Lijphart on Institutions

Consensus v. majoritarian democracies

Class Structure

I. Lijphart’s typology of democracies

II. Majoritarian democracy
   - Case study of the UK May 2005 election

III. Consensus democracy
   - Case study of the Swiss 2003 election

IV. Discussion exercise
   - What might be the arguments for adopting either type of democracy for new constitutions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Nepal?

Key readings

- Arend Lijphart
  - *The Politics of Accommodation* (1968)
  - *Democracy in Plural Society* (1979)
  - Electoral systems and party systems (1994)
  - Institutional design in new democracies (1996)
  - *Patterns of Democracy* (1999)
  - *Thinking about Democracy* (2008)

Additional resources

- Comparative Constitutions Project
  - [http://netfiles.uiuc.edu/zelkins/constitutions](http://netfiles.uiuc.edu/zelkins/constitutions)
- International Constitutional Law Documents
  - [http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/index.html](http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/index.html)
- Pippa Norris
  - *Driving Democracy* (CUP 2008)
  - [www.pippanorris.com](http://www.pippanorris.com) (under ‘books’)

Why focus on institutions?

- Institutions can influence democratic governance e.g.
  - Electoral rules have a mechanical impact on the number of parties in parliament and in government
  - Executive-legislative relations influence state capacity for effective governance

- Potential for practical political reforms e.g.
  - Electoral reform in Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Venezuela
  - Constitution-building in Bosnia, Cambodia, South Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nepal, Sudan

Institutions

- Formal institutions
  - Written constitutions, legal statutes, administrative decisions, executive decrees, judicial rulings, budgetary allocations
  - Open to short-term political reform
- Informal institutions
  - Norms, values and common practices which shape and constrain human behavior
  - Open to long-term cultural evolution
Stages of Institutional Reform

- **State building**
  - Post-conflict peace settlements
    - E.g. Afghanistan constitution
- **State reform**
  - Transition from autocracy
    - E.g. Choice of electoral system in post-Communist states
  - Common in established democracies
    - Improving existing arrangements within a limited set of parameters/options
    - E.g. UK green paper “The Governance of Britain” (2007)

Consociational democracy

- Lijphart (1968) *The Politics of Accommodation*
- Netherlands exemplified ‘pillorized’ divided society
- Yet there was stable democracy and elite consensus
- Why? Constitutional arrangements
  - Executive power-sharing/grand coalition
  - Minority veto in government
  - Proportional representation of all major groups in elected/appointed office
  - Cultural autonomy for groups
- Model for other divided (plural) societies?
  - E.g. Belgium, Switzerland, Lebanon, Cyprus

Normative values

**Majoritarian (Westminster) democracy**
- Goals...
  - Government accountability and transparency of decision-making
  - Single-party executives
  - Effective opposition parties
  - Vigorous parliamentary debate, and
  - Decisive elections.
- Yet dangers of
  - Elective dictatorship
  - Permanent majorities
  - Lack of checks and balances.

**Consociational democracy**
- Goals...
  - Consensual decision-making, bargaining and compromise
  - Multiple parliamentary parties, each with a stake in coalition government, and
  - Dispersed decision-making processes.
- Yet dangers of
  - Ineffective governance
  - Extreme multiparty fragmentation
  - Lack of accountability.

Potential criticisms?

- For constructivists, ethnic divisions have meanings shaped by political structures and elites. Power-sharing regimes can thereby freeze/reinforce ethnic cleavages (Donald Horowitz)
  - E.g. Bosnia-Herzegovina
- By contrast, majoritarian elections force vote-pooling across groups and bridging appeals (Ben Reilly)
- Not the only outcome: some peace settlements are negotiated, others result from outright victory
- Majoritarian solutions may be more effective in restoring fragile states. Sequencing process in peace settlements? (Mansfield and Snyder)

Types of Democracies

**Source**: Lijphart Democracies (1999)

**Democracies**

- **Majoritarian (Westminster)**
  - E.g. UK? New Zealand? Barbados
- **Mixed**
  - E.g. USA Costa Rica France
- **Consensus (Consociational)**
  - E.g. EU Belgium Switzerland
Ref: Arend Lijphart
Patterns of Democracy
1999

Majoritarian’ Model
Effective and accountable

Consensus’ Model
Inclusive and representative

Exec-Parties
One-party cabinet
Coalition government

Parliament
Executive dominant
Balanced exec-legislature

Party system
Two-party
Multi-party

Electoral system
Majoritarian
Proportional Representation

Interest groups
Pluralist
Corporatist

Federal-Unitary
Government
Centralized-unitary
Decentralized-federal

Parliament
Unicameral
Balanced Bicameral

Constitution
Flexible
More Rigid

Judiciary
Part. sovereign
Judicial review

Central Bank
Dependent
Independent

Ref: Lijphart Patterns of Democracy 1999

Typology of Democracies

Table 4.1 The thirty-six democracies included in this study, classified by decade and first year of the period (until the middle of 1999) analyzed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Democracies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940s</td>
<td>Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, Norway, United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>Australia, Belgium, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Ireland, Jamaica, Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Germany, Israel, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Costa Rica, France, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>Colombia, Ecuador, Tonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>Cameroon, Haiti, Tanzania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consensus democracy matters

