

WHAT IS A
PARLIAMENT?

Parliament

- Agora
- Democracy
- Free elections
- Indirect representation
- Elections
- Direct representation ?
- Referendum

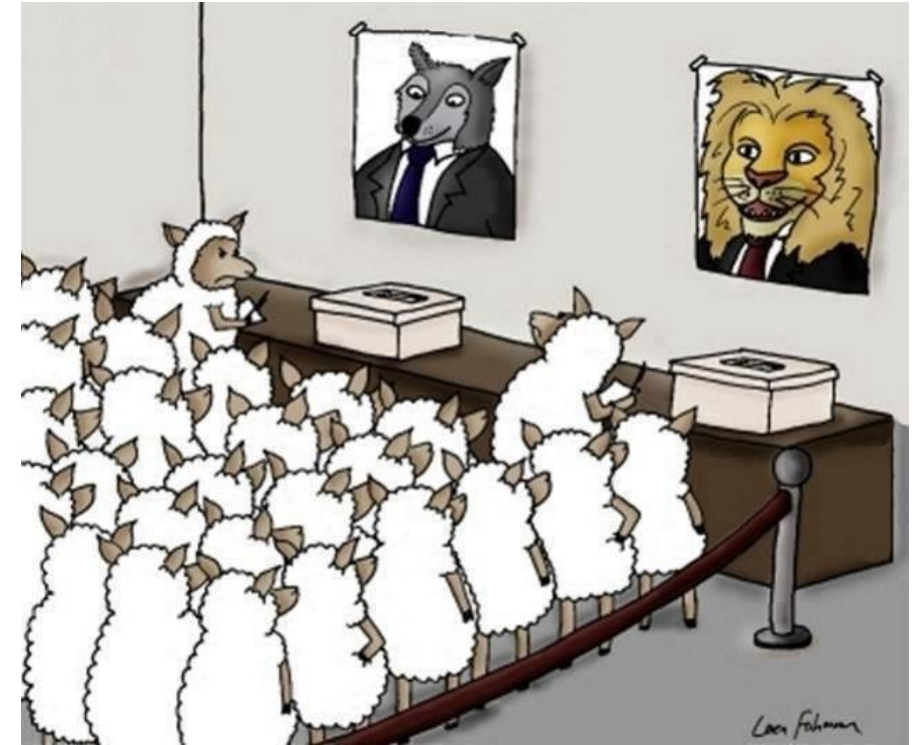
Referendum

- Popular vote
- Entire electorate can vote on a particular proposal
- From the 18th century
- Popular or not



Voting

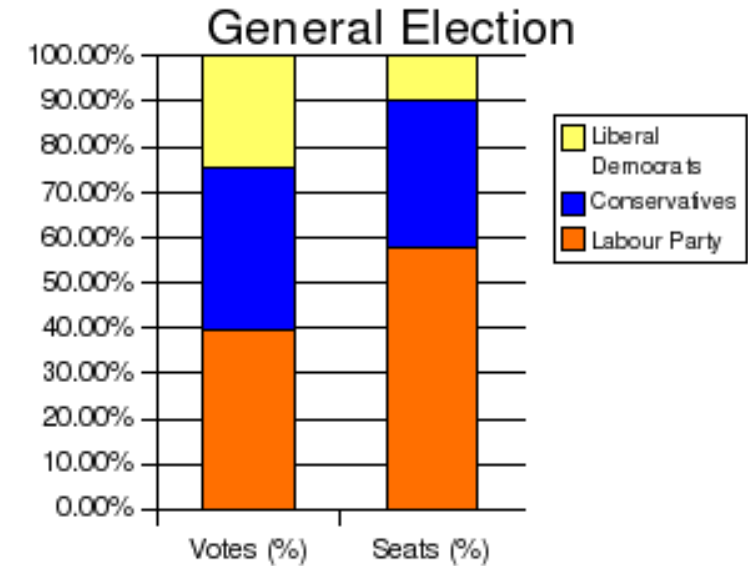
- First-past-the post
- Proportional
- Mixed



First-past-the-post

- One vote/citizen
- Winner-takes-it-all
- Large parties
- Single-party majority government
- UK, Canada, former colonies
- + easy process, responsible government
- - tactical voting, two-party system, many wasted votes

Figure 1.1 - A Comparison of the Proportion of Votes and Proportion of Seats in the 2005 General Election



