SOMALI SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Topic 7 Political Parties

Part 1 Introduction and overview

A political party is defined as an organization of people who share the same views about the way power should be used in a country.

Parties are designed to attract ideas for good governance of a country, to gather support for these policies, and to select candidates to pass policies into law.

Since the first wave of democratisation in 1974[1] various forms of multiparty political systems have been introduced around the world.

In Africa, following the independence movement of the 1960s, the task of nation-building was dominated by both single party and military dictatorships. These governments often misused their authority.

Newly independent nations frequently began with the form of and hope for democracies which could build on the best of traditional and colonial influences.

The age of mass parties

In fact, the whole of the twentieth century was known as the century of parties. After WWI and WWII in Europe, increasingly politicised citizens were drawn into national politics in the hope of changing society. They saw mass parties as the way to counter powerful pre-war class and industrial forces – and as a way of channelling social forces for good.

In Africa too, to varying degrees, the inherited idea of parties became a way of attracting mass support. These often emerged at first from the idealism and energy of key leaders. They involved allegiances as much to social groupings, such as the working class socialist parties, as to ideas.

Organisations to counter and channel social forces

In older democracies, parties were no longer seen as in-fighting groups (factions) within parties but a successful way to organise. European socialised medical schemes, in which the risks of sickness and accident were covered by an overall tax, were just one result of parties' demands for change.

The mainstream way to achieve change became the exchange of ideas, debated throughout party-based elections. Party rules were established and set in constitutions and then voted on in representative assemblies.

Partial public funding was introduced to make party organisations possible, without removing the need to seek widespread support from ordinary people. This public support could be financial, intellectual or practical.

Origins and advantages of parties

The advantages of party politics over independent or direct representation can be summed up in the word 'power'. And the historical origins of parties reveal how this power advantages was discovered and was later further developed.

Parties originated in a dispute over power that England's King had with the 'mother of all parliaments.' The king believed parliament's members wanted to take for themselves his god-given right to rule: the 'divine right of kings.' Two parties made up of then members of Parliament formed around this issue: the 'Tories' who were loyal to the king, and the 'Whigs' who favoured increased power for parliament.

Parties for emerging nations in 'the new world'

In the so-called new world of North America, parties formed in the 19th century on both sides of the issue of federalism. Federalists were for unity in a diversity of states, Jeffersonians (later Republicans) favoured independent state governance.

In Africa from 1970 to 1990, two different forces were at work: (i) the break- down of existing systems of governance and (ii) the consolidation of **dominant-party** and **two-party systemsof government.**

Since 1990 there has been increasing awareness of party **selectorates**[2]. With this awareness of 'the choice before the choice' has come greater examination of ways in which party choices of leaders can be more effective.

Since then there has also been a worldwide move away from two party systems to **multi-party systems**. The advantages of ideas produced by the increased competition of multi-party systems became more obvious although there were other factors to consider. This was especially true in countries able to harness the political power necessary to pass reforms, while retaining the stability achievable by involving a greater cross-section of society.

Parties do deliver change

Motivating and unifying large numbers of people is always a challenge. But by and large, party politics did deliver well supported social change.

What are the main functions of parties?

Parties, then, can be said to have four distinct functions:

- to direct government
- to provide ways in which electoral choices can be made
- to recruit competent and skilful leaders
- to bring together interest groups to establish the best policies

More modern studies have also argued the scope of party activities could be widened, especially for emerging democracies :

- to incorporate community building (Salih 1999: 355-6)[3].

De-colonisation and dominance by single parties

After their 1960s de-colonisations, many African governments inherited democratic models of parliament. Unless experienced in party politics, however, many governments became puppet governments of dictator presidents. Parliaments were dissolved, armies took over power and states became dominated by single parties.

In Africa, then, parties generally became instruments of government, not means of holding governments to account. Partly because of this, parties' organisation remained weak. This often resulted in poorly thought out policies and dominance by strong or Big Man leaders.

Types of party systems

Today elected governments are usually divided into:

1) two-party systems or

2) multi-party systems. Historically two-party systems have been the most common. These two usually formed as 'sides' for and against a serious single issue, or a small number of significant issues.

Third parties do form. And sometimes scores of others, especially in times of transition. However third parties were often excluded from power by winner- take-all election systems, even if they were able to achieve a sizable minority of votes. Or they collapsed after electoral defeats.

Condemned never to hold parliamentary power in two-party systems, minor parties justified their existence as a way of raising 'grass roots' issues. Their policies, if able to be publicly spelled out, could theoretically be absorbed into the **party platform** of either or both of the two main parties. In practice, however, many ideas and pressing concerns were excluded by this system.

1 Huntington, S. (1991) The Third Wave: Democratisation in the late Twentieth Century (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press).

2 Rahat, G. (2007) Candidate Selection: The Choice before the Choice.' Journal of Democracy (18) 157- 71.

3 Salih, M. (1999). Environmental policies and politics in Eastern and Southern Africa'. Environmental Planning, Policies and Globalisation and Sustainable Policies in Developing Countries, 355-6

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PART 2: Internal party structures and functions

The aims of parties

Like any organisation, parties exist to make peoples' aims more likely to succeed whether at local, regional or national levels.

Successful parties focus on specific short-term and long-term goals including:

- Identifying issues
- selecting candidates
- winning elections
- sustaining members' sense of purpose
- maintaining unity

The priority of these depends on the stage in the electoral cycle and the health of the organisation.

Different parties, then, are united by a common cause and distinct policies. Their members have common interests – such as making a living off the land, from the ocean or by small industries – and usually want similar services from governments. Ethnic parties are based more on allegiances to own-clan leaders than to policies, though this lessens over time especially in urban areas.[4]

Practically, a mix of paid staff and volunteers is usually required at all levels and within nationwide local groupings or 'branches'. However, while parties are united by agreed-on aims and similar rules, some branches naturally become more organised, focused and numerically stronger than others.

Goals, strategic plans and life expectancy

Sometimes party organisation lasts only long enough to achieve specific goals. In other instances the organisation 'shell' can be empty until needed, from election to election. This kind of party structure is typical in the US which is characterised by a high degree of organisation for a limited shell-life. Successful parties have a centralised base responsible for making decisions on policy priorities. They also have overall strategies, such as how to:

- Manage campaign advertising
- have strong communication and co-ordination with regional and local branches
- devise convincing policies
- have a recognisable 'brand'

Centralised parties also do the following:

- select candidates
- support local branch initiatives that work
- devise action plans
- tailor objectives to suit local conditions and needs

Similar to business franchises: freedom at local levels

How parties are organised or set up is very important. Freedom at local level, having **autonomy**[5] similar to business franchises, encourages initiatives and maximum participation. And if set up well enough as 'shell' parties they can be filled from time to time by new generations of ideas and leaders.

Changing to stay relevant

In industrialised countries, media-based election campaigns and other influences have resulted in huge reductions of mass party membership. To stay relevant, therefore, parties are changing the way they operate.

Also, studies have revealed how a **clique** of leaders or ruling elite can dominate at party level[6].

In newer democracies, however, systems are beginning to operate more flexibly. The 'iron law' predicting that all organisations become elitist over time[7] may not apply to modern conditions or set-ups that are responsive to feed-back, or is becoming more flexible.

Loyalty to parties replaced by other political virtues

Modern parties no longer need to rely on a base of full-time members. Such groupings such as religious ones and trade unions, which previously made up some parties' base, have either been weakened by globalised forces – or no longer see loyalty to one party as serving their needs.

Increasingly, parties of all types are using new social media to raise funds and mobilise volunteers for short-term activities. These activities include public awareness or election campaigns on a task-specific, need-to-do basis.[8]

A major task is candidate selection for leadership roles

A major task of parties is the selection of suitable candidates for positions in an assembly or parliament is. Another major task is the elections, directly or indirectly, of leader of the party.

There are a limited number of ways to do this, depending on who decides the best candidates – and on what basis.

Some countries are very inclusive, with the leader of the party being decided by both the party membership plus the already elected members of parliament/assembly.

Other parties leave the election of their leader to those s/he will directly lead in the day-to-day running of the party (or parties) in power: the government MPs or the party/parties in opposition.[9]

Recognised leaders who can act locally, think nationally

The process of putting up suitable candidates begins at the local level. Individuals who consider themselves to have the ideas, skills and capacity to serve others, give their names to party officials. Or are 'shoulder-tapped' for future roles.

If individuals have been leaders in a clan organisation, they may already have arisen within a community and been recognised as 'leader material.' Others may have flourished or distinguished themselves in different traditions, or bring experience and education from other countries.

If a country's electoral system is a proportionate one, a national list of candidates is ranked in order of competence and seniority. A central committee usually approves the final order, even if candidates are suggested locally.

Those already in office have been shown statistically to have a better chance of re-selection.

Majorities and pluralities

Even where the electoral system uses a winning majority (called a plurality)[10], the method for candidate selection for a local party is usually from a pre-qualifying list of approved candidates. Those with a high local profile are most often favoured.

Today, the number of countries using a **mixed electorate system** is increasing. This means electors have the chance to vote both from a **party list** and from a district candidate list. (In this case, the usual 'one-person-one- vote' becomes 'one-person-two-votes' – but with one outcome or result.)

In mixed systems, individual politicians put themselves forward to be a 'list MP' or an elected MP. Elected MPs get into parliament if they get the most votes from all those registered in the electorate.

List MPs

If a proportional system is used, or a whole-list one, some MPs on party lists do gain seats without being directly elected. In proportionate systems this happens when the number of electorate seats won is below the number won as decided by the proportion of votes cast nationwide. In this case more MPs are added to 'top-up' to the proportionate national number.

More experienced MPs can, and most often wisely do, put themselves up for both electorate and list MPs. For if they do get voted out by their own electorate, they may still get into parliament as experienced MPs because 1) the seats needs topping up and 2) they are still deservedly at the top of their party list.

Leadership selection: the choice before the choice

This selection process within parties, for MP candidates and a party leader, is now getting more attention around the democratic world.

In many ways these selections by a **selectorate** are 'the choice before the choice'as those who nominate candidates can be seen as gatekeepers to the citadel of power.

And as party leaders also become PMs or presidents, and then front the party's election campaign, it is important to understand how this process promotes or blocks leaders.

4 Erdmann (2004:71) claims that full-fledged ethnic parties, far from being the rule in Africa, are actually exceptions. Several African parties were formed and backed by people of different cultural backgrounds, somehow cross-cutting ethnic divides. These parties may take the form of a full- fledged trans-ethnic party (a "congress party"), characterised by the goal of promoting the integration and coalition of voters or parties that refer to different communities.

5 The ability to make independent decisions under the 'brand' of a centralised or parent organisation.

6 Michels, R. (1911) [1962 edn] Political Parties (New York: Free Press). Often expressed as 'Who says organisation, says oligarchy.'

7 Michel's 'iron law of oligarchy' argued that in Europe this tendency to rule by and for the few was common, even in parties formally committed to democracy.

8 Kreis, D. (2012) Taking Our Country Back: The Crafting of Networked Politics from Howard Dean to Barack Obama (New York: Oxford University Press).

9 The generic term 'opposition' is the general name for all MPs who won seats in parliament but who do not belong to the party who won the election.

10 The differing ways of defining – or setting – a majority are given in the hypertext on majorities.

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Part 3 How Parties can be Hijacked – and reinvented.

Parties in authoritarian states

In post-independence Africa of the 1960s, nationalist leaders soon did away with political competition and established one-party states. There were many justifications for this.

These included a need felt by many leaders to commit to action and unity so as to improve the country with less 'squabbling'. In some countries a tradition of the benevolent chief was invoked to justify one party rule on the grounds that it reflected the direct rule of a single chief.[11]

Responsive policies results from competition among parties

Such models, and reasoning, produced little fresh policy. There was little opportunity for input from ordinary people to be later refined by competitive debate. Leaders seldom responded to issues brought to their attention by representative **focus groups** or **polling** or courageous MPs.

Single parties often neglected to respond to the needs of rural regions or minorities, unless MPs came from them. Also, when not dominated by a national leader, single parties mostly lacked direction or autonomy.

Due to a lack of grassroots organisation, these parties usually collapse when their leaders disappear. A case in point is Ghana's Convention People's Party, founded by President Nkrumah, which collapsed in 1966 when he was overthrown.

Many parties do not necessarily make for multi-party democracy

The leaders of one-party states can also build up dominating organisations unrestricted by public accountability. Even when dominating states put up a number of parties, these parties often lack a genuine demographic. They are for show, and have little real autonomy.

