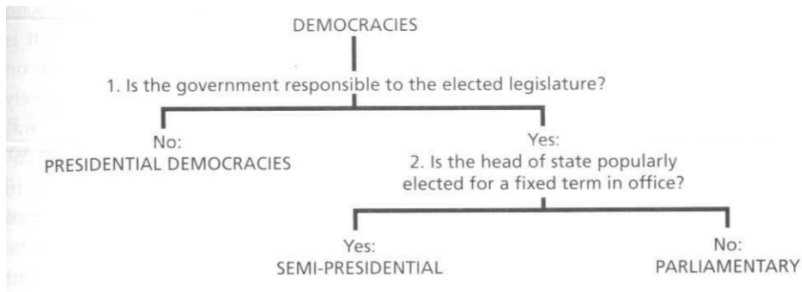


Democratic Government

Political Science 225
North Dakota State University

Classifying Democracies

- Presidential (e.g. USA, Brazil, Afghanistan)
- Parliamentary (e.g. UK, India, Iraq)
- Hybrid / Semi-presidential (e.g. France, Haiti, Kenya)



Parliamentary Government

Parliamentary Government

- ① Citizens elect representatives to a single legislature
- ② The members of the legislature select a government to manage executive
 - Prime minister heads cabinet and state
 - Cabinet secretaries direct executive branches
- ③ The government stays in power until the next mandated election, it dissolves the parliament, or it loses a (constructive) vote of (no) confidence

Presidential Government

Presidential Government

- The chief executive is popularly elected
- Legislative and executive terms are fixed, not contingent on mutual confidence
- Executive chooses cabinet
- (Executive has some formal lawmaking powers)

Semi-presidential Government

- Both the legislature and chief executive are popularly elected
- Cabinet chosen by president but responsible to legislature
- President has formal powers and is not simply a figurehead

Pros and Cons of Parliamentary Government

Pro:

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- Single body can pass legislation efficiently

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- Some party systems lead to unstable coalition dynamics
- It can be difficult for voters to assign responsibility to individuals or parties in coalition governments
- It can be difficult for citizens to punish leaders for bad policy

Pros and Cons of Presidential Government

Pro:

Pros and Cons of Presidential Government

Pro:

- Accountability
 - Punishing leaders is easier than in parliamentary systems
 - Retrospective voting
- Identifiability
 - Voters can predict likely government
 - Prospective voting
- Mutual checks
 - Legislators can vote on policy without worrying about dissolution
 - Representatives are forced to form custom coalitions for each piece of legislation
 - Checks can protect minority interests
- Arbiter role

Pros and Cons of Presidential Government

Con:

Pros and Cons of Presidential Government

Con:

- Temporal rigidity
 - Lack of dissolution reduces options in crisis
 - Lame ducks
- Majoritarianism
 - Homogeneous cabinet
 - Focus on winning presidential elections
 - False mandate
 - Coattails reduce legislative representativeness
- Dual legitimacy
 - Reduced incentives to build lasting coalitions
 - Disconnect between executive expectations and power
 - Split government can result in gridlock

Parliamentary Democracy

- Prime minister
- Cabinet
- Portfolio
- Ministerial responsibility
- Collective cabinet responsibility

Government Formation in Parliamentary Systems

Example: Germany 1987

Table 12.3 German Legislative Elections in 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
Total	497	100

Notes: Data are from Adam Carr's webpage at <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/>.

Government Formation in Parliamentary Systems

Example: Germany 1987

Table 12.4 Potential West German Governments in 1987

Party	Seats	Percentage	Surplus seats
CDU/CSU + SPD + Greens + FDP	497	100	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: "Surplus seats" indicate the number of seats controlled by each potential government that were not required for obtaining a legislative majority.

