

An American Parliamentary System

While the parliamentary system has many benefits, I believe that such a system should not be implemented in the United States as it would not fit American political culture well. Specifically, American political culture is deeply rooted in mistrust of big government, a phenomenon which can be explained by a strong focus on states' rights throughout American history and the premise upon which the US gained its independence. Parliamentary systems intrinsically limit the potential for separation of power to occur because the legislative branch and executive are closely tied to one another. While this has benefits like decreasing the probability of gridlock and passing coordinated policy extremely quickly, it also removes safeguards on abuse of power that exist in the status quo. Without a presidential system, only the judicial branch would be able to keep the other two branches in check. Even then, the judges on the supreme court are appointed by the executive branch, leading to significant potential for abuse.

Such a system is bad for the United States for two reasons. First, the aforementioned distrust in government may cause significant push-back against such a system. Secondly, a strong, consolidated central government would be more likely to clash with states and their policies. Because the federal government would now act as a consolidated unit, they would have greater ability to overpower state policy, something that is problematic for (1) public perception of government and (2) further decreases the checks and balances built into the status quo, increasing potential for abuse of power.

Institutional Changes to the Status Quo

While I don't believe that moving to a parliamentary system is beneficial to the United States, there are certainly institutional changes that can be implemented to make voting more equitable. Firstly, moving away from a first-past-the-post system might be beneficial in reducing political polarization and opening up the election to more than just two political parties. This is because first-past-the-post systems encourage all like-minded people to band together behind a single political party to minimize vote-splitting.

Furthermore, ranked-choice ballots may be beneficial to the United States. Such ballots would require the voting process to be more complicated and necessitate that voters know about more candidates' policies but would ultimately lead to a better decision regarding the winner of the election. Furthermore, such a system would make the election process more fair as it would make the decrease the expense for candidates to still have a fighting chance in the election.

Feasibility of Changes

While the aforementioned these policies may make the voting process in the United States better, it is unlikely that any of them would be instituted. Insofar as the two-party system currently dominates elections and each branch of government, they would resist any policy that increases the ability for candidates of other parties to take power. This creates a system that isn't conducive to creating a better, more even playing field for third-party candidates or even for decreasing polarization. For this reason, I believe that reform is unfortunately unlikely.