examples of immobilism in the parliamentary democracies of postwar Italy and the French Fourth Republic are somewhat illustrative, ransacking history for supportive cases in favor of one’s favorite or most hated institution is not good scientific practice. As a result, we will now turn our attention to a more systematic analysis of how presidentialism and parliamentarism affect democratic survival.

Stepan and Skach (1993) claim that the prospects for the survival of democracy are worse under presidentialism than under parliamentarism. They argue that the reason for this can be traced to the fact that the essence of parliamentarism is *mutual dependence*, whereas the essence of presidentialism is *mutual independence*. In a parliamentary democracy, the legislative and executive branches are mutually dependent. On the one hand, the government needs the support of a legislative majority to stay in power. On the other hand, the government can dissolve the legislature by calling new elections. In other words, the government and the legislature cannot continue to exist without the support of the other in a parliamentary democracy. In a presidential democracy, in contrast, the executive and legislative branches are mutually independent. Both the legislature and the president have their own independent sources of legitimacy and their own fixed electoral mandates. The legislature cannot remove the president from office and the president cannot remove the legislature.

48. By “political experience” we mean the amount of experience that ministers have in any cabinet portfolio. And by “portfolio experience” we mean the amount of experience that ministers have in a specific cabinet portfolio.

Stepan and Skach (1993) argue that the mutual dependence of parliamentarism encourages *reconciliation* between the executive and legislative branches, whereas the mutual independence of presidentialism encourages *antagonism* between them. In presidential democracies, this antagonism, which can arise when the president is faced by a legislature dominated by opposition parties, can lead to legislative deadlock. With no constitutional mechanism to resolve the deadlock, politicians and citizens in presidential democracies may look to the military to break the stalemate. In contrast, if deadlock occurs between the executive and legislative branches in a parliamentary democracy, there are constitutional means for resolving the crisis. Either the legislature can pass a vote of no confidence and remove the government, or the prime minister can dissolve the parliament and call for new elections. It is the existence of these constitutional means in parliamentary democracies for resolving deadlock situations that is thought to be at the heart of why democratic stability is greater in parliamentary democracies than in presidential ones.

Stepan and Skach (1993) present an impressive array of facts to support their claim that democratic consolidation is more likely in parliamentary democracies than in presidential ones. They begin by asking how many of the countries that became independent democracies between 1945 and 1979 were able to sustain democracy throughout the 1980s. In Table 15.6a, we list the names of all eighty countries that became independent democracies between 1945 and 1979. We also list whether they adopted a parliamentary, presidential, or mixed form of democracy. As you can see, countries that became independent in the post–World War II period were about as likely to adopt parliamentarism (forty-one) as they were to adopt presidentialism (thirty-six). In Table 15.6b, we list the names of those countries that were continuously democratic from 1979 to 1989 and the form of democracy that they had. Of the eighty countries that became independent democracies in the postwar period, only fifteen were continuously democratic through the 1980s. Incredibly, all fifteen of these countries had adopted parliamentarism; none of the thirty-six countries that adopted presidentialism managed to sustain democracy during the 1980s.

Lest a focus on newly independent countries be a source of bias, Stepan and Skach next present evidence from all countries that experienced democracy between 1973 and 1989 but that were not members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).⁴⁹ They wanted to know how many non-OECD countries that experienced democracy for at least a year between 1973 and 1989 were able to sustain it for a continuous ten-year period. Their data are shown in Table 15.7. As you can see, countries that experienced democracy for at least a year between 1973 and 1989 were about as likely to adopt parliamentarism

49. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is essentially a club of rich democracies set up by the Allied powers after World War II. Stepan and Skach focus on non-OECD countries because it is in poor countries that democracy is most unstable and that institutional choice is arguably most important for the survival of democracy. This last point is one that we return to at the end of this section.

TABLE 15.6**Democratic Survival in Newly Independent States after World War II****a. Form of Democracy Adopted**

Parliamentary <i>N = 41</i>		Presidentialism <i>N = 36</i>	Mixed <i>N = 3</i>
Bahamas	Mauritius	Algeria	Madagascar
Bangladesh	Nauru	Angola	Malawi
Barbados	Nigeria	Benin	Mali
Botswana	Pakistan	Burkina Faso	Mauritania
Burma	Papua New Guinea	Cameroon	Mozambique
Chad	St. Lucia	Cape Verde	Niger
Dominica	St. Vincent	Central African Rep.	Philippines
Fiji	Sierra Leone	Cyprus	Rwanda
Gambia	Singapore	Comoros	Sao Tomé
Ghana	Solomon Islands	Congo	Seychelles
Grenada	Somalia	Djibouti	Syria
Guyana	Sri Lanka	Equatorial Guinea	Togo
India	Sudan	Gabon	Taiwan
Indonesia	Suriname	Guinea	Tunisia
Israel	Swaziland	Guinea Bissau	Vietnam (N)
Jamaica	Tanzania	Ivory Coast	Vietnam (S)
Kenya	Trinidad and Tobago	Korea (S)	Yemen (S)
Kiribati	Tuvalu	Korea (N)	Zambia
Laos	Uganda		
Malaysia	Western Samoa		
Malta			

b. Continuously Democratic Countries, 1979–1989

Parliamentary <i>N = 15/46</i>		Presidentialism <i>N = 0</i>	Mixed <i>N = 0</i>
Bahamas	Nauru		
Barbados	Papua New Guinea		
Botswana	St. Lucia		
Dominica	St. Vincent		
India	Solomon Islands		
Israel	Trinidad and Tobago		
Jamaica	Tuvalu		
Kiribati			

Source: Data are from Stepan and Skach (1993, 8–9).

