

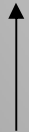
Institutions, Models of Democracy + Political Party Systems

Style or Substance

Forms of National Authority 1

Unitary State

Central government



People

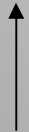
Power is held by
central government.

Central government derives
authority from people

Forms of National Authority 2

Confederal state

Central government



States



People

Power is held by independent states/provinces.

Central government derives authority from states, and has no direct authority over people

Forms of National Authority 3

Federal State

Central government



People



States

Power is divided between central government and the states. Both levels derive authority from the people, and exercise authority directly over them.

Key Democratic Institutions

- A. Executive = carries out laws and policies of the state – divided into 2 roles
 1. Head of state – symbolizes and represents people nationally and internationally
 2. Head of government – deals with everyday tasks of running the state
- Distinction runs along issues of direct management of policy + international and symbolic functions

B: Legislature

- Political body in which national politics is considered and debated
- Role is to make or pass legislation
- Comes in two broad types:
 1. Bicameral systems – 2 houses in the legislature
 2. Unicameral systems – only 1 house
- Most democratic states have bicameral legislatures – smaller democratic and socialist states are exceptions (Cuba, New Zealand, South Korea)

Bicameral Systems

- Origin in transition from pre-democratic feudal polity to democratic polity
- Created to serve the interests of major ruling economic classes
- “Upper house” retained as *check* on lower chamber – reflecting a fear that popularly elected house “too close” to the people

Upper Houses

- Often have power to amend or veto legislation originating in lower house
- Tenure tends to be longer than lower house members – often “for life”
- Federal states such as US rely on upper house to represent local interests as check on lower house
- In US the Senate was elected by local legislatures prior to 1913

Upper House Examples

- British House of Lords – still appointed – composed of representatives of Church of England and landed peerage
- Japan Diet – from Meiji period House of Peers integrated former court nobility and daimyo as counterweight to popularly elected House of Representatives
- House of Peers became House of Councilors and latter sit for elections

Feudalism in Britain

- MONARCH – King or Queen
- LORDS – major landowners
- KNIGHTS – minor landowners
- Peasants/vassals

Notes:

Sovereignty was divided or “parcelized”.

This allowed towns and cities to grow independent of centralized power.

In the spaces created by parcelized sovereignty the new class of the bourgeoisie or capitalists arose.

Feudalism in Japan under Tokugawa Shogun

Shogun – supreme military commander – controlling about 25% of revenue from marketing of rice crop

Daimyo – ruled domains or “feudatories” – controlled about 40% of rice crop revenues

Samurai – warrior class or “knights” – had own territory in particular daimyo domains

- Tokugawa Era from approximately 1600 to 1868
- “parcelized” sovereignty as nobility had rights in terms of property and authority in given spheres
- Japan only country in Asia to develop an indigenous capitalism

C: Judiciary

- All states rely on laws as means to prescribe behavior + lay out rules of the political game
- Center of body of laws is the constitution
- Constitution = fundamental expression of the regime + justification for subsequent legislation and powers of executives, legislatures and other political actors
- Constitutional power key to maintaining **rule of law** – sovereignty of law over all people + elected officials

Constitutional Courts

- Charged with task of ensuring legislation is compatible with the constitution
- Powers of such courts in democracies vary dramatically – some cases they serve as appellate courts, meaning that rulings by lower courts are appealed to higher court
- Judicial review
 1. Concrete review – constitutionality of legislation considered only when question triggered by court case
 2. Abstract review courts may rule on legislation without court case and before law even exercised

Westminster Model

- Associated with “majoritarian” parliamentary system of Britain
- Executive power concentrated in one party and bare-majority cabinet
- Cabinet leadership depends on majority support in legislature and cohesiveness of major party
- Legislature is bicameral but legislative power in hands of House of Commons (Lords can only delay bills)

Two-Party System

- SMD electoral systems tend to yield two-party systems
- SMD system means that party gets seat in district only when it finishes 1st – therefore voters tend to support major parties
- Two-party systems offer advantage in giving voters clear choice of alternative sets of public policy
- Two-party systems have a “moderating” influence pushing politics to the center as both parties have to compete for “swing” voters

Consensus Model

- More democratically inclusive in *plural societies* divided along religious/ideological/linguistic/cultural/ethnic lines
- Features executive power sharing in broad coalition cabinets – Swiss Federal Council representation by Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Radical Democrats + representation of German, French and Italian linguistic groups

Multi-Party systems

- PR + MMD electoral systems tend to create multi-party systems in the legislature
- Multi-party systems emerge in democracies marked by a multiplicity of cleavages
- Multi-party systems political views and platforms tend to be more dispersed and less centrist