Reform Needed? Potential Reforms from Comparative Systems

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July 31, 2017
Recapping the American System

Another Model: Parliamentarism

Agenda

1. Recapping the American System

2. Another Model: Parliamentarism
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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term of Office</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>6 yrs</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apportionment</td>
<td>Proport.</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Federal + Prop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituency</td>
<td>[District]</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>[435]</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>[Elected]</td>
<td>[Elected]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Legislate, raise army, tax, interstate commerce, purse, impeach, impeachment, declare war</td>
<td>Appointment, pardon, Commander-in-chief, Executive</td>
<td>Veto, Execute the law, Nomination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction: v. Congress/Pres</td>
<td>Veto override, Senate confirmation, treaties</td>
<td>Set jurisdiction, initiate</td>
<td>Const. amend., confirmation, purse impeach, lower courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction: v. Courts</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 $\rightarrow$ 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

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