TABLE 15.7**Democratic Survival in Fifty-three Non-OECD Countries, 1973–1989**

	Parliamentary	Presidential
Democratic for at least one year	28	25
Democratic for ten consecutive years	17	5
Democratic survival rate	61%	20%

Source: Data are from Stepan and Skach (1993, 11).

(twenty-eight) as they were to adopt presidentialism (twenty-five). Of those countries that managed to sustain democracy for a continuous ten-year period, though, almost none had a presidential form of democracy. By comparing “democratic experimenters” with “democratic survivors,” we can calculate a “democratic survival rate.” As Table 15.7 illustrates, the democratic survival rate for parliamentary regimes is three times that for presidential regimes.

Although these simple comparisons suggest that there is something to the notion that presidentialism imperils democratic survival, they say almost nothing about why this might be the case. In other words, they say very little about the causal link between regime type and democratic survival. Recall, though, that Stepan and Skach do provide a potential causal story for the results in Tables 15.6 and 15.7. Specifically, they argue that presidentialism is more likely to lead to the kind of deadlock between the executive and legislative branches that invites extraconstitutional behavior. Thus, an observable implication of their theory is that military coups should be more common in presidential democracies than in parliamentary ones. Is this actually the case in the real world? In Table 15.8 we present data on the frequency of military coups collected by Stepan and Skach in the same fifty-three non-OECD countries as before. As you can see, military coups are more than twice as likely in presidential democracies as they are in parliamentary ones. Whereas 40 percent of the non-OECD countries that adopted presidentialism experienced a military coup between 1973 and 1989, just 18 percent of the countries that adopted parliamentarism did. This higher coup rate in presidential regimes is exactly as Stepan and Skach (1993) predict.

TABLE 15.8**Military Coups in Fifty-three Non-OECD Countries, 1973–1989**

	Parliamentary	Presidential
Democratic for at least one year	28	25
Number that experienced a coup	5	10
Coup susceptibility rate	18%	40%

Source: Data are from Stepan and Skach (1993, 12).

Although these simple statistics are quite illustrative, it is probably the case that some factors that cause democracies to fail are also associated with the choice to adopt parliamentarism or presidentialism in the first place. This raises the concern that it may be these other factors, and not presidentialism per se, that lead to the collapse of democracy. In other words, the failure to take account of these other factors might lead us to overestimate the true effect of regime type on democratic survival. Recognizing this concern, Stepan and Skach attempt to deal with it by leaning on the work of a Finnish political scientist named Tatu Vanhanen.

Recall from Chapter 6 that modernization theory predicts a strong association between democracy and societal development. In an attempt to evaluate modernization theory, Vanhanen (1991) constructed an index of democratization—a measure capturing the level of democracy in a country—and what he calls an index of power resources—a measure capturing the level of societal development in a country.⁵⁰ If modernization theory is accurate, then countries with a high score on the power resource index should also have a high score on the democratization index. Indeed, this is exactly what Vanhanen finds. Although Vanhanen finds a strong association between the power resource index and the democratization index, the fit is certainly not perfect. Some countries, for example, score significantly higher on the democratization index than their level of modernization, as revealed by the power resource index, would predict. Similarly, some countries score significantly lower on the democratization index than their level of modernization would predict. Stepan and Skach label those countries that score surprisingly high on the democratization index as “democratic overachievers.” And they label those countries that score surprisingly low on the democratization index as “democratic underachievers.” In Table 15.9, we present data from Stepan and Skach (1993) showing whether the democratic overachievers and underachievers are presidential or parliamentary democracies.

Stepan and Skach interpret the comparison of democratic overachievers and underachievers in Table 15.9 to mean that, after taking account of a set of modernization variables thought to influence democratic survival, parliamentary systems are five times more likely

TABLE 15.9
Democracy Underachievers and Overachievers by Regime Type

	Parliamentary	Presidential
Overachievers	31	10
Underachievers	6	12
Ratio of overachievers to underachievers	5.17	0.83

Source: Data are from Stepan and Skach (1993, 10).

50. Vanhanen's (1991) index of power resources combines six factors related to modernization: the percentage of urban population, the percentage of the population in nonagricultural occupations, the percentage of students in the population, the literacy rate, the percentage of land in family-owned farms, and the degree of decentralization of nonagricultural economic resources.

to be democratic overachievers than they are to be democratic underachievers; in contrast, presidential systems are slightly more likely to be democratic underachievers as they are to be democratic overachievers. A different way to look at the data is that democratic overachievers are about three times more likely to be parliamentary regimes as they are to be presidential ones; in contrast, democratic underachievers are about twice as likely to be presidential regimes as they are to be parliamentary ones. Overall, the evidence in Table 15.9 provides strong support for the claim that the prospects of democratic survival are lower in presidential systems than they are in parliamentary systems even after controlling for other factors that affect the survival of democracy.