Vote

Alexis ☒

Billie ☐

Casey ☐

6

Vote

Alexis ☐

Billie ☒

Casey ☐

17

Vote

Alexis ☐

Billie ☐

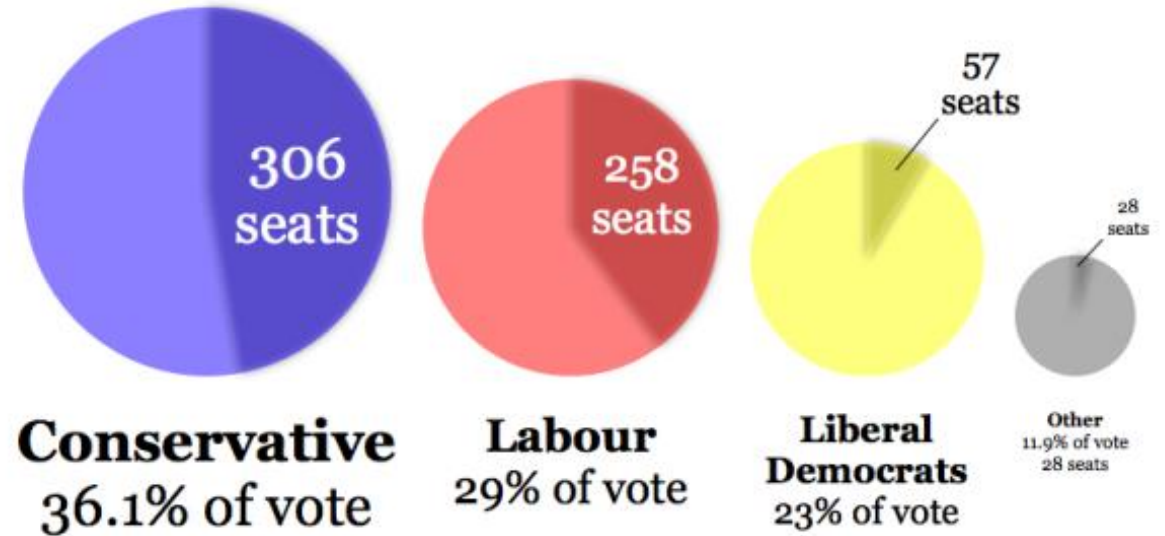
Casey ☒

14

Proportional

- Party lists
- All votes contribute to the result
- Sainte-Lague method
- D'Hondt method

Why we need Proportional Representation



Example: if 8 seats are to be allocated, divide each party's total votes by 1, then by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. An example is given in the grid below. The 8 highest distribution figures are highlighted in bold, ranging from **100,000** down to **25,000**. For each distribution figure in bold, the corresponding party gets a seat.

<i>denominator</i>	/1	/2	/3	/4	/5	/6	/7	/8	Seats won (*)
Party A	100,000*	50,000*	33,333*	25,000*	20,000	16,666	14,286	12,500	4
Party B	80,000*	40,000*	26,666*	20,000	16,000	13,333	11,428	10,000	3
Party C	30,000*	15,000	10,000	7,500	6,000	5,000	4,286	3,750	1
Party D	20,000	10,000	6,666	5,000	4,000	3,333	2,857	2,500	0