Citing the importance of progress, state leaders like these dominate more and more aspects of citizens' lives, including electoral processes. The result is a lack of transparency.

Singapore from 1959 to 1990 is such a case. The 'PAP state,' the People's Action Party, increasingly used control of public resources to shut out or side-line opposition ideas.[12]

Parties as a means of governing not as channels for people-power

Some ruling monarchies, particularly in the Middle East, have no parties at all. The mere existence of a party, therefore, is not necessarily a sign of voter choice. Nor is the presence of parties a sign that power has devolved to the people.

Dictators often use the party as a 'shield and instrument of power,' a cover for their personal rule and 'a technique for distributing patronage.' In such countries, parties are a means of governing. That is, they do 'the work of government as directed by other agents with greater power (the military or the demagogue and his entourage).'[13]

In communist regimes, too, parties are instruments of power. Instead of being a means to create responsive policy, these regimes are united more by ambition. Common features of these regimes are:

- privileged employment opportunities
- patron-client networks.

Parties as instruments of power not vehicles for policy

In competitive authoritarian regimes parties become shells for powerful presidents and other ambitious politicians. In fact, in any country where there is a weak party structure – or one that doesn't exist from election to election – the public's trust in party accountability falls dramatically.[14]

The result is cynicism towards party systems and in the political process in general. Also there is disengagement, for the prime purpose of parties is undermined. In these authoritarian regimes, presidents have been known to start parties just before (re-) election campaigns so as to corner the market in votes by excluding all competition.

Leaders in these regimes also use their executive power to buy support from state governors and the CEOs of the biggest corporations.

By using regulations about party registration and financing, such leaders can favour large parties and stooge candidates. They can thus ensure there is only one party of power. Minor parties, deprived of resources, have their ideas effectively consigned to the political desert.[15] Russia is but one present- day example of the dark arts of 'political technology'.

Parties are still relevant – with revisions and adaptations

The defining role of political parties in democracies is to select the best candidates to represent all people. These leaders can then test themselves in public elections for positions as members of assemblies. [See list of Somalia's diverse parties].

Despite a move away from mass parties, political scientists agree parties are still the most effective means of providing policy choice for voters. Parties are being redefined. However, they will remain relevant if they continue to produce leaders who are 'the best of the best'.

These leaders are now defined by how well they represent the best interests of those they are elected to represent. As vehicles for democracy, therefore, parties are capable of being redesigned to cope with modern and local conditions.

For emerging democracies, this redesign of parties can include the gradual:

- build-up of communities
- education of small groups to political awareness, especially through participation
- the prompt enactment of changes that uplift everyday lives.

FURTHER READING:

Parts IV and V are further reading on the ways parties have developed or can develop. They give examples of how parties can organise themselves, how they can adapt to local conditions, and how they can be regulated and/or restricted.

To keep the lessons user-friendly they are available here as hypertexts.

PART IV: Ways of making parties more responsive and representative

PART V: Learning from past and present systems

11 In our African tradition, there are never two chiefs; there is sometimes a natural heir to the chief but can anyone tell me that he has known a village that has two chiefs. That is why we Congolese, in the desire to conform to the traditions of our continent, have resolved to group all the energies of the citizens of our country under the banner of a single national party.

12 Tremewan, C. (1994) The Political Economy of Social Control in Singapore (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

13 Lawson, K. (2001) 'Political Parties and Party Competition', in The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World, 2ndedn, ed. J. Krieger (New York: Oxford University Press) pp. 670-3.

14 White, S. (2007) 'Russia's Client Party System', in Party Politics in New Democracies, ed. P. Webb and S. White (Oxford: Oxford University Press) pp. 21-52.

15 Kulik, A. (2007) 'Russia's Political Parties: Deep in the Shadow the President', in When Parties Prosper: T/he Uses of Electoral Success, ed. K. Lawson & P. Merkl (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner) pp. 27- 42.

Three Waves of Democratisation

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A wave of democratisation is a group of transitions from non-democratic regimes to democratic ones that occurs within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumbers transitions in the opposite direction during that period (Huntington, 1991, p. 15).

The three waves were between:

1. 1828-1926 with examples being Britain, France and the USA.
2. 1943-1962 with examples being India, Israel, Japan, West Germany.
3. 1974-1991 with examples being countries from Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, parts of Africa.

The first wave partly reversed between 1922 and 1942 (for example, fascism took hold in both Italy and Germany. Italy, led by Mussolini, was first in the 1920s).

The second wave, similarly, between 1958 and 1975 (for example, in much of Latin America and post-Colonial Africa).

Note: Many of these 'reversals' have now themselves reversed.

Africa's 'Big men' and one-party dictatorships

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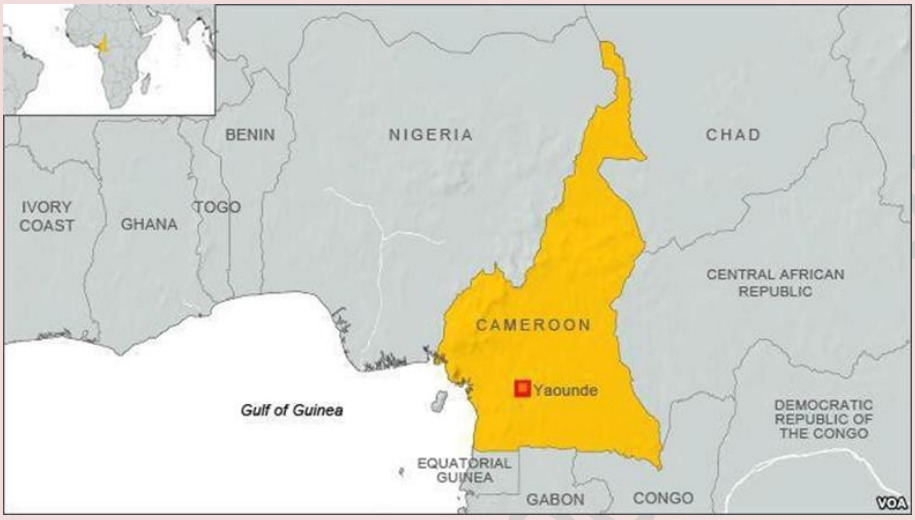
Case study: Cameroon

Cameroon's corrupt one-party regime is an example of a Big Man one-party dictatorship. President Biya has dismissed calls for a multi-party system as a 'distasteful passing fetish' and justified his one-party system with excuses familiar in Africa after the 1970s. Only a one- party state could avoid the hazards of 'tribal and regional allegiances' and ensure 'the efficient running of state machinery.'

Only when public sector employees and students protested the arrest of a prominent lawyer for trying to form an independent party did President Biya agree to parties. Then used familiar repression to crush opposition: intimidation by security forces, arrests of prominent journalists, banning opposition newspapers, violent dispersion of pro- democracy demonstrators, put the army in charge of troublesome provinces and rejected calls for a national conference.



Playing the ethnic card

After playing the 'ethnic card' by appointing advisors from his own group ('Beti barons') it was presidential elections that finally overcame: in 1992, though only winning 40 percent of the votes, the split vote of his opponents left him the victor.

In Kenya too, in the 1992s, a split vote kept an authoritarian regime in place. As observers Throup and Hornsby noted: 'What began as an apparently national contest based on ideals ended as little more than an ethnic slangin match.' Incumbent President Moi gained only 36.5 percent of the vote but his three opponents Kibaki, Odinga and Matiba split 63 percent between them. The campaign was marred by violence, intimidation, rigging, electoral malpractice and propaganda from state-owned radio and television.

Uganda's army leader Museveni's 'no-party system' ruled a rural society composed mostly of peasants with essentially the same interests.

Here distraction from real issues was also achieved by parties exploiting ethnic, regional and religious loyalties. Museveni had declared that Western-style multi-party democracy was inappropriate for Uganda because there was "no healthy basis for honest competition" and "tribalism, religion, regionalism becomes the basis for intense partisanship." He maintained the advantages of a 'no-party democracy' was it enabled individual candidates to stand for election on their merits.'

Elections – by fair means or otherwise

In practice this no-party system was little different to a one-party system.' In 1996 the first direct presidential elections Museveni gained 75 percent of the vote, said by independent observers to reflect popular opinion. However it was achieved by use of state resources including cash and cars for candidates supporting Museveni's National Resistance Movement and restrictions on any opposition parties. These included bans on public rallies, congresses, nominating candidates or campaigning on their behalf – and the harassment and intimidation of candidates favouring multi-party politics.

Subsequent to 1996, Museveni became increasingly autocratic. Just like other Big Men he ran a patronage system favouring family members and loyal supporters while blocking any real challenges to his rule.

Challenged about this by a BBC interviewer in 1992 he denied the accusations by citing his way prevented the loss of 800, 000 Ugandans murdered under General/President Amin for 'political reasons.' "This is not paternalism … just diagnosis … diagnosis with a history. We are not talking out of the air."

Biya was prime minister for seven years beginning in 1975, then became president following the resignation of the Central African state's first leader, Ahmadou Ahidjo.

President revises constitution to permit life-time power

In 2008, he revised the 1996 constitution to remove presidential term limits, allowing him to contest and win the 2011 election. Biya is now serving the fourth year in his seven-year term. Asked earlier this year if he will be a candidate in 2018, Biya said "it is not he who wants, but he who can that will be able to lead Cameroon."

Opposition parties are calling on Biya to consider stepping down when his current term ends in 2018. But there are no signs the 82-year-old president will.

But Cameroon's main opposition party, the Social Democratic Front, does not have such a rosy view of the long-time leader.

"Cameroon had seven percent economic growth in 1982 when Paul Biya became president and that the country was on a path to becoming an emerging economy like Brazil, China, Korea and Japan. But today. The economic growth rate has dropped to less than three percent. There is no democracy, no freedom of expression, falling moral standards and poor justice systems and that Paul Biya has failed," said Mbarga.

Youth leader Clarise Yimngang is skeptical Biya will heed the call not to run again. She says Biya has not helped most Cameroonians, because they remain jobless after completing their education.

"When you go to our ministries, the secretaries and people who work there were employed in the '80s. I do not want to think that the youth in this country want to go through that process any more. They go to schools with the view of getting jobs in other countries where education is valued," said Yimngang.

http://www.voanews.com/content/thirty-six-years-of-cameroon-biya-will-be-enough-activists- say/3041976.html

Meredith, M (2013) The State of Africa – A History of the Continent Since Independence, Simon & Shuster: London.

Parties and tribal identity – advantages and disadvantages

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Many of the so-called Big Men leaders who won or took power in the 1960s were still there thirty years later. Only six of 150 have voluntarily given up power. Autocratic rulers in countries like the Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Malawi, Zambia and Gabon had found ways to remain in power, often while keeping the trappings of democracy. Zambia was a country where it was impossible to run against a president who had produced 'a watertight system designed to produce only one candidate (Meredith 2013 p 380-1).

Many early African leaders appealed to citizens to vote for them by tribal identity. There are a number of consequences for this kind of voting in a democracy.

Advantages of voting along ethnic lines

The advantages of voting along clan or tribal lines are obvious for those who belong to the same tribes as the leaders:

- They know the leaders and often have a trust relationship with them
- They can usually rely on the leaders to listen to concerns they both share
- It avoids having to judge issues or policies on their merits as voters presume their leaders have their 'best interests' at heart
- There may be tangible rewards given as incentives to vote and/or endorse policies

Therefore, voters who find it difficult to understand ideas or are confused by unclear policies often vote at first for 'their man/woman' because they are from the same clan or ethnic background – rather than for the ideas they have.

However this kind of campaigning or voting on clan, tribal or ethnic lines, has many negative impacts which can backfire on both leader and voter.

Disadvantages

These negative consequences include:

- Leaders winning elections on clan loyalty alone may take their voters for granted and not deliver changes they promised – or never needed even to promise
- As loyalty to personality and clan is less demanding than loyalty to policies, voters become disenchanted with non-performing politicians and disengage from politics
- A political culture in which votes are bought, if not with actual money then with expectations of this-for-that, becomes widespread
- When favour-for-favour becomes the basis of decision-making rather than the best policies people often look the other way – or tolerate for too long lack of action, incompetency and low-level corruption
- Political parties may not feel the need to put sufficient effort into organising think tanks or conferences to ensure well thought out, do-able policies
- Leaders may play on loyalties to confuse issues that may have some tribal or clan basis but are more complex or the result of many other drivers
- Ideas from other sources are excluded or unable to emerge because loyalty becomes the prime virtue rather than careful examination of policies
- The identification of clan with leadership means negative or ethnic prejudice ethnicity can be exploited by leaders to exclude - or blame their own shortcomings on those less powerful
- Rural voters who make up the majority of voters can be excluded by urban leaders with more favours to pay back in towns - which also leads to resentment and disengagement

- Once ethnicity or clan identification becomes part of the language of politics it can inflame ancient passions and becomes a smokescreen for leaders not attending to selection on meritocracy

Positive ethnicity

All Africans have many identities, including tribal ones, and are usually proud of them. This is part of 'positive ethnicity' and local governance depends on it. Also, tribal politics was a natural first step to resist colonial forces that often manipulated differing loyalties to 'divide and rule'.