We now briefly present some new statistical evidence to further support this conclusion. In Chapter 6 we used data provided by Przeworski et al. (2000) on 135 countries from 1950 to 1990 to examine how economic factors, such as a country's status as an oil producer, its wealth, and its economic growth, affect the probability that it will remain democratic. We can use the same data to examine whether the choice of parliamentarism or presidentialism also affects the probability of democratic survival. The results of our analysis using a dynamic probit model are shown in Table 15.10.

TABLE 15.10**Effect of Regime Type on Democratic Survival**

Dependent variable: Probability that a country will be a democracy this year if it was a democracy last year.

Independent variables	1946–1990	1946–1990
Presidentialism	−0.58*** (0.14)	−0.32* (0.16)
GDP per capita		0.0002*** (0.00005)
Growth in GDP per capita		0.04*** (0.01)
Oil producer		−0.12 (0.28)
Constant	2.22*** (0.10)	1.29*** (0.18)
Number of observations	1584	1576
Log-likelihood	−170.85	−142.15

Source: Data are from Przeworski et al. (2000).

Note: Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

* = greater than 90% significant.

** = greater than 95% significant.

*** = greater than 99% significant.

Recall that the coefficients indicate the direction in which the explanatory variables affect the probability that a democracy remains democratic. Thus, a positive coefficient indicates that an increase in the explanatory variable in question increases the probability of democratic survival, whereas a negative coefficient indicates than an increase in the variable reduces the probability of democratic survival. Recall also that the standard error beneath the coefficient essentially tells us how confident we are in our results. We tend to be more confident in our results the smaller the standard error is relative to the coefficient. Typically, as a rule of thumb, we claim that we can be 95 percent confident that the coefficient is correctly identified as being either positive or negative if the coefficient is bigger than twice the size of the standard error. If the coefficient is much larger than twice the size of the standard error, then we become even more confident. To save the reader from doing this calculation in their heads, authors often use stars next to the coefficient to indicate their confidence in the results. In Table 15.10, one star indicates that we are over 90 percent confident in our results; two stars that we are over 95 percent confident; and three stars that we are over 99 percent confident in our results. No stars next to a coefficient indicates that we cannot be confident that this variable has any effect on the probability of democratic survival.

So what do the results tell us? In line with the evidence presented by Stepan and Skach (1993), the coefficient on presidentialism is negative and significant. This indicates that democracies with presidential regimes are less likely to remain democratic than democracies with nonpresidential regimes. This is the case even when we take account of the economic factors thought to affect democratic survival that we examined in Chapter 6. At this point you might be wondering exactly how much a country's regime type matters for the survival of democracy? For example, how much less likely would it be for a non-oil-producing democracy with average GDP per capita (\$3,494) and an average growth rate (2.24 percent) to remain democratic if it adopted presidentialism rather than parliamentarism? It is possible to answer this question using the results in Table 15.10 (although we do not show exactly how to do this here). The answer is that a democracy with the characteristics outlined above would be 50 percent more likely to collapse into dictatorship if it adopted presidentialism rather than parliamentarism. As this example illustrates, regime type is a very important determinant of democratic survival.

The Difficult Combination: Presidentialism and Multipartism

So far, the empirical evidence suggests that the prospects for democratic survival are greater in parliamentary democracies than in presidential ones. But recall our earlier discussion of immobilism in the French Fourth Republic. As you will remember, de Gaulle argued that concentrating power in the hands of a president was the key to solving the problems of highly fragmented legislatures, government instability, and immobilism in the French Fourth Republic. De Gaulle's belief that we should call upon a "strong man," such as a president, who can bring the country together in moments of crisis is quite widespread. As we now suggest, this has important implications for any causal connection between presiden-

tialism and democratic survival. Specifically, if presidentialism is adopted in moments of crisis, then presidential regimes may fail at a higher rate than parliamentary regimes, not because there is something inherently problematic about presidentialism, but simply because presidentialism tends to be adopted in difficult circumstances.⁵¹ One way to think about this is that presidentialism is like a hospital for ailing polities. We would not want to say that “hospitals kill people” just because large numbers of people die in hospitals. If people who go to the hospital are, on average, in poorer health than those who do not, then the explanation for high mortality rates in hospitals is likely to have more to do with the fact that people in a hospital are very sick than it does with the fact that they are in a hospital. Maybe the same is true for presidentialism. Until we can convince ourselves that countries that adopt presidentialism are the same as countries that adopt parliamentarism, studies such as Stepan and Skach’s run the risk of overstating the deleterious effects of presidentialism.

The standard way to address this issue is, to continue our metaphor, to find a measure of “poor health” and include it as a control variable in an analysis of the relationship between mortality and being in a hospital. With one exception, we know of no empirical analysis that has adopted this approach when examining the relationship between presidentialism and democratic survival.⁵² This may, in part, be because the analytical problem before us is probably more complicated than the one suggested by our hospital metaphor. For example, the factors that cause death in humans—cardiovascular diseases, parasitic diseases, respiratory diseases, and so on—affect those in a hospital and those not in a hospital the same way. But it may be the case that some factors that are “dangerous” for democracy are dangerous only in parliamentary regimes or only in presidential ones. If this is true, and presidential and parliamentary regimes are different sorts of organisms that process factors such as legislative fragmentation in fundamentally different manners, then it may prove extremely difficult to measure the underlying health of a regime independently of its status as a presidential or parliamentary system.