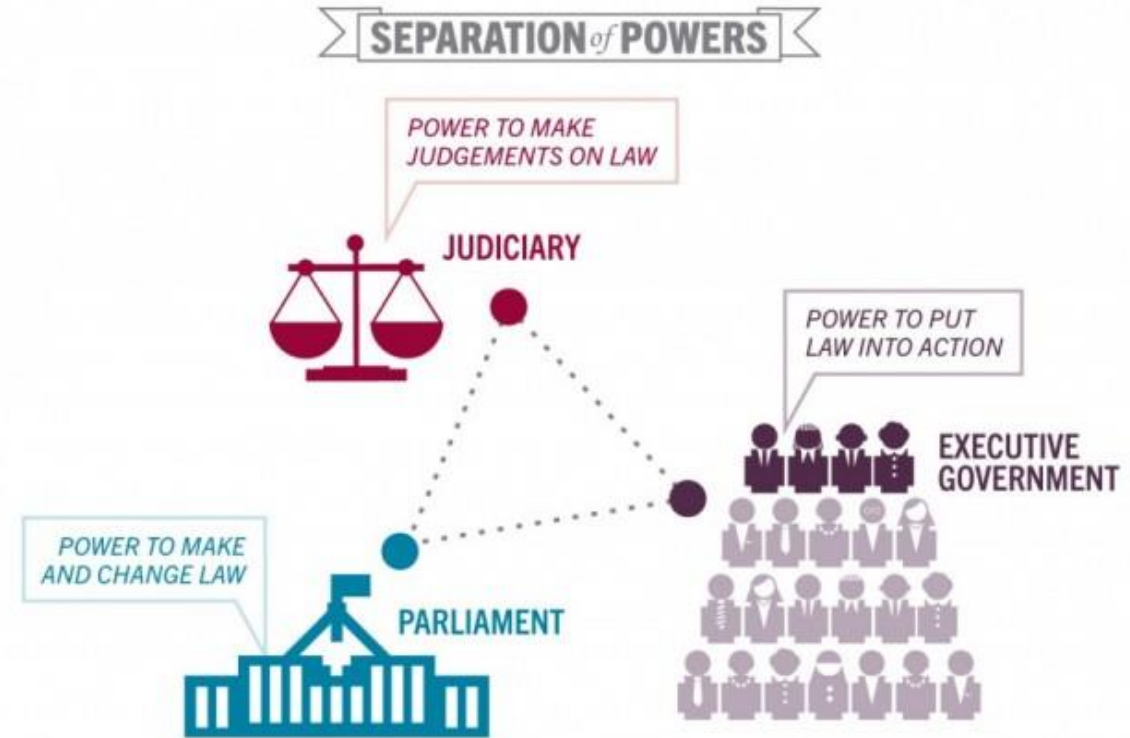
Mixed

- 2 votes / citizen
- Party list and single member list
- First – past – the – post
- Proportional
- E.g. Hungary – 199 MP:
 - 106 fptp
 - 93 proportional



Structure

- Legislative and executive
 - Derived authority and legitimacy
 - Political accountability
 - Fusion of powers
- Legislative and presidential powers
 - Veto powers
 - Dissolution of parliament
- Negative and positive legislator
 - Constitutional Courts



Legislative Power

- Legislation
- Budget
- Constitution
- Acknowledgement of international treaties
- War and peace
- Acknowledgement of churches
- Impeach presidents
 - Your country?



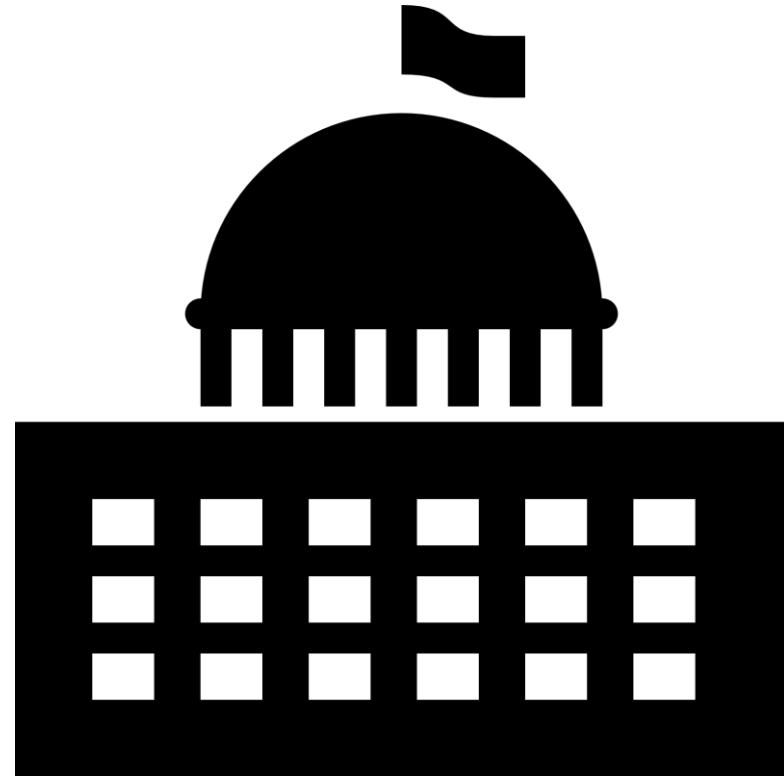
Constitution

- Legislation or different special organ (constitutional assembly)
- Adoption or amendment
- Extra-parliamentary authorization
- Direct democracy's possible role
- Eternity clauses
- Stability of constitutions



Composition

- Uni/monocameral
- Bicameral
 - Federal
 - Regional
 - Corporative
 - Aristocratic
 - Representative



Parliament of England

- House of Commons
 - 650 members
 - First-past-the-post
 - Universal adult suffrage
 - (at least) every 5 years
 - Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition
 - Since 1642 no monarch on a sitting



Parliament of England

- House of Lords
 - 799 seats
 - From 1949 less power
 - No money bills debated
 - Delaying powers
 - Independent Supreme Court from 2009
 - Life peerage
 - Hereditary members



US Congress

- House of Representatives
 - 435 members
 - 2-year term
 - Represent the people of a single constituency
 - Minimum 1/state
 - Election systems different
- Senate
 - 100 members
 - 6 years



US Congress

- Powers:
 - Equal partners with unique powers
 - Impeachment
 - Budget
 - Taxes
 - National defense
 - Establish post offices