It is a generation since the genocides of Rawanda. In that state it has been made an offence to refer to ethnicity, something that is potentially punishable by five years in jail. This can be seen as a draconian solution but is one way to make the 'common good' – what is good for all not just the dominant tribes – the focus of discussion and policy.

Tribal this-for-that mentality can develop into favouritism then patronage

Most African nations struggling with the disease of corruption have realised that 'patronage,' the promising of favours for the promise of support, has been a strong factor in the spread of that disease.

More powerful tribes often produce powerful leaders in their first stages of development in democracy. And transition governments often begin with agreed-on formulas for fair tribal representation before their development into more inclusive two party then multi-party states.

For citizens of a country other identities demand different responsibilities

As young democracies develop further, and towns and cities become melting pots of many tribes, voters not turned off by corrupt politics begin to make choices based on merit – and particularly on the strength of the policies presented to them. Tribal identities remain significant culturally but geography, income, class ('socio-economic status') and other identities become more important.

Many army coup leaders including those in Somalia, Benin, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Togo and Zaire also become long-stay leaders by force, tribalism and a combination of nationalisations and socialism that delivered social services at first but disintegrated into factions and corruption.

Civic institutions take time to develop

Often united at first by struggles for independence, those that made the transition to multi- party democracies in the 1990s often underestimated the impact of lingering colonial influences. Or over-estimated the education of their people. Both of these forces often led to a fracturing of party systems that were still under-developed institutions shaped by tribal loyalties and patronage. Kenya and Zambia are case studies in this process. Now, a generation later again, Tanzania, Lesotho and Botswana are case studies in countries that have made progress in the constitutional reforms, institution of the rule of law and in finding ways to counter the corruption sickness that has become a way of life in so many African countries.

Background to development of multi-party politics in Africa[1]

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Outside pressure ends one party regimes

In the spring of 1989 'peoplepower' spelled the end of eastern dictators. And the one party state. It was the same in Kenya in the mid-80s.

At the conclusion of the cold war the Soviet Union withdrew support from client states in Africa, including Somalia.

Pressure for democratic reform came from Western governments, along with the World Bank, had concluded economic development as being held up by one party regimes that lacked the widespread support of their own citizens.

In 1990 the UK spelled out that further aid to African countries would only be given to those promoting:

- Pluralism
- Accountability
- Respect for the rule of law
- Programmes introducing human rights and
- market principles in their economies.

1991 was a watershed year – Benin leads the way

Then in 1991 Benin became the first African state where peoplepower, ordinary civilians, forced the army from power and the first African country in which a standing president was convincingly defeated in free and fair elections.

However, in the following years power struggles between Africa's Big Men leaders and opposition groups, all sides appealed to ethnic loyalties rather than promoting cross-ethnic policy ideas. Benin's northern tribes voted for northern leaders and southerners for theirs.

There was no shortage of promises. Often agreement to national conferences stimulated roadmaps for the journey to multiparty democracy.

Zaire agrees to multi-party system … but then reneges

Zaire's leader, Mobutu, agreed to replace the 23 years old party system with a multi- party one, beginning with a national conference. After constant delays he manipulated the levers of power to win dubious elections and retained control of the army. Positively more than 200 parties were formed, not all of them fronts for Mobutu and his allies.

By 1993, however, Mubutu had reverted to Big Man tactics. Though consultations took place, Mobutu was not known for taking advice. "The chief is the chief," he is reported to have said. "(He is) The eagle who flies high and cannot be touched by the spit of the toad."

This extent of this disdain ranged from creating ethnic divisions, stacking governments with his own ethnic group to provoking ethnic violence and ethnic cleansing by expelling opposition leaders and their followers from their homes.

Ghana in 1992 provides another example of leaders retaining power though outwardly agreeing to multi-party reforms. After lifting an 11 year old ban on political parties, only six months was given for them to prepare for elections. Monopolising government resources, typical of dictators, enabled Jerry Rawlings to dominate the elections and to head a one party state.

Big man democracy often replaced Big Man rule

A brief survey of Africa's political history, therefore, shows that development of democracies is not guaranteed and certainly never a straight line. Big Man rule was often replaced with Big Man democracy, with not a lot of differences between them.

In the first five years of the early 1990s, then, most of the one party systems in Africa were challenged and eventually dismantled. These included Benin, Congo-Brazzaville, the Central African Republic, Mali, Chad and Ethiopia. But often this transition was to a new breed of dictators now more skilled at the appearances of democracy and milking foreign aid.

Although many regime changes occurred in the 1990s, the large militaries waiting in the wings – or at centre stage – were still a decisive fact of African political life.

Military rulers with levers on political power

Military rulers who won presidential elections in Guinea, Burkino Faso, Equitorial Guinea and Mauritania joined a new breed of dictators who used the leverage of government resources to reinstall previously successful systems of patronage and patrimonialism.

This perversion of democracy brought no change to the economic crises faced by most African states.

Many pressures for change to multi-party systems

Pressures from donor countries, combined with those from university students, civic and political groups , as well as form Church groups working from 'all equal under God' ideals, each had an impact on the change to multi-party systems.

The pressure to allow greater political competition so as to produce governments more inclusive of all groupings in society has come up against the realities of a poor country with a thin middle class, widespread illiteracy and inadequate capitalisation for development.

1 Meredith, M (2013) The State of Africa – A History of the Continent Since Independence, Simon & Shuster: London.

Advantages and disadvantages of 2-party systems for selected African countries

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At least five observations can be taken from the table, according to the authors.[1]

African party systems – what can be learned from them?		
No.	Country	Major political parties, including the two dominant parties
1	Benin	Union for Future Benin, Benin Rebirth Party, Democratic Renewal Party, African Movement for Development and Progress
2	Cape Verde	African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV), Movement for Democracy (MPD), Independent and Democratic Cape Verdean Union (UCID), Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), Social Democratic Party (PSD)
3	Ghana	Convention People's Party, Democratic People's Party, National Convention Party, National Independence Party, New Patriotic Party, People's Convention, United Ghana Movement
4	Kenya	Kenya African National Union, National Rainbow Coalition
5	Seychelles	Democratic Party, Seychelles National Party, Seychelles People's Progressive Front
6	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone People's Party, All People's Congress, Peace and Liberation Party
7	Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)

1. Not all two-party systems have emerged from a truly democratic experience. The best example here is Zimbabwe, where the Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), which became known for its capacity for electoral fraud, intimidation of voters and outright intimidation and imprisonment of political opponents, has kept the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) at bay for too long.

2. The two-party system is not immune from engendering severe conflicts leading to state collapse, particularly in situations where the ethnic advantage of one political party vis-à-vis the other may lead to the opposition becoming impatient and resorting to the military as a way of advancing civilian politics. The case of Sierra Leone speaks volumes to this possibility.

3. Two-party systems are indicative of highly polarized ideological differences which in some cases undermine the smaller political parties; larger parties use (or rather abuse) them for their own political convenience. Kenya's National Rainbow Coalition and Kenya African National Union (KANU) offer a glaring example of this. However, although the future of the National Rainbow Coalition is uncertain, given the current internal squabbles which have marred the relationship between some of its coalition partners, the likelihood that it will maintain some strong presence in Kenyan politics cannot be ruled out.

4. It is not inevitable that two-party systems develop into a multiparty system or a dominant-party system. For example, following the first multiparty democracy elections in Mozambique, Frelimo gained and the Mozambican National Resistance (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, Renamo), which hinted at the possibility that the country was developing in the direction of a two-party system. However, following elections, Frelimo won votes and Renamo lost votes, and this tilted the balance towards a dominant-party system (the subject of the next subsection).

5. Two-party systems are not in themselves guarantors of political stability or otherwise, despite the fact that they are signifiers of polarized pluralism. Consider, for example, the political stability and almost near-perfect

transition in Benin, as contrasted with the political turmoil of pre-civil war Sierra Leone and the current brutal and unwelcome development in Zimbabwe.

Conclusions:

Although two-party systems displays a tendency towards adversarial politics rather than consensus and compromise (as in multi-party systems), the development of two-party systems in Africa "could be welcome, particularly from a national integration viewpoint."

Multi-party systems are more prone to ethnic and regional conflicts whereby each group creates its own political parties, leading to fragile conflicts whereby each group creates its own political parties, leading to fragile coalition politics at best and political instability at worst.

There is also the possibility that smaller political parties, although they provide a mechanism for electoral participation, will be marginalized by larger political parties, contributing to distrust of politics and politicians in the event of massive 'floor-crossing'.

In Africa, where there are a large number of ethnically-based parties, a form of 'moderate pluralism' operates within parties. That is, ideological differences between major parties are not so large so there is a tendency for parties to form coalitions and move to the centre ground of politics.

Adapted from a 2007 IDEA research article Source: Mohamed Salih, M. A., African Political Parties: Evolution, Institutionalization and Governance (London: Pluto Press, 2003)

Lesotho – Africa's First MMP Electoral System

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Lesotho: Africa's First MMP Electoral System

The result of the ordinary National Assembly elections in Lesotho in May 1998 was very clear. The governing Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) won an overwhelming electoral victory, taking 79 of the 80 seats in the National Assembly.

The only problem was that LCD had only received the support of slightly over 60 per cent of the electorate. The result in terms of number of seats won was yet another example of how the FPTP electoral system can lead to remarkable discrepancies between the share of the vote and the share of the seats won by political parties. A discrepancy of this kind should not come as a surprise–it had happened before–but it was followed by the losing parties, and especially the main opposition party, the Basotho National Party (BNP), crying 'Foul'. This was also nothing new, but was a sad surprise that the accusations about the overall correctness of the 1998 election results (which were never seriously challenged), some time after they were published, incensed the public. This sparked rioting in the streets of the capital, Maseru. Public and private buildings were set on fire or destroyed.

The government called on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to intervene, and the SADC did so, relying mainly on the armed forces of South Africa. When order was restored, an agreement was reached on 2 October 1998 (later guaranteed by the SADC) which called for the establishment of an Interim Political Authority (IPA) on which the 12 parties which had put up candidates in the elections were given two seats each, no matter how small their electoral support. The IPA's brief was to develop a new electoral system and suggest other political and administrative measures to strengthen Lesotho's peaceful democratic development. However, all recommendations would be submitted to the government, which would then take them to Parliament to be enacted in the ordinary way.

The ideas behind the establishment of the IPA were clearly inspired by the institutions of the negotiation process in South Africa during the early part of the transition process, but it was not taken into account that the two processes were so different that the institutional solutions also had to be different. The subsequent political process in Lesotho was not an easy one, and it can be no surprise that the opposition's overwhelming majority on the IPA—by 22 to 2 against the government of the day—was not conducive to a constructive climate of negotiation.

The IPA representatives, none of whom had been able to ensure a seat for themselves in the National Assembly, were eager to suggest an electoral system which would keep the single-member constituencies and at the same time provide for a much more proportional outcome at the next elections than had been the case in 1998. The obvious solution was either an MMP or a Parallel System. A German expert on electoral systems was invited to give a presentation, after which the IPA majority opted for the MMP solution, with some seats allocated in single-member districts and others allocated from party lists on a compensatory basis. The LCD—in complete control of the legislature—decided to opt for the alternative, the Parallel System, which would give it, on top of its expected massive share of the single-member district seats, an additional number reflecting its share of the votes cast for the seats not allocated in the single-member districts.

It soon transpired that the IPA was not aware of all the practical details that should be taken into consideration when deciding to go for MMP, such as the seat allocation formula, the issue of a formal electoral threshold, overhang mandates, one or two ballots, and so on.

The number of seats in the two categories was also an issue, even though most IPA members seemed to agree that keeping the 80 single-member districts was a good idea and that it was only natural to have 50 compensatory seats.

The basis for the latter suggestion was a little awkward: previously Lesotho had had 65 single-member districts. If it returned to that number, and then added an identical number of compensatory seats (as in Germany), the National Assembly would have 130 seats altogether. However, if the size of the Assembly was to be 130, as the number of single-member districts for the time being was 80, and as it was difficult to imagine this number being changed in the immediate future, the number of compensatory seats had to be 50.