The work of one political scientist, Scott Mainwaring, suggests that presidential and parliamentary democracies *do* process political factors differently. In particular, it suggests that they process legislative fragmentation differently. Whereas legislative fragmentation always increases the likelihood of instability, the instability that is produced in parliamentary democracies is different from that produced in presidential ones. Specifically, legislative frag-

51. We owe this insight to an impromptu remark from a New York University undergraduate student during a class on comparative politics that we were teaching. Shugart (1999) makes a similar argument claiming that presidentialism tends to be adopted in large and complex societies with highly unequal income distributions and great regional disparities. Shugart argues that it is these inhospitable conditions rather than presidentialism itself that makes it difficult to sustain democracy.

52. The exception is Cheibub’s (2007) analysis of presidentialism and democracy. He argues that what has made presidential regimes more fragile than parliamentary ones is that presidential regimes are more likely to emerge in countries in which the military has traditionally had a strong political role. As Cheibub demonstrates, any democratic regime, parliamentary or presidential, is more likely to fail in countries with a strong military tradition than in countries without such a tradition. This leads him to conclude that presidential democracies are more likely to fail not because they are presidential but because they are more likely to be adopted in difficult circumstances—when the military has a strong political presence.

mentation increases the likelihood of *cabinet instability* in parliamentary systems, whereas it increases the likelihood of *democratic instability* in presidential systems. The work by Mainwaring (1993) ultimately suggests that if legislative fragmentation is viewed as a political ailment in parliamentary democracies, as, say, critics of the French Fourth Republic like de Gaulle and others claim, then presidentialism could well be a form of medicine that is worse than the disease.

Why is legislative fragmentation likely to lead to such different outcomes in parliamentary and presidential democracies? One reason is that legislative fragmentation is more likely to lead to legislative deadlock in a presidential regime than in a parliamentary one. Legislative deadlock in a presidential democracy occurs when a legislative majority opposed to the president is large enough to pass bills in the legislature but not large enough to override a presidential veto. As we have already seen, legislative fragmentation increases the chances that the president's party will not command a legislative majority and, hence, the chances that legislative deadlock will occur. But why is legislative fragmentation more likely to lead to legislative deadlock in presidential systems than in parliamentary systems? The answer is that in a parliamentary democracy, the head of government, the prime minister, serves at the pleasure of the legislature and is, therefore, obliged to form a cabinet made up of a coalition of parties that *does* command a legislative majority. As we saw in Chapter 11, presidents do sometimes form coalitions (Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh 2004; Amorim Neto 2006; Cheibub 2007).⁵³ The key difference, though, between parliamentary and presidential democracies is that when legislators vote against a president's legislation in sufficient numbers the legislation is blocked, but when legislators vote against a prime minister's legislation there is a good chance that the government will fall. In other words, a coalition government in a parliamentary democracy implies a legislative coalition, whereas this presumption is not the case in presidential democracies.⁵⁴ A consequence of this is that legislative fragmentation is much more likely to produce deadlock in a presidential democracy than it is to produce immobilism in a parliamentary democracy.

The problem of legislative deadlock created by legislative fragmentation in presidential democracies tends to be exacerbated by the way presidents are recruited to office. As we noted earlier, presidential candidates are often political outsiders who have relatively little policymaking expertise or experience dealing with the legislature. One of the main reasons for this is that presidents tend to be directly elected by the people and, therefore, have less need to build links with legislative actors than prime ministers do. A consequence of this, though, is that presidents tend to lack the necessary skills or experience to build legislative

53. Although presidents do sometimes form coalitions, coalition governments are less common and minority governments are more common in presidential democracies than in parliamentary ones (Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh 2004; Amorim Neto 2006; Cheibub 2007).

54. As Mainwaring (1993, 221) puts it, "the extension of a cabinet portfolio does not necessarily imply party support for the president, as it does in a parliamentary system."

coalitions to resolve deadlock situations when they arise. Even when they do manage to build a coalition, it has been argued that coalition partners in presidential regimes have acute incentives to distance themselves from the president's policy goals. One reason for this is that they expect to run against the president in a winner-take-all contest in the next election and they want to be able to criticize his policies (Coppedge 1994, 168). In contrast, prime ministers tend to be individuals who have worked in the legislature for many years, who have gained enormous amounts of policy expertise, and who have been schooled in the art of coalition building. A result of this is that prime ministers are often better placed than presidents to build legislative coalitions to resolve deadlock situations when they emerge. Thus, according to Mainwaring (1993), presidential democracies are not only more apt than parliamentary democracies to have executives whose policy programs will be consistently blocked by the legislature, but they are also more apt to have executives who are less capable of dealing with problems when they arise.

When legislative deadlock does occur, it is much more likely to lead to democratic instability in presidential democracies than in parliamentary ones. If legislative deadlock occurs between the executive and legislative branches in a parliamentary regime, then there are constitutional means for resolving the crisis. Either the legislature can pass a vote of no confidence and remove the government, or the prime minister can dissolve the parliament and call new elections. As Mainwaring (1993, 208) notes, though, in presidential democracies, "there are no neat means of replacing a president who is enormously unpopular in the society at large and has lost most of his/her support in the legislature." Thus, the absence of a vote of no confidence may ensure the stability of the head of government in presidential regimes, but it introduces a rigidity that can threaten democratic stability by encouraging frustrated elites or masses to call for the removal of the president, or the dissolution of parliament, as a way to break the deadlock (Linz 1994). Although there are some circumstances under which political actors can accomplish this within the bounds of some presidential constitutions, the solution to deadlock is more likely to be extraconstitutional in presidential regimes than in parliamentary ones. As this argument makes clear, legislative deadlock is more likely to produce *democratic* instability in presidential democracies; if and when immobilism occurs in parliamentary democracies, it is more likely to produce *cabinet* instability.