Parliament of Germany

Bundestag

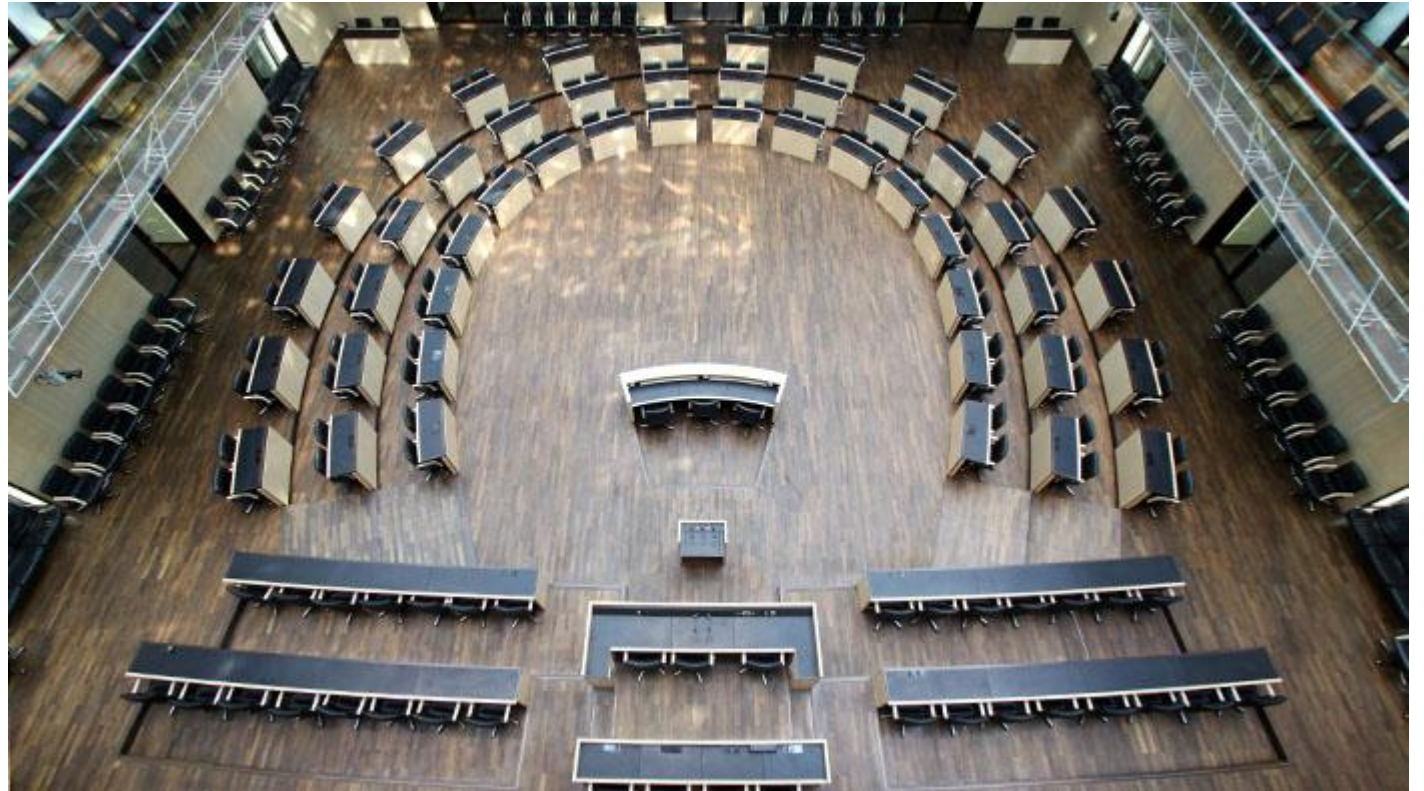
- 709 members
- 4 years
- Mixed system of constituency and list voting
- Legislation
- Election of the chancellor
- Half – directly
- Half – lists



Parliament of Germany

Bundesrat

- 69 members
- Delegated by the state governments
- Degressive proportionality (min. 3, max. 6)
- All legislative initiatives
- Approval for every Land-related question
- Suspensive veto



Parliament of France

- National Assembly
 - 577 members
 - Single-member constituency
 - 2-round voting
 - 5 years
 - Vote of no-confidence
 - 1958 – increased power of the Executive
- Senate
 - 348 members
 - Indirect election
 - Territorial collectivities and French citizens living abroad
 - Nearly the same powers



The Legislative power and the Constitutional Court

- Positive and negative law-making
- Control of constitutionality
 - Ex ante
 - Ex post
- Cassation
- Prohibition of application



Questions for Self-check

1. What are the roots of the legislative power?
2. What is a referendum?
3. What is the first-past-the post system?
4. What is the proportional system?
5. What is the mixed system?
6. What is the relationship between the legislative power and the other branches?
7. What are the most important roles of the legislative power?
8. What do you know about bicameral parliaments?
9. What do you know about the Parliament of England?
10. What do you know about the German Federal Parliament?

Resources

- Handbook: A Guide to Parliamentary Practice, Inter-Parliamentary Union, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- Systems of Government: Parliamentarism and Presidentialism by Jose Cheibub
- Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2006

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