

# Parliamentary and Presidential Systems

# PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

- Form of government found in most countries
- The only votes that people vote are for members of parliament
- The executive is chosen and set up by parliament

# PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

## Characteristics:

Parliament of representatives chosen by electorate; often 200-several hundred in size; only elected body; bills passed in parliament are law (no one has veto power)

Executive part of government (similar to US's presidential branch) is made up of a cabinet of men and women who are selected by parliament; take on executive powers in addition to legislative responsibilities; often in majority political party

# CHARACTERISTICS OF PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

Executive members only stay in positions while have the “confidence” (support) of the Parliament majority; a vote of no confidence can lead to the fall of the government and a new election

# CHARACTERISTICS OF PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

The Executive leader can dissolve parliament and call for new elections just as the parliament can call no confidence and remove the executive; a new election can lead to a new distribution of power,

# HEADS OF STATE

- Purely symbolic figure
- Often a monarch (example: England)
- Ceremonial and symbolic leader
- Usually only occurs with Parliamentary systems

# THE CABINET

- Leaders chosen by majority party
- If not clear majority party, a coalition is formed and a compromise reached to choose the leaders
- Cabinet must be able to control what is going on in Parliament.

# Parliamentary system (Head of State – Head of Government)

Parliamentary systems usually have a clear differentiation between the **head of government** and the **head of state**, with the head of government being the **prime minister** or **premier**, and the head of state often being a **figurehead**, often either a **president** (elected either popularly or by the parliament) or a **hereditary monarch** (often in a **constitutional monarchy**).

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# Parliamentary system (Head of State – Head of Government)

Constitutional Monarchies: UK, Denmark, Sweden, Japan...

Parliamentary Republics: Ireland, Germany, India, Italy....



# Parliamentary system (Seperation of powers)

**Parliamentary systems** are characterized by no clear (cut) **separation of powers** between the executive and legislative branches, leading to a different set of checks and balances compared to those found in **presidential systems**.

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# Parliamentary system

- **Parliamentary systems**, unlike presidential systems, are typified by a **fusion of powers between the legislative and executive** branches.
- The Prime Minister is the chief executive
  - The Prime Minister may be elected to the legislature in the same way that all other members are elected.
  - The Prime Minister is the **leader of the party that wins** the majority of votes to the legislature (either de facto, or in some cases through an election held by the legislature).
  - The Prime Minister appoints Cabinet Ministers.

# Parliamentary system

- However, unlike in the presidential systems, **these members are typically themselves legislative members** from the ruling party or ruling coalition.
- Thus, in a parliamentary system, the constituency of the executive and legislature are the same.
- If the **ruling party is voted out** of the legislature, the executive also changes.
- **Continued cooperation** between the executive and legislature is required for the government **to survive and to be effective** in carrying out its programs.
- **The UK represents the strongest** form of parliamentarism (sometimes referred to as the Westminster system).

# Parliamentary Systems

- Only one elected body: a parliament of representatives. Its bills are law.
- Cabinet only serves **as long as there is parliamentary confidence**. A **“Vote of Confidence”** can be called at any time, and a majority vote can unseat the existing cabinet (**“government falling”**) and call for a new one to be formed.
- But the cabinet can also hold the parliament in check. The leader of the cabinet (Prime minister, premiere, etc.) can disband a parliament and call for new elections.

# Parliamentary Systems

- **Advantages:**

- Always unified government. Power is unified under a majority party so government can respond quickly and decisively.
- Greater party discipline
- No veto power
- Clear lines of responsibility – voters know who to blame/reward

- **Disadvantages:**

- Divided government may be a good thing!!! Minority rights get washed away
- What if there's no clear majority? Then coalition governments must be formed between the main parties, and cabinet positions are divided up accordingly.

# Presidential system

A presidential system is a **system of government** where an **executive branch** exists and governs separately from the **legislature**, to which it is not **accountable** and which cannot, in normal circumstances, **dismiss**.