Earlier, we presented evidence suggesting that democracy was more fragile in presidential regimes than in parliamentary ones. An important implication of Mainwaring's argument, though, is that democracy should be more fragile in some presidential regimes than in others. Specifically, his argument implies that democracy should be more fragile in (perhaps only in) presidential democracies that are characterized by high levels of legislative fragmentation than in those characterized by low levels of legislative fragmentation, because legislative fragmentation increases the likelihood of deadlock, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of democratic instability. When legislative fragmentation is low, the likelihood of deadlock and, hence, democratic instability will also be low.

To evaluate his claim that presidential democracies will be unstable particularly (or only) when legislative fragmentation is high, Mainwaring (1993) examines all countries that experienced uninterrupted democracy for the twenty-five-year period between 1967 and 1992. Although twenty-four parliamentary regimes were able to sustain democracy during this period, just four presidential regimes were able to do so: Colombia, Costa Rica, the United States, and Venezuela. Mainwaring wanted to know what made these presidential regimes different from other presidential regimes. His answer was that they all effectively had two-party systems, as illustrated in Table 15.11; none of them had multiparty systems. At the time of his writing in 1993, Mainwaring argued that only one multiparty presidential regime had historically managed to sustain democracy for a twenty-five-year period. And this exception was Chile, a democracy, begun in 1932, that experienced a dramatic “death” in 1973 when a military coup overthrew the Socialist president Salvador Allende and replaced him with the dictator General Augusto Pinochet. Allende had been elected in 1970 with a slim plurality of the vote (35.3 percent) and was immediately beset with problems from every side in the country’s highly fragmented and deeply polarized legislature.⁵⁵

In Table 15.12, we use data from Mainwaring (1993, 205–207) to calculate a democratic success rate for parliamentary regimes, multiparty presidential regimes, and two-party presidential regimes. Democratic success is defined here as a sustaining of democracy for an uninterrupted twenty-five-year period at any time between 1945 and 1992. The information in Table 15.12 suggests that democratic consolidation is possible in two-party presidential regimes but not in multiparty presidential regimes. Interestingly, the democratic success rate for two-party presidential regimes (0.50) is almost as high as the democratic success rate for parliamentary regimes (0.57). These results provide strong evidence that it is the combination of presidentialism and multipartism rather than just presidentialism that is inimical to democracy. Indeed, Mainwaring refers to the combination of presidentialism and multipar-

TABLE 15.11**Presidential Regimes that Sustained Democracy from 1967 to 1992 and Their Party System Size**

Country (year)	Effective number of legislative parties
Colombia (1986)	2.45
Costa Rica (1986)	2.21
United States (1984)	1.95
Venezuela (1983)	2.42

Source: Amorin Neto and Cox (1997, 169–170).

55. We are generally reluctant to invoke the “exception that proves the rule,” but if this hackneyed phrase ever applies, this seems to be the case.

TABLE 15.12**Regime Type, Party System Size, and Democratic Consolidation, 1945–1992**

Regime type	Democratic success rate
Multiparty presidentialism	1/15, or 0.07
Two-party presidentialism	5/10, or 0.5
Parliamentarism	25/44, or 0.57

Source: Data are from Mainwaring (1993, 205–207).

Note: The democratic success rate refers to the percentage of countries that were able to sustain democracy for an uninterrupted twenty-five-year period at any time between 1945 and 1992.



La Moneda, the Chilean presidential residence, under ground and air attack by Chilean armed forces during the September 11, 1973 coup d'état that led to the ruthless dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. The democratically elected Socialist president Salvador Allende is thought to have committed suicide during the palace siege.

tism as “the difficult combination” for precisely this reason.

It is worth noting that Stepan and Skach (1993) also provide evidence in support of Mainwaring’s conjecture in their own analysis of presidentialism and democratic survival. Although they do not make too much of it, they provide data on the size of party systems in those countries that became independent after 1945 and that managed to sustain democracy during the 1980s. These data are shown in Table 15.13. As you can see, long-lived multiparty parliamentary regimes are not particularly rare but long-lived multiparty presidential regimes are.

The data presented thus far seem to support Mainwaring’s claim that it is not presidentialism per se that imperils democracy but rather presidentialism combined with a

highly fragmented legislature. There are, however, a couple of reasons to be concerned about our approach up to this point. First, the scholarly work that we have examined so far has imposed some fairly arbitrary cut-offs on the data. Why, for example, should we consider a democracy long lived if it survives at least twenty-five years instead of, say, at least twenty-four years or twenty-six years, as Mainwaring does? Why should we consider continuous democratic rule for ten years (in the 1980s) a natural measure of “democratic consolidation” as Stepan and Skach do? Why should we classify countries as having multiparty systems if they have an effective number of legislative parties greater than 2.9? Second, we have made no attempt to take account of other factors that might be associated with democracy, regime

TABLE 15.13**Consolidated Democracies by Regime Type and Party System Size**

Constitution	Effective number of legislative parties	
	Fewer than three	Three or more
Parliamentary	23	11
Mixed	0	2
Presidential	5	0

Source: Data are from Stepan and Skach (1993, 8–9).

