

Reform Needed? Potential Reforms from Comparative Systems

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Agenda

- 1 Recapping the American System
- 2 Another Model: Parliamentary

Course Concepts

- ▶ Readings *not* covered in readings since midterm: Lee (2015; Meeting 17), Huber & Powell (1994; Meeting 19), & readings for Meeting 13 (except Grimmer 2013).
- ▶ Opening Question: What is the most surprising/salient model you have learned in this course?

The Republic Theory in Practice

Institutional Logic of "Separation of Powers"

Legislature

	House	Senate	President
<i>Incentive</i>			
Term of Office	2 yrs	6 yrs	4 yrs
Apportionment	Proport.	Federal	Federal + Prop
Constituency	[District]	State	National
Size	[435]	100	1
Selection	Elected	[Elected]	[Elected]
<i>Resources</i>			
<i>Action</i>	Legislate, raise army, tax, interstate commerce, purse, impeach impeachment, declare war		Appointment, pardon, Commander-in-chief, Executive
<i>Reaction:</i>	Veto override, Senate		Veto,
<i>v. Congress/Pres</i>	confirmation, treaties		Execute the law
<i>Reaction:</i>	Set jurisdiction, initiate		Nomination
<i>v. Courts</i>	const. amend., confirmation, purse impeach, lower courts		
Note: [brackets] denotes non-constitutional requirement.			

System Defined by *High* Transaction Costs

- ▶ To make policy, one must pay transaction costs to entice relevant pivotal players
 - ▶ Median Voter in U.S. House (w/ veto: veto pivot)
 - ▶ Filibuster Pivots in U.S. Senate (w/ veto: veto pivot)
 - ▶ Presidential approval of policy change
- ▶ Madison's Theory of Representation insures that politicians have strong rational self-interest to represent their districts faithfully (Faction → Representatives)
- ▶ Principal-agent relationship between representatives & their districts require long coalitions to change policy
- ▶ Congress becoming more *partisan-centered*, lowering transaction costs if one party can control all institutional *veto gates* (House, Senate, Presidency) given intra-party bargaining
- ▶ However, like GOP today, parties have no formal control over representatives (no principal-agent between parties & members)

Parliamentary Systems Defined by *Low* Transaction Costs

Candidate Selection

- ▶ Candidates screened & nominated by parties (no primaries)
- ▶ Candidates run *explicitly* as party members rather than individual candidates
- ▶ Parties control party brand & campaign resources

Party Voting in Government

- ▶ Legislators vote as *cohesive* partisan blocs
- ▶ Legislators are agents of their party's leadership & can be sanctioned for lack of discipline
- ▶ Legislators reliant on parties for campaign resources: *weak* individual resources such as staff, offices, salaries, committee property rights

Parliamentary Government Continued

Institutional Parameters

- ▶ Parliamentary systems defined by the following constitutional setup: *Legislative Majority* → Executive
- ▶ Executive (Prime Minister & Cabinet) is an *agent* of the legislative majority
- ▶ Executive & cabinet chosen from majority party leadership or coalition parties leadership
- ▶ Executive can be removed (fired) by no confidence vote-unlike members of Congress which have explicit fixed terms and are not subject to removal by no confidence votes
- ▶ Weak institutional independence between leg & exec

Representation & Policy

- ▶ Policy debates centered around national partisan agendas, mostly referendum of legislative majority agenda
- ▶ Responsibility is collective and very partisan

Congress & Parliament Compared

	Parliament	Congress
Recruitment: Nomination Election	Party controlled. Candidates represent party	Direct primary; local issues, resource base. Party influence weak
Party Voting	Result of leadership discipline, national strategy	Result of personal preferences and local pressures.
Individual resources	Weak	Strong: offices, staff, salaries
Relation to executive	Selects from party leadership. PM/cabinet. No confidence vote removes	Independent.
Institutional independence	Weak	Strong: budget, purse, Army, taxes, war, appointments.
Focus of policy and Representation	National party/majority	District and committee, with partisan component
Responsibility	Party/collective	Personal, with partisan component

Policymaking in Parliamentary Governments

- ▶ *“In many parliamentary systems, governments form as explicit multiparty coalitions, but single party governments must also be coalitions: no party can win majority support without representing a coalition of groups in society.”*
- ▶ Parties may represent narrow interests and form “long coalitions” with other parties
- ▶ Single-party majorities strike more “efficient” legislative bargains: party represent same interests and members negotiate amongst one another
- ▶ Multi-party majorities strike less “efficient” legislative bargains: since these parties may represent narrower interests (short coalitions) and want something in return of supporting government (executive)

Differences in Policymaking?

- ▶ What do Bawn & Rosenbluth find with respect to “efficient” policymaking & size of parties in government?
- ▶ More parties in government increases the size of the *public* sector & government spending
- ▶ Why would multi-party coalition governments increase the size of the government sector of employment?
- ▶ Less externalized costs, in line with research suggesting that more parties in government decreases income inequality
- ▶ Point is, multiparty coalition governments forced to negotiate with one another to stay in power, inter-party
- ▶ More views represented in multiparty systems through what sort of electoral mechanism?
- ▶ Proportional representation provides for more views represented in *governmental* debate

Key Points:

- ▶ Madisonian Democracy in the United States defined by *high* transaction costs brought forth by principal-agent relationship between elected representatives & constituents
- ▶ American parties traditionally defined as *weak*, given lack of principal-agent relationship between parties & representatives
- ▶ Parliamentary systems, relative to Madisonian system, lowers transaction costs of policymaking given *strong* political parties & principal-agent relationship between parties & representatives
- ▶ Parties control nominations & campaign resources: representation more *party-based* rather than district-centered (i.e. nationalized, think debate around *repeal & replace* ACA)
- ▶ Parliamentary systems can reduce transaction costs given institutional design
- ▶ Bawn & Rosenbluth show more parties in government contributes to “less efficient” policy outcomes