The government challenged this number, among other reasons because Lesotho is a small and poor country which should only have a reasonable number of parliamentary seats.

The political conflict was easy to understand. The IPA, which was tasked with suggesting institutional solutions to the political impasse, was strongly in favour of MMP with 80 single-member districts and 50 compensatory seats.

However, the government, in complete control of the legislature, had to pass all the IPA's suggestion. It argued that the best solution was a Parallel system with the same 80 single-member districts and probably 40 seats to be allocated separately on the basis of (preferably) the same ballot as was used in the single-member districts, although a second ballot was also an option.

The political compromise over the electoral system took some time to reach, mainly because of the level of distrust between the two sides and some hesitation about the very idea of compromise.

It was eventually agreed that the electoral system should be MMP (which was the main opposition objective), while the number of seats should be 120 (80 + 40), which was very important for the government side. While the government held all the cards through its huge parliamentary majority, it was clear that some concession had to be made in order to ensure wider acceptance and thus legitimacy of the revisions.

The consequent constitutional amendment required strong support not only in the National Assembly but also in the Senate (made up mainly of chiefs), which was another reason why compromise was necessary. The reason for this was that, if the two houses of Parliament could not agree on the constitutional amendment, it had to be put to a popular referendum, and this was not really possible because of disagreement over the electoral register.

Eventually, the constitutional amendment was formally adopted in May 2001. Only then could the necessary changes to the electoral law be considered.

The 1998 internationally guaranteed agreement had provided for early elections, to take place in May 2000. This was completely unrealistic, not least because the government and the opposition (the IPA) were not really on speaking terms, and a new Independent Electoral Commission had only been appointed in April. Agreement was then reached on delaying the election by a year, but further delays in reaching agreement about the electoral system, concerns about an adequate voter registration system and so on meant that a new general election was only possible in May 2002.

The election went reasonably well. The LCD, not entirely unexpectedly, won 55 per cent of the party (PR) votes but 65 per cent of all the seats. The reason for this was that the party won 77 of the 78 single-member districts contested on election day (elections in the remaining two were postponed because of the death of candidates, but eventually the LCD also won them). The system does not have overhang mandates, so the opposition got all 40 compensatory seats.

Seven of the eight opposition parties which won seats ended up being under- represented in terms of share of votes compared to share of seats. This under-representation was, however, very much smaller than it had been in 1998, and the National Assembly of Lesotho is now a fairly representative body in terms of political representativeness. Thus the main objectives of the efforts after the 1998 troubles have certainly been achieved.

It is clear that the combination of (a) one party taking almost all the single- member districts, (b) only 33 per cent of the seats being compensatory seats, and (c) the absence of surplus seats may continue to cause some degree of disproportionality in future elections as well. However, this seems a small price to pay for the various improvements in the system achieved during the protracted political compromise-seeking process of 1999–2001, when it was also a concern not to have too many members of Parliament in a small and poor country.

From The Electoral Knowledge Network http://aceproject.org/ Retrieved 24/4/16

Africa's parties – development and reversals since 1950s

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During the early 1990s, most of the one party systems prevailing in Africa for more than 20 years were dismantled.

Over a period of five years, virtually all sub-Saharan countries shifted from army- dominated or single-party-dominated regimes to formally democratic systems.

Big Men Leaders: a necessary stage of development, or progress hijacked?

European Big Men parties were elite-based parties which could be compared with African party-based elites, though these were less well organised.

Big Men leaders of the European tradition were influential men with large personal followings maintained by personal resources. They translated their social class 'superiority' into political influence.

The Big Men of the African tradition usually came from political-bureaucratic classes whose economic power depended on control and use of public resources and structures.[1] (Sklar, 1979)

Already relevant leaders in public life set up new parties. For example, Uganda, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, or Kenya: Kizza Besigye's Forum for Democratic Change, Olusegun Obasanjo's People's Democratic Party, Laurent Gbagbo's Front Populaire Ivoirien or Mwai Kibaki's Democratic Party.

Also, many single parties succeeded in maintaining power by making sure that reforms were kept to a minimum and thus preventing any real changes. For example, the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front, the Parti Démocratique Gabonais or the Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais.

Africa's low-income conditions also reduced ability to build strong parties

It has been pointed out that 'building the state' in a modernising society means in part the creation of an effective bureaucracy, but, more importantly, "the establishment of an effective party system capable of structuring the participation of new groups in politics."[2]

Unsurprisingly, what became established political practices in Africa were most often defined by widespread and extreme poverty, low literacy levels, or state weakness. So these practices included invariably authoritarian rule and corruption.

Consequently the depth of 'democratic' change was limited In many cases, to make up exercises. However, reforms undoubtedly brought about a significant return of multi-party-ism in sub-Saharan Africa.

Building up grass roots party strength to allow greater participation

Many single parties succeeded in maintaining power by making sure that reforms were kept to a minimum and thus preventing any real changes. For example, the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front, the Parti Démocratique Gabonais or the Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais. [See Ercolessi 2006]

Civil society organisations or networks formed parties elsewhere: the New Patriotic Party in Ghana, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy in Zambia or the Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe.

Many of Africa's new parties following WWII were liberation movements. Subsequently armed insurrections or guerrilla movements gave rise to governing parties or parties in opposition. For example, the Rawandan Patriotic

Front, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front or the Burundian Conseil National Pour la Defense de la Democratie-Forces pour la Defence de la Democratie and Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana became the opposition.

Conclusion: uncovering the factors that lead to success or failure

Since the 1990s there have been studies into an "effective number of parties" or "electoral volatility" the factors behind party dominance, the effects of electoral laws, and the institutionalization of party systems.

New ways of examining party politics in Africa are interested in the spread of systems dominated by one party but no longer monopolised by it. There has also been interest studying the recent fragmentation of oppositions into a number of weak and short-lived parties, the role of ethnic identities and clientelist networks as bases for party mobilisation.

Also, given the commitment to building more resilient parties, political scientists are studying the practical problems involved in setting up and maintaining parties, the weak policy-making capacities of new parties and the generally low level of institutionalisation of the continent's party systems.

1 Sklar, (1979) "The Nature of Class Domination in Africa," Journal of Modern African Studies, 17, no. 4

2 Huntington (1968) Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press)

Case study: Zambia. Are one-party or multi-party states more competitive? (And: Do bans on 'ethnic campaigning' work?)

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This case study found that in multi-party elections, electoral success depends more on party identities than tribal identities.

One of the tests of a functioning democracy is whether or not elections provide meaningful opportunities for replacing parliamentary officeholders.

And multi-party elections are presumed to be more competitive than one party elections. That is, they are presumed to allow for greater choice for voters to choose representatives or political leaders. (And one-party elections are usually assumed to be exercises for legitimising elites.)

However, Zambia's four one-party elections were an exception with a greater turnover of sitting candidates than in multi-party elections in elections from 1968 to 1996.

In the one-party elections (see table) an average of four candidates ran for every seat in the one-party races while just 2.7 ran in the multi-party elections. And in the one-party elections of 1973, 1978, 1983 and 1988 sitting MPs were less likely to be returned to office than in the multi-party elections of 1968 and 1996.

Another indicator of competitiveness is the number of candidates running unopposed in a given election.

Again Zambia's one-party elections were slightly more competitive than the multiparty ones. One electorate in twelve had an unopposed candidate in multi-party elections, whereas one in seventeen had an unopposed candidate in one-party elections.

Why did Zambia break the stereotype in these measures of competitiveness? There is no evidence that voters chose on the basis of tribal or linguistic identities. Therefore the reason for such 'cleavages' lie elsewhere.

In highly regulated campaign meetings there was little or no opportunity for candidates to address audiences about why they should support them instead of other contestants. And candidates were banned from both negative remarks about rivals or any 'ethnic campaigning'.

District governors, however, would make it clear which candidate the ruling party preferred – either subtly by the warmth of introductions or explicitly by returning to the audience on the candidates' exit to tell audiences which candidate to support.

There was also vetting at source: at party level any perceived trouble-makers or threats to favourites were excluded in the 'choice before the choice.' However there is evidence that this happened infrequently and never for tribal or linguistic reasons. This is given by the fact that …

Candidates got around strict regulations about ethnic considerations in the formal meetings by holding many informal meeting in which particular issues to do with ethnic communities could and were brought up. Although illegal, it did happen.

In one-party and multi-party campaigns politicians make different sorts of ethnic appeals. In one-party states, they are tribal appeals; in multiparty campaigns, linguistic ones.

Conclusion: In one-party elections, running in a constituency or electorate in which a candidate belongs to the dominant tribe is very important. In multi- party elections, electoral success depends more on party identity than tribal ones.

Incumbents Defeated in Multi-Party and One-Party Elections in Zambia 1968 to 1996				
	Election type	Number of incumbents running for re-election	Number of incumbents defeated	Percentage of incumbents defeated
1968	Multi-party	60	11	18.3
1973	One-party	57	15	26.3
1978	One-party	82	31	37.8
1983	One-party	104	42	40.4
1988	One-party	99	36	36.4
1991	Multi-party	73	50	68.5
1996	Multi-party	74	12	16.2

Types of majorities

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MAJORITIES: 'The most,' usually more than 50 percent. But in the development of democracy, varying degrees of majority rule have been decided on – from unanimity to plurality. Some guarantee a higher degree of support than others, needed for such widespread 'buy-in' as approval for change of a constitution (75 percent, for example) or decision to impeach a president (66 percent, for example).

Degrees of democracy: from unanimity to plurality

Unanimity: All need to agree, assent or at least acquiesce (agree to go along) – as in 'a unanimous decision was made by the committee.'

Plurality: The largest number of votes but not necessarily a majority. Majority (simple majority): More than half of those who actually voted Absolute majority: More than half of those entitled to vote

Concurrent majority: More than one majority required: for example, most voters and most provinces

Qualified majority: More than a simple majority: typically, two-thirds

Weighted majority: A majority after adjusting votes for differences in voting power: for example, shareholders may have one vote per share

Proportional representation

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Proportional Representation (PR)

The rationale underpinning all PR systems is to consciously reduce the disparity between a party's share of the national vote and its share of the parliamentary seats; if a major party wins 40 per cent of the votes, it should win approximately 40 per cent of the seats, and a minor party with 10 per cent of the votes should also gain 10 per cent of the legislative seats. This congruity between a party's share of the vote and its share of the seats provides an incentive for all parties to support and participate in the system.

PR requires the use of electoral districts with more than one member: it is not possible to divide a single seat elected on a single occasion proportionally. There are two major types of PR system—List PR and Single Transferable Vote (STV). Proportionality is often seen as being best achieved by the use of party lists, where political parties present lists of candidates to the voters on a national or regional basis, but preferential voting can work equally well: the Single Transferable Vote, where voters rank-order candidates in multi-member districts, is another well-established proportional system.

There are many important issues which can have a major impact on how a PR system works in practice. The greater the number of representatives to be elected from a district, the more proportional the electoral system will be. PR systems also differ in the range of choice given to the voter—whether the voter can choose between political parties, individual candidates, or both.

Advantages of PR systems

In many respects, the strongest arguments for PR derive from the way in which the system avoids the anomalous results of plurality/majority systems and is better able to produce a representative legislature. For many new democracies, particularly those which face deep societal divisions, the inclusion of all significant groups in the legislature can be a near-essential condition for democratic consolidation. Failing to ensure that both minorities and majorities have a stake in developing political systems can have catastrophic consequences, such as seeking power through illegal means.

PR systems in general are praised for the way in which they:

- Faithfully translate votes cast into seats won, and thus avoid some of the more destabilizing and 'unfair' results thrown up by plurality/majority electoral systems. 'Seat bonuses' for the larger parties are minimized, and small parties can have their voice heard in the legislature.
- Encourage or require the formation of political parties or groups of like- minded candidates to put forward lists. This may clarify policy, ideology, or leadership differences within society, especially when, as in Timor-Leste at independence, there is no established party system.
- Give rise to very few wasted votes. When thresholds are low, almost all votes cast in PR elections go towards electing a candidate of choice. See Voluntary Party Candidate Quotas to read who may determine the selection process in political parties. This increases the voters' perception that it is worth making the trip to the polling booth at election time, as they can be more confident that their vote will make a difference to the election outcome, however small.
- Facilitate minority parties' access to representation. Unless the threshold is unduly high, or the district magnitude is unusually low, then any political party with even a small percentage of the vote can gain representation in the legislature. This fulfils the principle of inclusion, which can be crucial to stability in divided societies and has benefits for decision making in established democracies, such

as achieving a more balanced representation of minorities in decision-making bodies and providing role models of minorities as elected representatives.