Government Formation in Parliamentary Systems

- Formateur
- Informateur
- Investiture
- Caretaker government

Government Formation in Parliamentary Systems

Example: Germany 1987

Table 12.5

Remaining Potential West German Governments in 1987

Party	Seats	Percentage	Surplus seats
CDU/CSU + SPD + Greens + FDP	497	100	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
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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.^a

Theories of Coalition Formation

Definition

A coalition formation game is the process by which parties bargain with each other over the distribution of cabinet portfolios—prime minister, foreign minister, etc—and eventually form a government

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 - Assume politicians are only interested in office benefits (policy-blind)
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 - Assume politicians are only interested in office benefits (policy-blind)
 - Parties in government can distribute more office benefits to their members than opposition parties
- Policy-seeking theories
 - Politicians are interested in policy outcomes
 - Typically assume spatial policy preferences in one or more dimensions

Parties as Actors in Coalition Formation Games

When thinking about coalition formation, we can think of parties in terms of two components:

- Weight: the number of seats the party holds in the legislature
- Ideal point: the party's preferred policy in one or more dimensions

Pure Office-Seeking Theories

Assumptions:

- Parties behave like individual actors
- Parties in government receive some fixed office benefit
- Parties do not care about policy outcomes, just office

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Example (101 seat legislature):

Party	A	B	C	D
Seats	30	30	21	20

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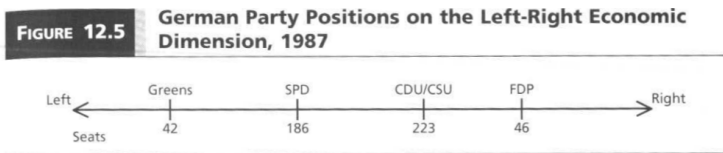
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Implications:

Connected coalitions

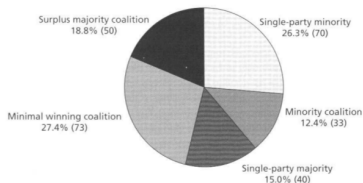


Types of Governments

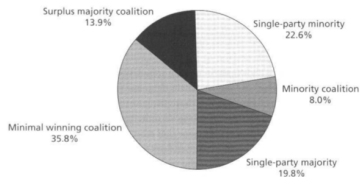
FIGURE 12.6

Government Types in Eleven Western 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



Why Minority Governments?

- Opposition strength
- Corporatism
- Investiture
- Strong party

Why Minority Governments?

Table 12.7 Testing Theories of Minority Governments in Parliamentary Democracies

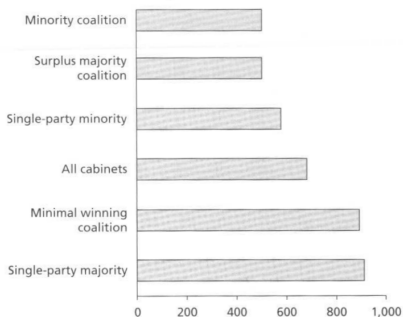
Dependent Variable: Did a Minority Government Form? 1 = Yes, 0 = No

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Opposition strength	0.31*** (0.06)				0.34*** (0.10)
Corporatism		0.78*** (0.25)			0.93*** (0.34)
Investiture vote			-0.89*** (0.18)		-1.08*** (0.36)
Strong party				-0.54** (0.22)	-0.23 (0.33)
Constant	-1.65*** (0.30)	-2.73*** (0.89)	0.44*** (0.14)	0.34* (0.18)	-4.38*** (1.44)
Observations	219	101	219	142	81
Log likelihood	-131.26	-64.10	-138.69	-95.43	-35.17

Source: Data are from the Comparative Parliamentary Democracy (CPD) project (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).

Government Duration

FIGURE 12.7 Average Parliamentary Government Duration by Cabinet Type, 1945–1998 (days)



Source: Data are from the Comparative Parliamentary Democracy (CPD) project (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).

Note: Data cover eleven Western European parliamentary democracies.

Government Duration

Table 12.9

Number of Governments That Fell for Technical and Discretionary Reasons in Eleven Western European Parliamentary Democracies, 1945–1998

	Specific reason	No.
Technical	Constitutionally mandated election	73
	Other constitutional reason	21
	Death of PM	6
Discretionary	Early election	64
	Enlargement of government	13
	Parliamentary defeat	31
	Intercoalition conflict over policy	53
	Intercoalition conflict not related to policy	16
	Intraparty conflict	39
Technical		99
Discretionary		156
Total		255

Source: Data are from the Comparative Parliamentary Democracy (CPD) project (Müller and Strøm 2000; Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2003).