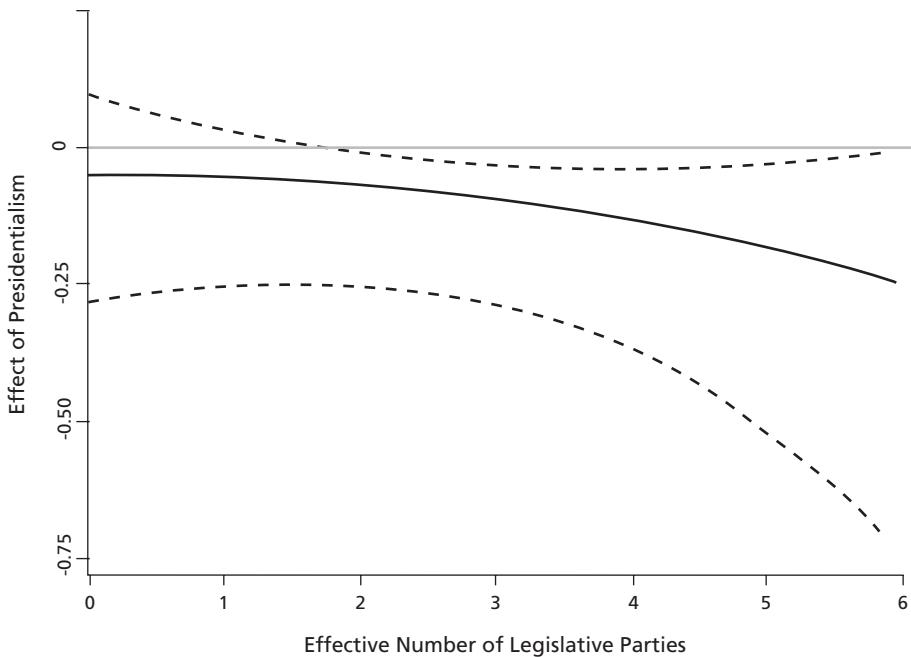
Note: The numbers in the table refer to those countries that became independent after 1945 and that sustained democracy for a continuous ten-year period from 1979 to 1989.

type, and party system size. We now end our discussion of the supposed “difficult combination” with a brief presentation of statistical results meant to address these concerns.

Earlier in this section, we estimated a dynamic probit model to examine the effect of presidentialism on the probability of democratic survival, taking into account such economic factors as wealth, economic growth, and oil production (Table 15.10). We now modify this model in such a way that it also tests to see whether the effect of presidentialism on the probability of democratic survival varies with the size of the party system. Recall that Mainwaring’s hypothesis is that presidentialism will have a stronger negative effect on the survival of democracy when the party system is large than when the party system is small. Indeed, presidentialism may have no negative effect on the survival of democracy at all when the party system is sufficiently small. Because our hypothesis is a conditional one—the effect of presidentialism varies with party system size—the interpretation of our empirical results is a bit more complicated than it was earlier in the section (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). Because it is easier to show the relevant information for testing Mainwaring’s hypothesis in the form of a figure than in a table of results, we turn to Figure 15.11.

In Figure 15.11, the vertical distance between the gray horizontal line and the solid black downward-sloping line indicates the estimated effect of presidentialism on the probability of democratic survival for any given effective number of legislative parties.⁵⁶ The downward slope in the solid black line indicates how the effect of presidentialism on the probability of democratic survival changes with the effective number of legislative parties. The important point to notice is that the line starts off close to, but below, zero, and becomes more and

56. Figure 15.11 is based on a dynamic probit model that takes account of GDP per worker, growth in GDP per worker, and a country’s status as an oil producer. A qualitatively similar figure is obtained if we use GDP per capita and growth in GDP per capita as our proxies for wealth and economic growth. Party system size is measured by the effective number of legislative parties. Data come from Przeworski et al. (2000) and cover 135 countries from 1950 to 1990. In Figure 15.11, we plot the effect of presidentialism on the probability of democratic survival for the specific case in which a country is not an oil producer, its GDP per worker is \$14,468, and its growth in GDP per worker is 2.41 percent; this is the “average democracy” in our sample.

FIGURE 15.11**Effect of Presidentialism on the Probability of Democratic Survival across Different Levels of Legislative Fractionalization**

more negative as the effective number of legislative parties increases. This tells us that the effect of presidentialism on democratic survival is always negative and that this negative effect becomes stronger—that is, increasingly negative—as the effective number of legislative parties increases.

The solid downward-sloping line shows the direction of the effect of presidentialism on democratic stability (negative) but not whether this effect is statistically significant or not. To know whether the effect is statistically significant, we need to look at the dashed curved lines on either side of the solid downward-sloping line. These dashed lines represent the upper and lower bounds of what political scientists call the “95 percent confidence interval.” Together, these dashed lines indicate how certain we are that we have correctly identified the effect of presidentialism on democratic survival as being negative. When the upper and lower bounds of the confidence interval are on either side of the gray horizontal line drawn through the zero point on the y-axis, then we cannot reject the possibility that presidentialism has no effect on democratic survival. This situation is equivalent to a coefficient’s having no stars in the table of results presented earlier in the section (and elsewhere in the

book). When the upper and lower bounds of the confidence interval are both below the zero line, though, as occurs when the effective number of legislative parties is greater than 2, then we can be 95 percent confident that presidentialism has a negative effect on continued democratic survival. To sum up, Figure 15.11 demonstrates that presidentialism has a significant negative effect on continued democratic survival once the effective number of legislative parties is greater than about 2. This significant negative effect grows larger as the effective number of legislative parties increases.⁵⁷ This is exactly as Mainwaring predicts. We should remind the reader at this point that Figure 15.11 is generated by a model that takes account of economic factors such as wealth, oil production, and economic growth.