- Encourage parties to campaign beyond the districts in which they are strong or where the results are expected to be close. The incentive under PR systems is to maximize the overall vote regardless of where those votes might come from. Every vote, even from areas where a party is electorally weak, goes towards gaining another seat.
- Restrict the growth of 'regional fiefdoms'. Because PR systems reward minority parties with a minority of the seats, they are less likely to lead to situations where a single party holds all the seats in a given province or district. This can be particularly important to minorities in a province which may not have significant regional concentrations or alternative points of access to power.
- Lead to greater continuity and stability of policy. The West European experience suggests that parliamentary PR systems score better with regard to governmental longevity, voter participation, and economic performance. The rationale behind this claim is that regular switches in government between two ideologically polarized parties, as can happen in FPTP systems, makes long- term economic planning more difficult, while broad PR coalition governments help engender a stability and coherence in decision making which allow for national development.
- Make power-sharing between parties and interest groups more visible. In many new democracies, power-sharing between the numerical majority of the population who hold political power and a small minority who hold economic power is an unavoidable reality. Where the numerical majority dominates the legislature and a minority sees its interests expressed in the control of the economic sphere, negotiations between different power blocks are less visible, less transparent, and less accountable (e.g. in Zimbabwe during its first 20 years of independence). It has been argued that PR, by including all interests in the legislature, offers a better hope that decisions will be taken in the public eye and by a more inclusive cross-section of the society.

Disadvantages of PR systems

Most of the criticisms of PR in general are based around the tendency of PR systems to give rise to coalition governments and a fragmented party system. The arguments most often cited against PR are that it leads to:

- Coalition governments, which in turn lead to legislative gridlock and consequent inability to carry out coherent policies. There are particularly high risks during an immediate post-conflict transition period, when popular expectations of new governments are high. Quick and coherent decision making can be impeded by coalition cabinets and governments of national unity which are split by factions.
- A destabilizing fragmentation of the party system. PR can reflect and facilitate a fragmentation of the party system. It is possible that extreme pluralism can allow tiny minority parties to hold larger parties to ransom in coalition negotiations. In this respect, the inclusiveness of PR is cited as a drawback of the system. In Israel, for example, extremist religious parties are often crucial to the formation of a government, while Italy endured many years of unstable shifting coalition governments. Democratizing countries are often fearful that PR will allow personality-based and ethnic-cleavage parties to proliferate in their undeveloped party systems.
- A platform for extremist parties. In a related argument, PR systems are often criticized for giving a space in the legislature to extremist parties of the left or the right. It has been argued that the collapse of Weimar Germany was in part due to the way in which its PR electoral system gave a toehold to extremist groups of the extreme left and right.
- Governing coalitions which have insufficient common ground in terms of either their policies or their support base. These coalitions of convenience are sometimes contrasted with coalitions of commitment

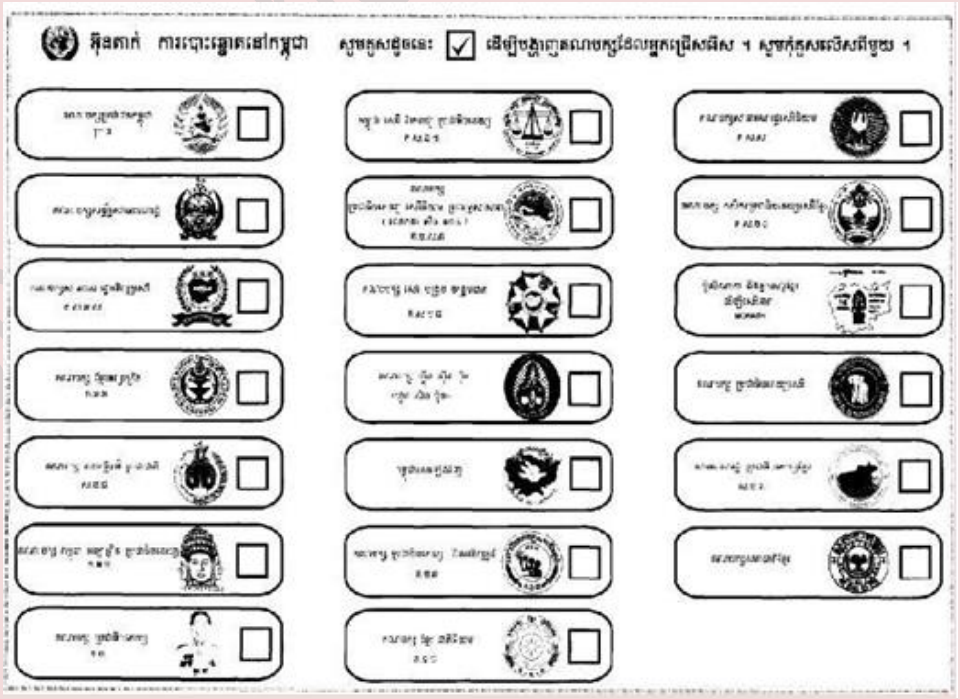
produced by other systems (e.g. through the use of AV), in which parties tend to be reciprocally dependent on the votes of supporters of other parties for their election, and the coalition may thus be stronger.

- Small parties getting a disproportionately large amount of power. Large parties may be forced to form coalitions with much smaller parties, giving a party that has the support of only a small percentage of the votes the power to veto any proposal that comes from the larger parties.
- The inability of the voter to enforce accountability by throwing a party out of power or a particular candidate out of office. Under a PR system, it may be very difficult to remove a reasonably-sized centre party from power. When governments are usually coalitions, some political parties are everpresent in government, despite weak electoral performances from time to time. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) in Germany was a member of the governing coalition for all but eight of the 50 years from 1949 to 1998, although it never gained more than 12 per cent of the vote.
- Difficulties either for voters to understand or for the electoral administration to implement the sometimes complex rules of the system. Some PR systems are considered to be more difficult than non-PR systems and may require more voter education and training of poll workers to work successfully.

List PR

In its most simple form, List PR involves each party presenting a list of candidates to the electorate in each multi-member electoral district. Voters vote for a party, and parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the vote in the electoral district. Winning candidates are taken from the lists in order of their position on the lists.

The choice of List PR does not in itself completely specify the electoral system: more details must be determined. The system used to calculate the allocation of seats after the votes have been counted can be either a Highest Average or a Largest Remainder Method. The formula chosen has a small but sometimes critical effect on the outcomes of elections under PR. In Cambodia in 1998, a change in the formula a few weeks before polling day turned out to have the effect of giving the largest party 64 seats, instead of 59, in a 121-seat National Assembly. The change had not been well publicized, and it was with difficulty that the opposition accepted the results. This example clearly demonstrates the importance for electoral system designers of apparently minor details.



Cambodian closed List PR ballot paper

There are several other important issues that need to be considered in defining precisely how a List PR system will work. A formal threshold may be required for representation in the legislature: a high threshold (for example 10 per cent, as used by Turkey) is likely to exclude smaller parties, while a low threshold (for example 2 per cent, as used by Israel) may promote their representation. In South Africa, there is no formal threshold, and in 2004 the African Christian Democratic Party won six seats out of 400 with only 1.6 per cent of the national vote. List PR systems also differ depending on whether and how the voter can choose between candidates as well as parties, that is, whether lists are closed, open or free (panachage). This choice has implications for the complexity of the ballot paper.

Other choices include arrangements for formal or informal 'vote pooling'; the scope for agreements between parties, such as that provided by systems which use apparentement; and the definition of district boundaries.

Advantages and disadvantages of List PR

Advantages of List PR

- In addition to the advantages attached to PR systems generally, List PR makes it more likely that the representatives of minority cultures/groups will be elected. When, as is often the case, voting behaviour dovetails with a society's cultural or social divisions, then List PR electoral systems can help to ensure that the legislature includes members of both majority and minority groups. This is because parties can be encouraged by the system to craft balanced candidate lists which appeal to a whole spectrum of voters' interests. The experience of a number of new democracies (e.g. South Africa, and Indonesia) suggests that List PR gives the political space which allows parties to put up multiracial, and multi-ethnic, lists of candidates. The South African National Assembly elected in 1994 was 52 per cent black (11 per cent Zulu, the rest being of Xhosa, Sotho, Venda, Tswana, Pedi, Swazi, Shangaan and Ndebele extraction), 32 per cent white (one-third English-speaking, two-thirds Afrikaans-speaking), 7 per cent Coloured and 8 per cent Indian. The Namibian Parliament is similarly diverse, with representatives from the Ovambo, Damara, Herero, Nama, Baster and white (English and German-speaking) communities.
- List PR makes it more likely that women will be elected. PR electoral systems are almost always more friendly to the election of women than plurality/majority systems. In essence, parties are able to use the lists to promote the advancement of women politicians and allow voters the space to elect women candidates while still basing their choice on other policy concerns than gender. As noted above, in single-member districts, most parties are encouraged to put up a 'most broadly acceptable' candidate, and that person is seldom a woman. In all regions of the world, PR systems do better than FPTP systems in the number of women elected, and 15 of the top 20 nations when it comes to the representation of women use List PR. In 2013, the number of women representatives in legislatures elected by List PR systems was 6.3 percentage points higher than the average of 21.8 per cent for all legislatures, while that for legislatures elected by FPTP was 2.8 percentage points lower.

Disadvantages of List PR

In addition to the general issues already identified relating to PR systems, the following additional disadvantages may be considered:

- Weak links between elected legislators and their constituents. When List PR is used, and particularly when seats are allocated in one single national district, as in Namibia or Israel, the system is criticized for destroying the link between voters and their representatives. Where lists are closed, voters have no opportunity to determine the identity of the persons who will represent them and no identifiable representative for their town, district or village, nor can they easily reject an individual representative if they feel that he or she has performed poorly in office or is not the kind of person they would want representing them – e.g., warlords in countries such as Bosnia or Afghanistan. Moreover, in some

developing countries where the society is mainly rural, voters' identification with their region of residence is sometimes considerably stronger than their identification with any political party or grouping. This criticism, however, may relate more to the distinction between systems in which voters vote for parties and systems in which they vote for candidates.

- Excessive entrenchment of power within party headquarters and in the hands of senior party leaderships—especially in closed-list systems. A candidate's position on the party list, and therefore his or her likelihood of success, is dependent on currying favour with party bosses, while their relationship with the electorate is of secondary importance. In an unusual twist to the List PR system, in Guyana parties publish their list of candidates not ranked but simply ordered alphabetically. This allows party leaders even more scope to reward loyalty and punish independence because seats are only allocated to individuals once the result of the vote is known.
- The need for some kind of recognized party or political groupings to exist. This makes List PR particularly difficult to implement in those societies which do not have parties or have very embryonic and loose party structures, for example, many of the island countries of the Pacific. While technically possible to allow independent candidates to run under various forms of PR, it is difficult and introduces a number of additional complications, particularly as relates to wasted votes.

The Single Transferable Vote (STV)

STV has long been advocated by political scientists as one of the most attractive electoral systems, but its use for legislative elections has been limited to a few cases—the Republic of Ireland since 1921, Malta since 1947, and once in Estonia in 1990. It is also used for elections to the Australian Federal Senate and in several Australian states, and for European and local elections in Northern Ireland. It has been adopted for local elections in Scotland and in some authorities in New Zealand. It was also chosen as the recommendation of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly.

The core principles of the system were independently invented in the 19th century by Thomas Hare in Britain and Carl Andræ in Denmark. STV uses multi- member districts, and voters rank candidates in order of preference on the ballot paper in the same manner as under the Alternative Vote system. In most cases, this preference marking is optional, and voters are not required to rank- order all candidates; if they wish, they can mark only one.

After the total number of first-preference votes are tallied, the count then begins by establishing the quota of votes required for the election of a single candidate. The quota used is normally the Droop quota, calculated by the simple formula:

Quota = (votes / (seats +1)) +1

The result is determined through a series of counts. At the first count, the total number of first-preference votes for each candidate is ascertained. Any candidate who has a number of first preferences greater than or equal to the quota is immediately elected.