# Presidential System

- In a **presidential system**, the President is the big „guy“.
  - The President, who is the chief executive as well as the symbolic head of government, is chosen by **a separate election from that of the legislature**.
  - The President then appoints his or her cabinet of ministers (or "secretaries" in US parlance).
- Ministers/Secretaries usually **are not simultaneously members** of the legislature, although their appointment may require the advice and consent of the legislative branch.
  - Because the senior officials of the executive branch are separately elected or appointed, the presidential political system **is characterized by a separation of powers**, wherein the executive and legislative branches **are independent** of one another.

# Presidential System

- Presidents have great control over their cabinet appointees who serve at the President's pleasure, and who are usually selected for reasons other than the extent of their parliamentary support (as in parliamentary systems).
  - In general, the Prime Minister is more constrained to represent his/her parliamentary party in the Cabinet.
- The U.S. represents the strongest form of presidentialism, in the sense that the powers of the executive and legislative branches are separate, and legislatures (national and state) often have significant powers.

# Full Presidential Systems



United States



Afghanistan



Argentina



Brazil



Ghana



Myanmar



Philippines



Costa Rica



Kenya



Mexico



Nigeria



Zimbabwe



Maldives



Liberia



South Sudan



Uruguay



Bolivia



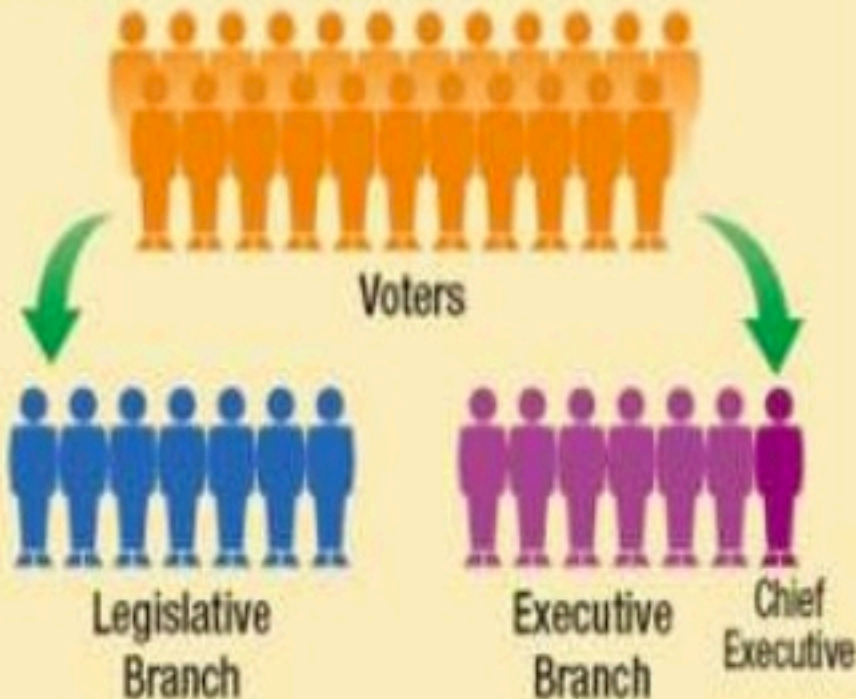
Indonesia

# Presidential versus Parliamentary

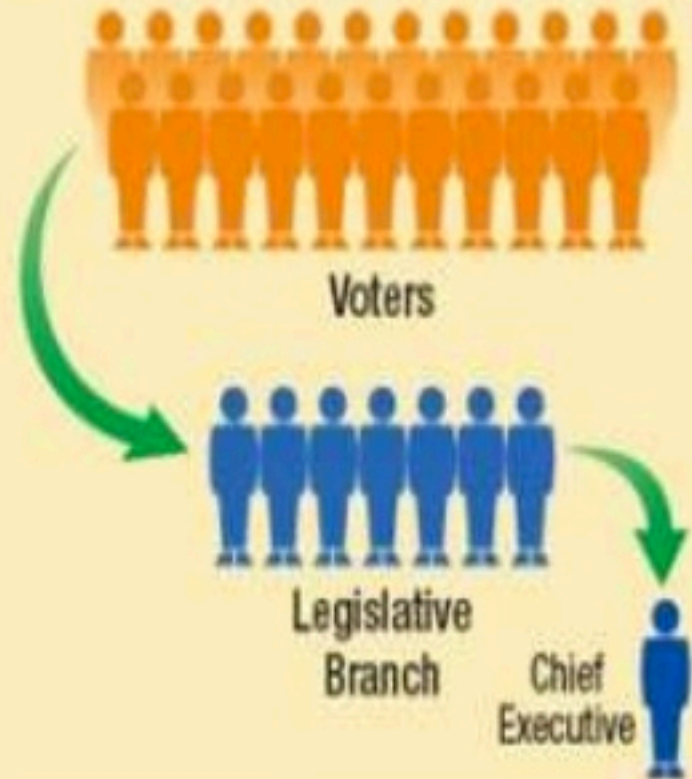
- The key distinction is the **Separation of Powers**
- In parliamentary systems, **the chief executive's term of office is directly linked with that of the legislature**, while in presidential systems the terms are not linked.
- Furthermore – and related to the first point, above– there are differences in party systems/structures/politics/elections.

# Presidential and Parliamentary Governments

**The Presidential Relationship** Voters elect the Legislature and the Chief Executive who is part of the Executive Branch. The legislature and executive are independent and coequal.



**The Parliamentary Relationship** Voters elect the Legislature. The Chief Executive is drawn from the Legislature.



## PRESIDENTIAL

- division of powers
- independent branches
- president = head of state
- president = head of gover.
- USA, Mexico

## PARLIAMENTARY

- power concentration