Summary

In this section we examined, and found considerable support for, an argument that says that presidential constitutions make successful democratic consolidation more difficult than parliamentary constitutions, particularly when the legislature is highly fragmented. The key weakness of presidentialism appears to be its inability to find legal ways out of executive-legislative deadlock, something that is more likely to occur when the legislature is highly fragmented. It is possible to put this finding in a broader perspective by comparing it with the analysis of veto players than we did in the last chapter. In Chapter 14 we discussed various arguments about the effect of multiple veto players on policy stability. All else equal, it was argued, an increase in the number of veto players is expected to make it more difficult to change the status quo policy. This was particularly true if the veto players held diverse policy preferences. What we characterized in the last chapter as policy stability induced by veto players is equivalent in many ways to what we have referred to in this chapter as deadlock or immobilism. The father of modern veto player theory, George Tsebelis, has conjectured that although large numbers of veto players with diverse preferences may encourage policy stability, they may also encourage political instability (Tsebelis 1995, 322). The Mainwaring claim that multipartism and presidentialism form a “difficult combination” for democratic consolidation can be interpreted in light of veto player theory. If Tsebelis is correct that an increased number of veto players leads to policy stability, which in its extreme form manifests itself as “deadlock,” then we should expect presidentialism and parliamentarism to affect the type of political instability that ensues.

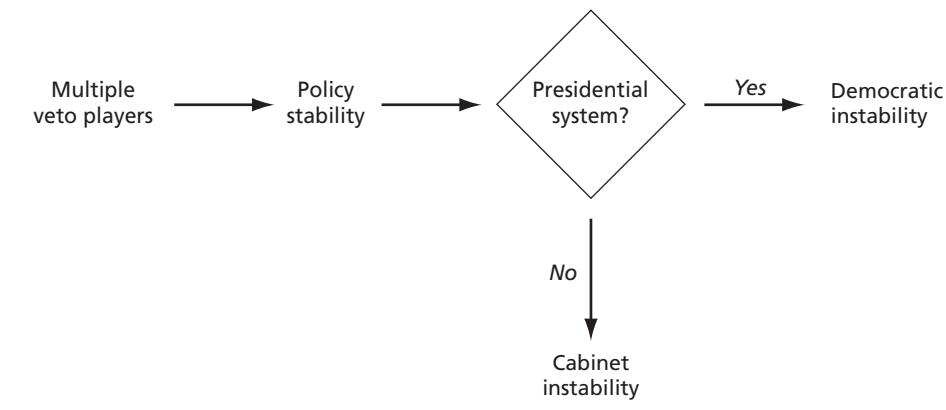
In other words, multiple veto players leads to policy stability (deadlock), but the form of political instability that results depends on a country’s constitution. As we have already argued, if the constitution is presidential, then policy stability or deadlock is likely to encour-

57. If we were to extend the upper and lower bounds of the confidence intervals in Figure 15.11 further to the right, they would indicate that presidentialism no longer has a statistically significant negative effect on continued democratic survival when the effective number of legislative parties is slightly greater than 6.1. This is little comfort for presidential democracies in general, however, because only about 3 percent of the presidential observations in our sample have a party system larger than this.

age a coup or some other form of democratic instability. If, however, the constitution is parliamentary, the policy stability of immobilism is likely to lead to a vote of no confidence, a cabinet reshuffle, or elections leading to the formation of a new cabinet; that is, cabinet instability. This causal argument is presented in Figure 15.12.⁵⁸

At this point, we would like to point out one last subtlety that involves our discussion of democratic survival in this section and our discussion of the effects of wealth on democratic survival from Chapter 6. Recall that Przeworski et al. (2000) argue that wealth is, essentially, a sufficient condition for democratic survival. As they indicate, countries above a certain wealth threshold (about \$6,055 per capita in 1985 PPP U.S. dollars) are likely to stay democratic forever, should they, for whatever reason, become democratic in the first place (see Chapter 6, Box 6.1 for a discussion of purchasing power parity [PPP]). The claim that wealth is sufficient to ensure democratic consolidation leads to a surprising result—the choice of political institutions, say, the combination of multipartism and presidentialism, is likely to have a bigger effect on the chances that democracy will survive in poor countries than in rich ones. This is because, according to Przeworski et al. (2000), democracy is likely to survive in rich countries whether they have chosen felicitous institutions or not. In other words, institutional choice matters much more in poor countries than in rich ones, at least when it comes to democratic consolidation.⁵⁹ This result is somewhat surprising because traditional

FIGURE 15.12 **Veto Players, Policy Stability, and Different Types of Political Instability**



58. We should note that we have simplified matters throughout this section by ignoring mixed democracies.

59. Evidence consistent with this line of reasoning comes from Boix (2003, 153–154). In a study of democratic survival from 1850 to 1990, for example, he finds that presidential democracies are more likely than parliamentary democracies to fail only in underdeveloped countries; he finds no difference in the democratic survival rates of parliamentary and presidential regimes in developed countries.

approaches in this area predict that formal institutions are more important in rich countries, where they are more likely to be accompanied by the rule of law, than in poor countries.⁶⁰ One of our former students tested this implication in her undergraduate honors thesis at New York University (Ferrer 2003). Her findings, consistent with a veto player interpretation of the Mainwaring argument, show that the probability of democratic regime failure increases as the number of veto players increases *but only in poor countries*.⁶¹ These results are suggestive enough to warrant future work on the interactive effect of institutional and economic variables on the survival of democracy (Bernhard, Nordstrom, and Reenock 2001).