In second and subsequent counts, the surplus votes of elected candidates (i.e. those votes above the quota) are redistributed according to the second preferences on the ballot papers. For fairness, all the candidate's ballot papers can be redistributed, but each at a fractional percentage of one vote, so that the total redistributed vote equals the candidate's surplus (the Republic of Ireland uses a weighted sample instead of distributing fractions). If a candidate had 100 votes, for example, and their surplus was five votes, then each ballot paper would be redistributed according to its second preference at the value of 1/20th of a vote. After any count, if no candidate has a surplus of votes over the quota, the candidate with the lowest total of votes is eliminated. His or her votes are then redistributed in the next count to the candidates left in the race according to the second and then lower preferences shown. The process of successive counts, after each of which surplus votes are redistributed or a candidate is eliminated, continues until either all the seats for the electoral district are filled by candidates who have received the

quota, or the number of candidates left in the count is only one more than the number of seats to be filled, in which case all remaining candidates bar one are elected without receiving a full quota.

Advantages and disadvantages of STV

Advantages of STV

The advantages claimed for PR generally apply to STV systems. In addition, as a mechanism for choosing representatives, STV is perhaps the most sophisticated of all electoral systems, allowing for choice between parties and between candidates within parties. The final results retain a fair degree of proportionality, and the fact that in most actual examples of STV the multi- member districts are relatively small means that a geographical link between voter and representative is retained. Furthermore, voters can influence the composition of post-election coalitions, as has been the case in the Republic of Ireland, and the system provides incentives for interparty accommodation through the reciprocal exchange of preferences between parties.

STV also provides a better chance for the election of popular independent candidates than List PR, because voters are choosing between candidates rather than between parties (although a party-list option can be added to an STV election; this is done for the Australian Senate).

Disadvantages of STV

The disadvantages claimed for PR generally also apply to STV systems. In addition:

- STV is sometimes criticized on the grounds that preference voting is unfamiliar in many societies, and demands, at the very least, a degree of literacy and numeracy.
- The intricacies of an STV count are quite complex. This has been cited as one of the reasons why Estonia decided to abandon the system after its first election. STV requires continual recalculations of surplus transfer values and the like. Because of this, votes under STV need to be counted at counting centres instead of directly at the polling place. Where election integrity is a salient issue, counting in the actual polling places may be necessary to ensure legitimacy of the vote, and there will be a need to choose the electoral system accordingly.
- STV, unlike Closed List PR, can at times produce pressures for political parties to fragment internally because members of the same party are effectively competing against each other, as well as against the opposition, for votes. This could serve to promote 'clientelistic' politics where politicians offer electoral bribes to groups of defined voters.
- STV can lead to a party with a plurality of votes nonetheless winning fewer seats than its rivals. Malta amended its system in the mid-1980s by providing for some extra compensatory seats to be awarded to a party in the event of this happening. Many of these criticisms have, however, proved to be little trouble in practice. STV elections in the Republic of Ireland and Malta have tended to produce relatively stable, legitimate governments comprising one or two main parties.

Proportional representation related issues

Proportional Representation electoral systems require to a larger extent than other systems that the designer also considers a number of issues in addition to the choice of electoral system type. These issues will affect the results of the elections both mechanically and through psychological effects by changing the incentives for voters and political parties alike. Often, these effects will appear to be minor, and this may very well be true in practice. However, even minor differences in results can sometimes have serious implications on the setup of the legislature and the formation of government, and – perhaps most importantly – the perception of the legitimacy of the elections and the results. Also, even though many of these choices are likely to only affect the outcome slightly, some – like the choice of electoral district magnitude – will have considerable implications on the translation of votes into seats, and

are thus likely to become a highly political issue. Therefore, a designer is advised to consider all these issues well in advance of an election and to be aware of the likely administrative as well as political implications the different options will have.

District Magnitude

There is near-universal agreement among electoral specialists that the crucial determinant of an electoral system's ability to translate votes cast into seats won proportionally is the district magnitude, which is the number of members to be elected in each electoral district.

Under a system such as FPTP, AV, or the Two-Round System, there is a district magnitude of one; voters are electing a single representative. By contrast, all PR systems, some plurality/majority systems such as Block Vote and PBV, and some other systems such as Limited Vote and SNTV, require electoral districts which elect more than one member. Under any proportional system, the number of members to be chosen in each district determines, to a significant extent, how proportional the election results will be.

The systems which achieve the greatest degree of proportionality will use very large districts, because such districts are able to ensure that even very small parties are represented in the legislature. In smaller districts, the effective threshold is higher. For example, in a district in which there are only three members to be elected, a party must gain at least 25 per cent +1 of the vote to be assured of winning a seat. A party which has the support of only 10 per cent of the electorate would be unlikely to win a seat, and the votes of this party's supporters could therefore be said to have been wasted. In a nine-seat district, by contrast, 10 per cent +1 of the vote would guarantee that a party wins at least one seat. The problem is that as districts are made larger—both in terms of the number of seats and often, as a consequence, in terms of their geographic size as well—so the linkage between an elected member and his or her constituency grows weaker.

This can have serious consequences in societies where local factors play a strong role in politics or where voters expect their member to maintain strong links with the electorate and act as their 'delegate' in the legislature.

Because of this, there has been a **lively debate about the best district magnitude**. Most scholars agree, as a general principle, that district magnitudes of between three and seven seats tend to work quite well, and it has been suggested that odd numbers such as three, five and seven work better in practice than even numbers, particularly in a two-party system. However, this is only a rough guide, and there are many situations in which a higher number may be both desirable and necessary to ensure satisfactory representation and proportionality. In many countries, the electoral districts follow pre-existing administrative divisions, perhaps state or provincial boundaries, which means that there may be wide variations in their size. However, this approach both eliminates the need to draw additional boundaries for elections and may make it possible to relate electoral districts to existing identified and accepted communities.

Numbers at the high and low ends of the spectrum tend to deliver more extreme results. At one end of the spectrum, a whole country can form one electoral district, which normally means that the number of votes needed for election is extremely low and even very small parties can gain election. In Israel, for example, the whole country forms one district of 120 members, which means that election results are highly proportional, but also means that parties with only small shares of the vote can gain representation and that the link between an elected member and any geographical area is extremely weak.

At the other end of the spectrum, PR systems can be applied to situations in which there is a district magnitude of only two. For example, a system of List PR is applied to two-member districts in Chile. This delivers results which are quite disproportional, because no more than two parties can win representation in each district. This has tended to undermine the benefits of PR in terms of representation and legitimacy.

These examples, from the opposite ends of the spectrum, both serve to underline the crucial importance of district magnitude in any PR electoral system. It is arguably the single most important institutional choice when designing a PR system, and is also of crucial importance for a number of non-PR systems as well. The Single Non-Transferable Vote, for example tends to deliver moderately proportional results despite not being in essence a proportional formula, precisely because it is used in multi-member districts. Similarly, the Single Transferable Vote when applied to single-member districts becomes the Alternative Vote, which retains some of the advantages of STV but not its proportionality. In Party Block Vote and Block Vote systems, as district magnitude increases, proportionality is likely to decrease. To sum up, when designing an electoral system, district magnitude is in many ways the key factor in determining how the system will operate in practice, the strength of the link between voters and elected members, and the overall proportionality of election results.

On a related note, the **party magnitude (the average number of successful candidates from the same party in the same electoral district)** is an important factor in determining who will be elected. If only one candidate from a party is elected in a district, that candidate may well be male and a member of the majority ethnic or social groups in the district. If two or more are elected, balanced tickets may have more effect, making it likely that more women and more candidates from minorities will be successful. Larger districts (seven or more seats in size) and a relatively small number of parties will increase the party magnitude.

The Threshold

All electoral systems have thresholds of representation: that is, the minimum level of support which a party needs to gain representation. Thresholds can be legally imposed (formal thresholds) or exist as a mathematical property of the electoral system (effective or natural thresholds).

Formal thresholds are written into the constitutional or legal provisions which define the PR system. In the mixed systems of Germany, New Zealand, and Russia, for example, there is a 5 per cent threshold in the PR section: parties which fail to secure 5 per cent of the vote nationwide are ineligible to be awarded seats from the PR lists. This concept had its origins in the desire to limit the election of extremist groups in Germany, and is designed to stop very small parties from gaining representation.

However, in both Germany and New Zealand there exist 'back-door' routes for a party to be entitled to seats from the lists; in the case of New Zealand, a party must win at least one constituency seat, and in the case of Germany three seats, to bypass the threshold requirements. In Russia in 1995, there were no back-door routes, and almost half of the party-list votes were wasted. Elsewhere, legal thresholds range from 0.67 per cent in the Netherlands to 10 per cent in Turkey. Parties which gain less than this percentage of the vote are excluded from the count. A striking example of this was the 2002 Turkish election, in which so many parties failed to clear the 10 per cent threshold that 46 per cent of all votes were wasted. In all these cases, the existence of a formal threshold tends to increase the overall level of disproportionality, because votes for those parties which would otherwise have gained representation are wasted. In Poland in 1993, even with a comparatively low threshold of 5 per cent for parties and 8 per cent for coalitions, over 34 per cent of the votes were cast for parties and coalitions which did not surmount it.

An effective, hidden, or natural threshold is created as a mathematical by- product of features of electoral systems, of which district magnitude is the most important. For example, in a district with four seats under a PR system, just as any candidate with more than 20 per cent of the vote will be elected, any candidate with less than about 10 percent (the exact figure will vary depending on the configuration of parties, candidates, and votes) is unlikely to be elected.

Open, Closed and Free Lists

While the List PR system is based on the principle that parties or political groupings present candidates, it is possible to give voters a degree of choice within List PR between the candidates nominated as well as between the parties. There are essentially three options that can be chosen—open, closed, and free lists.

The majority of List PR systems in the world are closed, meaning that the order of candidates elected by that list is fixed by the party itself, and voters are not able to express a preference for a particular candidate. The List PR system used in South Africa is a good example of a closed list. The ballot paper contains the party names and symbols, and a photograph of the party leader, but no names of individual candidates. Voters simply choose the party they prefer; the individual candidates elected as a result are predetermined by the parties themselves. This means that parties can include some candidates (perhaps members of minority ethnic and linguistic groups, or women) who might have difficulty getting elected otherwise. The negative aspect of closed lists is that voters have no say in determining who the representative of their party will be. Closed lists are also unresponsive to rapid changes in events. In East Germany's pre-unification elections of 1990, the top-ranked candidate of one party was exposed as a secret-police informer only four days before the election, and immediately expelled from the party; but because lists were closed, electors had no choice but to vote for him if they wanted to support his former party.

Many List PR systems in Western Europe use open lists, in which voters can indicate not just their favoured party but their favoured candidate within that party. In most of these systems, the vote for a candidate as well as a party is optional and, because most voters mark their ballots for parties only rather than candidates, the candidate-choice option of the ballot paper often has limited effect. However, in Sweden, over 25 per cent of the voters regularly choose a candidate as well as a party, and a number of individuals are elected who would not be if the list were closed.

In Brazil and Finland, voters must vote for candidates: the number of seats received by each party is determined by the total number of votes gained by its candidates, and the order in which the party's candidates are elected to these seats is determined by the number of individual votes they receive. While this gives voters much greater freedom over their choice of candidate, it also has some less desirable side effects. Because candidates from within the same party are effectively competing with each other for votes, this form of open list can lead to internal party conflict and fragmentation. It also means that the potential benefits to the party of having lists which feature a diverse slate of candidates can be overturned. In open-list PR elections in Sri Lanka, for example, the attempts of major Sinhalese parties to include minority Tamil candidates in winnable positions on their party lists have been rendered ineffective because many voters deliberately voted for lower-placed Sinhalese candidates instead. In Kosovo, a switch from closed to open lists actually enhanced the presence of more extremist candidates. On the same note, open lists have sometimes proved to be disadvantageous for the representation of women in highly patriarchal societies, although in Poland voters have shown themselves willing to use open list to elect more women than would have resulted from the nominations made by the parties if closed lists had been used.

Other devices are used in a small number of jurisdictions to add additional flexibility to open-list systems. In Ecuador, Luxembourg and Switzerland, electors have as many votes as there are seats to be filled and can distribute them to candidates either within a single party list or across several party lists as they see fit. The capacity to vote for more than one candidate across different party lists (known as panachage) or to cast more than one vote for a single highly favoured candidate (known as cumulation) both provide an additional measure of control to the voter and are categorized here as free list systems.