- legislature - great power
- president/monarch
- prime minister = head of gov.
- Sweden, Germany

# Differences

- Separation of powers: in a **presidential system** presidents and members of the legislature are **separately elected** for a given length of time.
  - Presidents have **no authority to remove members of the legislature**.
  - Premature removal of either legislative members or the President **can only be initiated by a vote in the lower legislative chamber** and under particular conditions.
  - Thus, under normal circumstances, even if the political **party** that the President represents **becomes a minority** in either or both houses of the legislature, the **President will remain in his position** for the full term for which he was elected.

# Differences

- In a **parliamentary system**, the Prime Minister can be removed from office in two ways.
  - **1-The first is through a 'no-confidence' motion, which is typically filed by the opposition or a coalition of opposition parties.**
    - The no confidence motion calls for a vote in the legislature to demonstrate that the legislature no longer has confidence in the Prime Minister and his cabinet of Ministers.
    - If the vote passes by a majority, the Executive, including the Prime Minister, is forced to step down. Since the Prime Minister and his cabinet of ministers are members of the legislature, this brings about new legislative elections. **The term of the Prime Minister, therefore, is generally linked to that of the rest of the legislature.**



# Differences

- 2- However, the Prime Minister can be removed by his/her own party members, in a setting outside of the legislature.
  - For example, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was removed by party vote and replaced by John Major during the Conservative Party caucus.
  - Such a removal, whereby the party decides to change its leader, does not force legislative elections.

# The semi-presidential system

The **semi-presidential system**, also known as the presidential-parliamentary system, or premier-presidential system, is a **system of government** in which a **president** and a **prime minister** are both active participants in the day-to-day administration of the state

It differs from a **parliamentary republic** in that it has a popularly elected **head of state** who is more than a purely ceremonial **figurehead**. It differs from the **presidential system** in that the **cabinet**, although named by the president, is **responsible** to the **legislature**, which may force the cabinet to resign through a **motion of no confidence**.