- For the inclusion of minority parties
- For the protection of minority interests
- For women’s representation
- For public policy, economic outcomes, and welfare states

II: Majoritarian institutions

Case study: UK 5th May 2005 general election
Institutions: UK 1945-1997

- Unwritten constitution – Magna Carta etc.
- One-party cabinet government since 1945
  - Collective responsibility, primus inter pares
- Two-party parliamentary competition
  - Labour and Conservative in gov't and opposition
- Programmatic & disciplined parties
  - Mass-branch party organizations, few independents, few backbench rebellions, manifesto program
- Parliamentary sovereignty (no Supreme Court)
- Unitary state (local governmment administration)
- Bicameral parliament but Commons predominant
- Plurality FPTP elections – exaggerates votes: seats for winner

UK House of Commons, June 2005

- MP in UK House of Commons

UK Ballot paper

2005 UK election result

- June 2005 % of Votes % of seats Ratio Number of seats
  - Labour 35.2 54.9 1.56 355
  - Conservative 32.3 30.4 0.94 197
  - Lib Dem 22.0 9.5 0.43 62
  - SNP 1.5 0.9 0.60 6
  - PC 0.6 0.5 0.83 3
  - Other 8.4 3.4 0.40 23

Labour Maj. 2.9 24.5 66

Total 100 100 659


'Winner’s bonus' UK

UK % Vote 1900-2005

Note: The votes-seats ratio is calculated as the percentage of UK seats divided into the percentage of UK votes for the governing party. A ratio of 1.0 would indicate no electoral bias for the government. Source: Pippa Norris & Chris Wlezien Ed. Britain Votes 2005 (OUP 2005).
Why exaggerative bias for winner?

1. Malapportionment
   - Unequal size of electorates in each seat
   - Decline of urban pop/Labour constituency
   - Delayed effect of boundary changes

2. Differential turnout
   - Lowest in safe Labour seats
   - Anti-Conservative tactical voting
   - Efficient distribution of party votes
Breakdown of classic ideal type since 1997

- Federalism:
  - Devolution for Scotland and Wales
  - Northern Ireland assembly
  - Elected Mayor/Assembly for London

- Electoral reform:
  - Party list PR for Europe
  - AMS for Scotland/Wales
  - STV for Scottish local elections
  - House of Lords reform (?)
  - Written Bill of Rights- Euro. Convention
  - Direct referendums

Advantages and disadvantages?

III: Consensus democracy

Switzerland

Swiss democracy

- Pop 7.4m
- Plural cleavages
  - Religion (46% Catholic, 40% Protestant)
  - Language (65% German, 10% Italian, 18% French)
  - Region/canton
  - Class ($32,800 per capita PPP 2003)

- Social divisions, yet elite consensus?
- Stable power-sharing coalition but lack of accountability?

Swiss parliament

- Bicameral Federal Assembly:
  - Direct elections
  - PR List elections w. high proportionality votes : seats
  - The National Council (popular representation, 200 seats, based on population size per canton) and
  - The Council of States (cantonal representation, 46 seats, 2 per canton)
  - Eight party factions in Federal Assembly and 13 parties in total.

- Federal Supreme Court
- Many popular initiatives and referendums.
October 2003 Election results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Vote 2003</th>
<th>Seats 2003</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP)</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz (SPS)</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei der Schweiz (FDP)</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christlich-Demokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz (CVP)</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grüne Partei der Schweiz (GPS)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberale Partei der Schweiz (LPS)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelische Volkspartei der Schweiz (EVP)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konservative Demokratische Union (KDU)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sozialdemokratische Demokratische Union (SDU)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partei der Arbeit der Schweiz (PAS)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldaten</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christlich-Soziale Partei</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Liste (AL)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidaritäts-Sozialistische Alternative Zug (SSAZ)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei der Schweiz (FDP)</td>
<td>FDP</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Swiss party competition

Note: Legislative voting patterns 1998-2003

Advantages and disadvantages?

IV: Discussion exercise

- In designing new constitutions for Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan and Nepal, what are the pros and cons of each type of democracy?
- What would be the major consequences of these institutional choices for stability and effectiveness?

Conclusions

- Useful classification of democratic institutions
  - From ideal types to continuous measures
  - Clarifies values and normative debates
  - Systematic comparisons
  - Consequences of institutional design?

- Next class:
  - Electoral Systems
  - Read Lijphart chs. 5 and 8