Apparentement (cartel)

High effective thresholds can serve to discriminate against small parties– indeed, in some cases this is their express purpose. But in many cases, an inbuilt discrimination against smaller parties is seen as undesirable, particularly

where several small parties with similar support bases 'split' their combined votes and consequently fall below the threshold, when one aligned grouping would have gained enough combined votes to win some seats in the legislature. To get around this problem, some countries which use List PR systems also allow small parties to group together for electoral purposes, thus forming a cartel—or apparentement or stembusaccoord—to contest the election. This means that the parties themselves remain as separate entities, and are listed separately on the ballot paper, but that the votes gained by each are counted as if they belonged to the entire cartel, thus increasing the chances that the combined vote total will be above the threshold and hence that they may be able to gain additional representation. This device is a feature of a number of List PR systems in continental Europe, in Latin America (where the umbrella parties are called lema) and in Israel. They are nevertheless a rarity within PR systems in Africa and Asia, and were abolished in Indonesia in 1999 after some small parties discovered that, although their cartel gained representation overall, they as parties actually lost seats. Nowadays, the coalition system has become an important way to contest elections in Indonesia due to the new electoral rules since only a political party or coalition of political parties that wins 25% of the votes or gets at least 20% of the seats in the legislature can nominate candidates for president.

Independent Candidates and PR systems

A common misconception is that independent candidates cannot run under proportional systems. This is not true, although most elections under List PR systems, will be carried out exclusively with candidates who belong to a political party. Under STV however, the very system is candidate centred and independent candidates are very common in elections in for example the Republic of Ireland.

Many times, an independent candidate will simply be treated as a one person party, presenting a list with only one name on it and will gain the seat if he or she receives enough votes in the election.

Mixed Systems

Mixed electoral systems attempt to combine the positive attributes of both plurality/majority (or other) and PR electoral systems. In a mixed system, there are two electoral systems using different formulae running alongside each other. The votes are cast by the same voters and contribute to the election of representatives under both systems. One of those systems is a plurality/majority system (or occasionally an 'other' system), usually a single-member district system, and the other a List PR system.

There are two forms of mixed system. When the results of the two types of election are linked, with seat allocations at the PR level being dependent on what happens in the plurality/majority (or other) district seats and compensating for any disproportionality that arises there, the system is called a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system. Where the two sets of elections are detached and distinct and are not dependent on each other for seat allocations, the system is called a Parallel system. While an MMP system generally results in proportional outcomes, a Parallel system is likely to give results the proportionality of which falls somewhere between that of a plurality/majority and that of a PR system.

Parallel and MMP systems have been widely adopted by new democracies in Africa and the former Soviet Union.

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

Under MMP systems, the PR seats are awarded to compensate for any disproportionality produced by the district seat results. For example, if one party wins 10 per cent of the vote nationally but no district seats, then it will be awarded enough seats from the PR lists to bring its representation up to 10 per cent of the seats in the legislature. Voters may get two separate choices, as in Germany and New Zealand. Alternatively, voters may make only one choice, with the party totals being derived from the totals for the individual district candidates.

The proportion of seats allocated according to the two elements of the system vary from country to country. Lesotho's post-conflict electoral system, adopted in 2002, contains 80 FPTP seats and 40 compensatory ones while Germany elects 299 candidates under each system.

Although MMP is designed to produce proportional results, it is possible that the disproportionality in the single-member district results is so great that the list seats cannot fully compensate for it. This is more likely when the PR electoral districts are defined not at national level but at regional or provincial level. A party can then win more plurality/majority seats in a region or province than its party vote in the region would entitle it to. To deal with this, proportionality can be closely approached if the size of the legislature is slightly increased: the extra seats are called overhang mandates or Überhangsmandaten. This has occurred in most elections in Germany and is also possible in New Zealand. In Lesotho, by contrast, the size of the legislature is fixed, and the results of the first MMP election in 2002 were not fully proportional.

Advantages and Disadvantages of MMP

While MMP retains the proportionality benefits of PR systems, it also ensures that elected representatives are linked to geographical districts. However, where voters have two votes—one for the party and one for their local representative—it is not always understood that the vote for the local representative is less important than the party vote in determining the overall allocation of seats in the legislature. Furthermore, MMP can create two classes of legislators—one group primarily responsible and beholden to a constituency, and another from the national party list without geographical ties and beholden to the party. This may have implications for the cohesiveness of groups of elected party representatives.

In translating votes into seats, MMP can be as proportional an electoral system as pure List PR, and therefore shares many of the previously cited advantages and disadvantages of PR. However, one reason why MMP is sometimes seen as less preferable than straight List PR is that it can give rise to what are called 'strategic voting' anomalies. In New Zealand in 1996, in the constituency of Wellington Central, some National Party strategists urged voters not to vote for the National Party candidate because they had calculated that under MMP his election would not give the National Party another seat but simply replace an MP who would be elected from their party list. It was therefore better for the National Party to see a candidate elected from another party, providing that candidate was in sympathy with the National Party's ideas and ideology, than for votes to be 'wasted' in support of their own candidate.

Parallel Systems

Parallel systems also use both PR and plurality/majority components, but unlike MMP systems, the PR component of a parallel system does not compensate for any disproportionality within the plurality/majority districts. (It is also possible for the non-PR component of a Parallel system to come from the family of 'other' systems, as in Taiwan which uses SNTV.)

In a Parallel system, as in MMP, each voter may receive either one ballot paper which is used to cast a vote both for a candidate and for his or her party, as is done in South Korea (the Republic of Korea), or two separate ballot papers, one for the plurality/majority seat and one for the PR seats, as is done for example in Japan, Lithuania, and Thailand. Parallel systems have been a product of electoral system design over the last decade and a half—perhaps because they appear to combine the benefits of PR lists with those of plurality/majority (or other) representation.

Advantages and disadvantages of Parallel systems

Advantages of Parallel Systems

In terms of disproportionality, Parallel systems usually give results which fall somewhere between pure plurality/majority and pure PR systems. One advantage is that, when there are enough PR seats, small minority parties which have been unsuccessful in the plurality/majority elections can still be rewarded for their votes by winning seats in the proportional allocation. In addition, a Parallel system should, in theory, fragment the party system less than a pure PR electoral system.

Disadvantages of Parallel Systems

As with MMP, it is likely that two classes of representatives will be created. Also, Parallel systems do not guarantee overall proportionality, and some parties may still be shut out of representation despite winning substantial numbers of votes. Parallel systems are also relatively complex and can leave voters confused as to the nature and operation of the electoral system.

Competitive authoritarian regimes

[Reference also to Lesson 1: Different systems of government]

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Categories of government

A study of modern governments is still informed by comparative studies of 158 city-states carried out 2400 year ago by Aristotle. After being lost in the 'Dark Ages', it was translated from Greek in the 12th century by Arab philosophers including Ibn Rush'd.

Aristotle classified 158 governments terms of the values of stability and effectiveness. He put governments into three categories:

- rule by one
- rule by the few
- rule by the many

Six types of government – for better or worse

He further divided them according to whether their rulers governed in the common interest ('genuine' rule) or their own interest ('perverted' rule). This classification produces six types of government.

For example, Aristotle considered the genuine form of single person rule to be kingship. He considered the worst or perverted single person rule to be tyranny.

Rule by the few was expressed either as (i) aristocracy (described then as rule by the high- born 'virtuous') or as (ii) its degraded or perverted form oligarchy (rule by the rich).

Importance of education in wisdom

Aristotle divided 'rule by the many' into two: its genuine or ideal form and its debased, degraded or perverted form. For him the ideal was rule by the moderate middle class as exercised through law (a polity). For Aristotle, then, democracy was the debased form because in his view it was rule by the self-interested poor.

Historically, in its original form of direct democracy – every citizen assembled and voted - wisdom could lose out to the uneducated. At the ekklessia, the open-air assembly where all eligible citizens could vote, the uneducated were often swayed to poor decisions by short- sightedness and emotive speakers or demagogues.

Modern classification of governments

The first comparison of modern democracies was a 1921 study[1]. Modern classifications of all governments usually divide governments into:

- liberal democracies
- authoritarian regimes
- competitive authoritarian regimes.

The term **authoritarian** is used for systems that control information and deny important freedoms. They also limit both political activity and competition.

A **regime**, a system of rule, is another word for government. It is usually used for authoritarian systems of rule. The **term competitive authoritarian regime**, then, is used to identify many transitional governments which do allow some freedoms and some competition. But they also restrict many others.

How to recognise 'competitive authoritarian governments'

It is useful to know the features of this type of government. In these systems there is a lack of fairness in the competition between ideas and politicians. And there is no level playing- field for citizens, for businesses or for those wanting social services, because of such practices as:

- electoral manipulation
- biased media access
- abuse of state resources
- voter harassment
- regular government influence on the law courts

This category describes systems where the judiciary is weak and unable to check or prevent any misuse of the law. There is also regular 'top-down' interference in the rule of law, in the media and in the market. This interference means that human rights are often absent or limited.

Low-income countries can change

Competitive authoritarian regimes are often features of low-income countries, as well as post-military and post-communist[2] countries. These include Russia and much of Latin America. And although research has shown that the higher the income, the more likely a country is to become a democracy, exceptions point to other significant factors.[3]

Lessons can also be learned from examining how countries can change from authoritarian to democracies. And vice versa. In the last nine years some countries around the world have lost freedoms. Tunisia is an exception. Freedom House has recognised it as having achieved vital freedoms. Over the past 40 years Mexico has also achieved this, at least at the national level. [See 2015 report on how degrees of freedom and democracy can be measured.]

1 Bryce, J (1921) Modern Democracies, Vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan).

2 From Latin for 'after', post anything means what comes after it in time eg events, thought, developments.

3 Lipset, S., (1959): 'Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy.' American Political Science Review.53: 75. Lipset, S.M. and Lakin, J.M. (2004). A 2004 update of this relationship suggests that capitalist free-market economies produce multiple commodities which are critical for democracy. They do this by creating more heterogeneous and diverse centres of wealth and power. This reduces the economic control of the state and provides the basis for opposition organizations, they suggest, and the economic foundation for an active civil society. See Lipset, M., (2004) The Democratic Century. Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press. Chapter 5.

The relationship between wealth and democracy is probabilistic (not certain). Even a casual glance at the standard indicators reveals many important outliers or exceptions. Affluent autocracies such as Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait have high per capita GDP. Today there are also many poor democracies including Benin, Ghana, Costa Rica, Nepal, Hungary, and Turkey, plus the classic case of India. These cases suggest that economic development is neither necessary nor sufficient for democratization

Attempts to hold competitive elections may fail to strengthen democracy in poor and divided nation states – as well as in regions such as the Middle East which are dominated by autocracy. Examples of this during an earlier wave of institution building are Benin and Togo, among many African societies. In the era of decolonization, European-style parliaments soon collapsed as militaries usurped their powers.

Singapore's PAP

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Since 1959 Singaporean politics have been dominated by the People's Action Party (PAP) although a number of parties contest elections. Singapore became an independent state in 1965.

Once a British colony Singapore first joined the Federation of Malaysia on its formation in 1963 but seceded to become an independent state on August 9, 1965. It is still a member of the British Commonwealth of nations.

The PAP's ability to maintain its control largely has been attributable to Singapore's rapid economic growth and improved social welfare. In addition, the PAP often has suppressed and co-opted domestic opposition – notably through internal-security laws that allow political dissidents to be held indefinitely without trial – and has promoted a national paternalistic ideology through a variety of laws and corporate institutions.

The emphasis of this paternalistic ideology has been expressed by a rigid public morality focused on personal appearance and cleanliness, political loyalty, and family planning.

Singapore is a unitary parliamentary democracy based on the Westminster model. Its electorate includes every adult citizen who is a registered voter, and voting is compulsory.

The president is head of state; until 1991 the largely ceremonial post of president was filled by parliamentary election, but in that year the constitution was amended to allow for the direct popular election of the president and for presidential powers to be expanded.

The unicameral Parliament consists of 94 members, of whom 84 are elected and 10 are appointed to terms of up to five years.

The parliamentary majority selects the prime minister, who is head of government, and the cabinet from its own ranks, and they in turn form the government. In each constituency there is a Citizens' Consultative Committee, designed to link local communities to the ruling party.

Close liaison is maintained between the political and administrative arms of government. The administrative structure consists of the various ministries and statutory boards. These are staffed by civil servants who are monitored by an independent Public Service Commission.

http://www.britannica.com/place/Singapore#ref509668 Retrieved, April 2016

Political parties in Somalia

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List of political parties in Somalia

Overview

During the civilian administration which existed prior to the seizure of power by the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) in 1969, there were a number of local political parties. Most notable of these early institutions was the Somali Youth League, the nation's first political organization. Upon assuming office, the Siad Barre-led SRC outlawed all extant political parties,[1] and advocated a form of scientific socialism inspired by Marxist China and the Soviet Union.