# The semi-presidential system

- The term **hybrid** generally refers to a system with a separately elected President **who shares executive power with the Prime Minister**.
  - The President usually has the constitutional power to select the Prime Minister.
  - If the constitution and/or political circumstances tend to place the emphasis on the powers of the President, it is sometimes termed a **semi-presidential system**.
  - If, on the other hand, the Prime Minister and the legislative leaders enjoy more power than the President does, it may be referred to as a **semi-parliamentary system**.

# The semi-presidential system

- For political reasons, Presidents generally appoint leaders of the ruling coalition to the post of Prime Minister, although they are not required to do so constitutionally.
- The Prime Minister **may or may not be a member of the President's political party**, depending upon what party or coalition of parties maintains the majority in the legislature.

# The semi-presidential system

- The French system is the hybrid model most often cited as a semi-presidential system.
- In the French system, the President has broad powers.
  - For example, **the President nominates the Prime Minister and selects his own cabinet**, over which he presides. The President and his cabinet attending bureaucracy initiate and draft most legislation.
- The French President, like some others in hybrid systems, has some areas where his power is well defined, such as in the **conduct of foreign affairs**.
- **The day to day running of the government** is, however, left to the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

# The semi-presidential system

- Unlike in a parliamentary system, the legislature in France cannot force the resignation of the President.
- Rather, the President may dissolve the parliament's Lower House, the National Assembly (but not the upper house, Senate).
- Further, the President appoints, and can remove the Prime Minister, who is effectively the head of the cabinet.
- Similar to the parliamentary model, the National Assembly can also force the government (the Prime Minister and legislative leaders) to resign by passing a motion of censure.

# The semi-presidential system

- Thus, in the French model, while the Prime Minister is vulnerable to removal from both the legislature and the President, **the President cannot be removed prior to the end of his/her electoral term.**

	<b>US Presidential</b>	<b>UK – Westminster parliamentary</b>	<b>French Hybrid</b>
<b>Who makes up the Executive Branch?</b>	Separately Elected President, Cabinet nominated by the President and confirmed by the legislature  (Cabinet members cannot simultaneously be members of legislature, and vice-versa)	<b>Prime Minister</b> ; PM and <b>Cabinet</b> elected by the majority party in the legislature The Cabinet, or Ministers, are members of the legislature. A <b>Monarch</b> is head of state (mostly ceremonial).	Separately elected <b>President</b> with strong powers chooses a <b>Cabinet and Prime Minister</b> who presides over the legislature. (The President presides over the Cabinet, who cannot be members of the legislature.)
<b>Can the legislature remove the executive, and vice-versa?</b>	Legislature cannot remove the President, except under extreme conditions, and the president cannot dissolve the legislature.	The legislature dissolves the chief executive and cabinet through a vote of no confidence, forcing new parliamentary elections.	The legislature cannot remove the President, but can dissolve parliament, removing the Prime Minister and cabinet. The President can dissolve the lower house.
<b>Bodies involved in the legislative process?</b>	Upper House: Senate Lower House: House Govt. cabinet departments assist in drafting bills, but most originate via committees in legislature; President can veto legislation, which can be overridden by 2/3 vote of both houses.	Upper: House of Lords Lower: House of Commons The government (Prime Minister, cabinet and bureaucracy) Occasionally bills referred to select committees for consultation.	Upper: Senate Lower: National Assembly President; Prime Minister and cabinet appointed by PM who sits in the legislature (can be MPs).
<b>Who Initiates Legislation?</b>	Both Houses Executive can draft legislation but a member must introduce it.	Executive and Both Houses, but MPs can't introduce bills that affect govt. spending or taxation. Can only amend on technical grounds. Executive-initiated bills take precedence over member bills.	Executive and both Houses, Appointed bodies, such as the Economic and Social commission make recommendations on drafting legislation. MPs cannot introduce any bill that raises or reduces expenditures. Executive-initiated bills take precedence over member bills.