Finally, we would like to point out that whereas the choice between presidentialism and parliamentarism is typically addressed explicitly by constitution writers, the size of the party system is not entirely under their direct control. As we say in Chapter 13, though, comparative politics scholars know quite a bit about why some countries have many parties and some have few. Specifically, we can expect a country with high levels of social heterogeneity to produce a highly fragmented legislature unless specific electoral institutions (majoritarian ones) are adopted with the goal of reducing the number of parties. Consequently, the results in this section suggest that if a presidential constitution is chosen for some reason, then adopting permissive electoral laws such as PR with a high district magnitude is likely to cause problems. In the presence of social heterogeneity, permissive electoral laws can be expected to produce multipartism, which, combined with presidentialism, is likely to inhibit democratic consolidation. Of course, the finding of Przeworski et al. (2000) on the apparent sufficiency of wealth may suggest that relatively rich countries have a greater margin of error in choosing their institutions than poor countries. This may explain why some multiparty presidential regimes in Latin America have managed to stay democratic since the wave of transitions to democracy that began there in the mid-1980s. For some time now many of these countries have exceeded Przeworski et al.'s "magical" threshold of wealth at which democracy is immune to breakdown.

CONCLUSION

We have, perhaps, gone on long enough. We hope, however, that this chapter has convinced you that contemporary comparative politics has a great deal to say that is of vital interest to citizens and policymakers who would like to know how the institutions they choose are likely to affect the political, social, and economic outcomes they will experience. Let us briefly summarize the basic results that we have presented in this chapter. First, we have shown pat-

60. Recent studies in this area strongly suggest that the importance of rule of law and other legal institutions for democratic consolidation itself varies across different levels of societal development (Reenock and Staton 2008; Reenock, Staton, and Radean 2008).

61. In this case, "poor" is defined as \$6,055 per capita GDP, Przeworski et al.'s (2000) cut-off point.

tered differences in the way that majoritarian and consensus democracies represent the interests of voters. Second, we have demonstrated that electoral laws influence both who is chosen to rule and how they are likely to wield that power—at least with respect to redistributive fiscal policy. Third, we have highlighted the ways in which constitutional elements, such as electoral laws and federalism, are likely to affect the probability of ethnic conflict. And finally, we have reported results suggesting that the choice of electoral laws and the decision about whether to adopt presidentialism or parliamentarism are likely to influence strongly the survival of new democracies—especially if the country’s level of wealth is not sufficiently high to, by itself, make democratic survival likely.

Many questions remain about how these results interact with each other. We invite students to speculate about such matters and to develop the tools necessary to evaluate their answers. Comparative politics raises and attempts to answer questions with life and death implications. We hope that as you finish this book, your development as a student of comparative politics is just beginning.

KEY CONCEPTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| accountability , 689
clarity of responsibility , 690
common pool resource problem , 719
confessionalism , 735
congruence, or static representation , 695
consensus vision of democracy , 680
consociationalism , 734
ethnic outbidding , 732
fiscal policy , 700
government identifiability , 693 | immobilism , 745
Keynesianism , 700
majoritarian vision of democracy , 680
mandate , 693
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prospective voting , 693
representation , 675
responsiveness, or dynamic representation , 695
retrospective voting , 689 |
|--|---|

PROBLEMS

The following two problems are designed to incorporate material covered in the earlier sections of the book with the material presented in this final chapter, and to encourage you to synthesize what you have learned so that you can make practical policy recommendations.

1. After a long experience with authoritarianism, a new democracy is looking to install a constitution that will maximize its chances of survival. As an expert in comparative institutions, you have been hired as a consultant by the transitional government. They have asked you to develop a proposal in which you are to make recommendations on specific institutions that you believe will enhance their chances of never returning to authoritarianism. To aid in their selection, they have asked you to rank your reform recommendations according to

their likely impact on regime survival. What are your recommendations? Be sure to support your claims with evidence from the literature (both theoretical and empirical). Is there information about the country, such as its wealth and ethnic heterogeneity, which would shape your recommendations?

2. You have received a telephone call from the new interim leadership in Burma (formerly Myanmar), following the collapse of the military junta in the wake of a devastating cyclone. The caller, a policymaker, asks you to explain the pros and cons of parliamentarism versus presidentialism and to advise whether a mixed form of democracy would capture the benefits of both parliamentary and presidential systems while taming the problems commonly associated with each of them. In your reply, you should draw on both theory and empirics. Be sure to discuss what other institutions the caller needs to consider and under what conditions some sets of institutions might be preferable to others. (In answering part of this question, it might be useful to refer back to the section on the making and breaking of governments in mixed democracies in Chapter 11.)

CHAPTER 15

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