Following the outbreak of the civil war in 1991 that saw the ouster of the Barre regime, many of the few remaining political parties gave way to autonomous or semi-autonomous regional states, or fragmented into feuding militia groups. After several unsuccessful national reconciliation efforts, a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was formed in 2004 with a five-year mandate leading toward the establishment of a new constitution and a transition to a representative government.[3] The Federal Government of Somalia was established on August 20, 2012, concurrent with the end of the TFG's interim mandate. It represents the first permanent central government in the country since the start of the civil war.[4]

The following is a **list of political parties in Somalia.**

Parties

National

- CAHDİ PARTY – Liberal political party founded in 2012. It is led by Prof. Abdirahman Ibrahim. Based in Mogadishu, it has a justice and development platform.
- Cosmopolitan Democratic Party – Political party established in May 2015. Led by Yarow Sharef Aden, it has a liberal platform.[5]
- Daljir party – A political party established in December 8, 2014. It unites most of the country's political figures, The Daljir Party's main aims is to achieve a Somalia that is secure, stable, unified, strong and sovereign, advanced and sophisticated and prosperous in all fields. The founders of this party are Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, Former president of Somalia 2009-2012, former minister of interior affairs Abdilqadir Ali Omar , former intelligence Chief and former Ambassador Ahmed Moallim Fiqi, who is the Secretary General of the party, the chairman of Daljir Party is veteran politician for minister of state and member in the federal parliament H.E. Hassan Moallin Mohamud Sheikh Ali among others. This party has the most support in the Somali community./ref>
- Democratic Green Party of Somalia (DGPS) – Political party created and led by Abdullahi Y. Mahamoud, with an emphasis on environmental protection and preservation. Member of the African Green Federation and Global Greens.[6]
- Democratic Party of Somalia (DPS) – Political party formed in 2010 by Maslah Mohamed Siad, son of former President of Somalia Siad Barre.[7]
- Green Leaf for Democracy (GLED) – organization with a focus on youth empowerment, employment and advocacy.[8]
- Hiil Qaran – Political party founded in February 2011. It was led at its establishment by former Prime Minister Abdirizak Haji Hussein and scholars Abdi Ismail Samatar and Ahmed Ismail Samatar.[9]
- Justice and Community Party – Political party founded in 2014. It is led by former Mayor of Mogadishu Mohamed Nur. Based in the capital, it has a justice, unity and development platform.[10]

- Liberal Party of Somalia (*Xisbiga horumarinta iyo dib u Habeynta Somaliyeed*)
- Peace and Development Party (PDP) – Political party launched on 17 April 2011, after lengthy consultation meetings. It is led byHassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of Somalia, and has established youth and women wings.[11]

Photo: President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, founder and Chairman of the Peace and Development Party.

- Somali National Party (SNP) – Nationalist political party founded and chaired by Mohammed Ameen Saeed Ahmed.
- Somali People's Party (*Xisbiga Ummadda Somaliyeed*) – Political party led by chairman and founder Mahamud Hassan Rage. It has a socially themed platform.[13]
- Somalia Green Party – Local green party of Somalia. Member of the Horn of African Greens in the Federation of Green Parties of Africa.
- Tayo (TPP) – Political party launched in early 2012, with a socially-themed platform. Founded by former Prime Minister of Somalia Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (Farmajo), who serves as its Secretary-General. Chaired by former Minister of Social Development Maryam Qaasim.[14]

Photo: Former Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, founder and Secretary- General of the Tayo Political Party.

- Tiir Party – Youth-based political association founded in July 2006. Led by chairman Fadhil Sheikhmohamud, it promotes social development through a broad-based, inclusive platform anchored in Islamic principles.[15]
- United and Democratic Party (UDP) – Political party founded in January 2014. Led by former Deputy Defense Minister and MP Salad Ali Jelle. Based in Mogadishu, it has a nationalist platform.[16]
- United Somali Parliamentarians – Major party which supported the former Prime Minister.
- Xisbiga Midnimo-Qaran (National Unity Party) – National political party announced to the public in February 2014. Led by chairman Dr. Abdurahman Baadiyow, a former 2012 presidential candidate.[17]

Regional

Puntland

- Horseed – Political party established on 14 November 2012 in the northeastern Puntland region. Led by Puntland President Abdirahman Mohamud Farole, the association counts over 200 members and represents the incumbent Puntland government, including Vice President Abdisamad Ali Shire and the state Ministers. It is the first prospective party to register for an application with the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC).[18]

Somaliland

- Peace, Unity, and Development Party (*Kulmiye Nabad, Midnimo iyo horumar*, also known as Solidarity / The Gathering / Union and Development) – Political party in the northwestern Somaliland region. The association's chairman is Muse Bihi Abdi.
- For Justice and Development (*Ururka Caddaalada iyo Daryeelka*, also known as the Justice and Welfare Party) – Political party in the Somaliland region. The association's chairman is Faysal Ali Warabe.

Photo: Faisal Ali Warabe founder and Chairman of the Justice and Welfare Party

- United Peoples' Democratic Party (*Ururka dimuqraadiga ummadda bahawday*, also known as Allied People's Democratic Party / United Democratic People's Party / National Alliance Democratic Party / Pillar) – Political party in the Somaliland region. The association's chairman is Dahir Riyale Kahin, who is a former President of Somaliland.
- Wadani (*Wadaani*) – Political party in the Somaliland region. The association's chairman is Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi.

Further reading: (on history of political parties, government and coalition politics in Somalia)

Politics of Somalia

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PART V: Learning from past and present systems

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Types of parties

Three types of parties evolved:

> **Cadre or elite or caucus parties**[1] These developed from within parliament or assemblies to gather more support for particular issues. MPs within these parties then fought campaigns to sell their ideas to their electorates.[2] These parties were mostly financed personally or by private sponsors.
>
> **Mass parties** are a later development. These seek their support from groups in society. They devise specific policies for change and organise local 'branches' to create and test their ideas. The membership of these branches has firm expectations of their leaders in parliament and raises funds so their ideas can be sold effectively.
>
> The authority of party leaders to act on members' behalf, their mandate, comes from a clear expression of these expectations. People within mass parties identify with a common purpose, often symbolically under a flag with a defining logo, and often through easily understood slogans.
>
> **Catch-all parties**, often a development from the first two, are parties whose policies are in **the national interest** rather than in the interests of particular groups within them. Religious organisations, which at first form parties to defend their interests, often develop into parties that represent greater national interests.
>
> Examples in Europe are Germany's Christian democratic party which moved from a religious defence organisation to a broader party of the centre-right; in the Middle East, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood is another. Other examples are the many socialist parties which broadened into leader-dominated social democratic parties (Spain's or the UK's).[3]

Organisation reflects aim of highlighting issues for affected groups

Traditionally, in the history of parliament, parties represented a specific class or work-related group: landowners, farmers, wage-earners, businesspeople, all taxpayers.[4]

A party today is more a collection of communities, of small groups, united by a common purpose. Accordingly, these communities are often now organised in an 'organic' rather than top-down way, with the purpose of the organisation deciding what its best formation should be.

Election campaigns are an education in themselves

When parties interact they learn from each other, especially in election campaigns. Party systems are all these interactions, as well as all rules governing the ways they are run. We can learning how to improve these systems by first categorising them, and then examining the reasons for their success or decline.

In democracies party systems can put into three overlapping categories:

1)dominant systems

2) two party systems and

3) multi-party systems.

There is a trend towards multi-party systems and away from the first two. This is because voters worldwide are demanding more inclusive systems. With multi-party systems, more social groups can be represented in parliament.

Dominant parties can become 'victims of their own success'

The problem with dominant parties is they can use their control of state resources to reward support. Corruption and decline easily follow. Despite or because of continuous electoral success, dominant parties become divided by factions.

As victims of their own success dominant parties:

- become inward looking
- do not develop sufficient concern for policy
- are bothered by excessive careerism, rather than idealism
- become increasingly corrupt

Examples of this are South Africa's African National Congress, India's Congress Party, Japan's Liberal Democrats and Sweden Social Democrats.

'Patronage pyramids' of clan alliances exclude other voices

By using powers and perks of office to shut out other parties, India's Congress party dominated elections for more than two decades. It formed a 'patronage pyramid' of alliances with castes and clans. By doing this the party could draw support from all social groups. However, the result was many minority voices could not be heard.

Since 1996 the increasingly authoritarian policies of the Congress party under Indira Gandhi has reduced its role to the lead party in a minority coalition

Two party systems becoming rarer

Two party systems and the plurality method they favour – in Canada, India, and the UK – are becoming less popular. One of the reasons is that other parties can have little influence on government policy. In Africa the development has been varied.

One of the exceptions is in the US where the Republican and Democrat parties have dominated politics since 1860.

However, the plurality election system there sets an almost impossible task for minor parties.[5] Given that a broad national coalition is needed to win a US presidential election, only the major parties have the resources to do this.

Regular change of parties in power is a sign of accountability

If major parties alternate as the ruling party or government reasonably regularly, an electoral system is described as offering 'clear accountability.' However, voters seeking solutions not offered by either major party often disengage from formal politics. This is because no party offers policies relevant to them, or has any chance of being at the decision-making table.

As both the US and the UK – the other example of a 'strong' two-party nation - have rarely exceeded a 60-percent turnout of voters over the past 40 years, political commentators have challenged definitions of such accountability. How strong is a democratic 'clear result', they say, when so few eligible citizens vote.

Africa's first MMP government and the call for more inclusive coalitions

After becoming the first African nation to adopt MMP in 2002, the National Assembly of Lesotho is more inclusive in terms of political representativeness. This change followed discrepancies, under the previous FTTP system, between the share of the vote and share of the seats won by political parties. It was also the result of intense negotiations for a solution.

In Europe, ruling coalitions are typically made up of five or six significant parties. Consequently consensus-building politics has become a tradition. Denmark is one of clearest examples of a full multi-party system. Since 1909 no Danish party has held a majority in the Diet, the unicameral parliament.

Coalitions work by establishing consensus-building traditions

Since 1973 in Denmark, a minimum of seven parties have won seats in parliament. In 2011 the centre-left coalition was made up of four of these, with support in parliament for 'confidence and supply' from the Red-Green Alliance.

Multi-party systems are increasing in popularity around the world as more social groupings are represented in parliament. Rather than being seen as weak government, a parliament made up of many parties can becomes the arena where reconciliation of viewpoints and social cleavages takes place. [See advantages and disadvantages of parties].

Parties in different countries have different roles

The number of party 'families' in Europe has generally been eight, with typically five or six gaining power in coalitions.

Parties in Europe, therefore, have both a representative and consensus- seeking function. This differs from the US idea of parties as 'post-fillers' or candidate-choosing mechanisms, which then spend most of their shell-life raising funds.

For multiparty systems to be successful in Africa's developing democracies, the skills and practices of consensus politics need to be retained, regained or reinstituted – in ways that reflect the complications of modern society. The history of two-party rule in Africa is instructive, especially in countries where there are ethnically-base parties.

1 A 'caucus' is the word for the closed meeting of a party's members of parliament.

2 Electorates were later regions divided into equal numbers of voters. Typically 60 – 100, 000.

3 Catch-all parties seek electoral support wherever they can find it ('a party large enough to get a majority has

*to be so catch-all that it cannot have a unique ideological program' *Kirchheimer, O. (1966) 'The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems', in Political Parties and Political Development, ed. J. LaPalombara and M. Widner (Princton, NJ: Princeton University Press) pp. 177-200]. The purpose of so-called catch-all parties, therefore, is to govern rather than represent.*

4 Wealthier taxpayers with more to lose – and contribute – often become a class of their own. Recently, with understanding of the consequences of growing 'inequality gaps' there has been increasing public and international objection to the methods of, and justifications for, tax avoidance by the rich. Also by trans- national companies who can arrange to pay comparatively little tax in any one country, including their country of origin.

5 Lowenstein,D. (2006) 'Legal Regulation and Protection of American Parties', in Handbook of Party Politics, ed. R.Katz & W. Crotty (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage) pp. 456-70. The 2016 presidential election produced calls for reform of two-party dominance and indirect voting, especially among younger voters from within the Democratic party whose preferred candidate Bernie Sanders stood on a platform of system reforms.

PART IV: Ways of making parties more representative and responsive

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Party organisation developed as a way of representing more diverse groups

Traditionally, in the history of parliament, parties represented a specific class or work-related group: landowners, farmers, wage-earners, businesspeople, all taxpayers.[1]

A party today is more a collection of communities, of small groups, united by a common purpose. Accordingly, these communities are often now organised in an 'organic' rather than top-down way, with the purpose of the organisation deciding what its best formation should be.

Selectorate before electorate – why the 'choice before the choice' is important

Awareness has grown about the importance of selectorate choices being as inclusive as possible. For no one can be voted by the electorate if s/he is not first selected by the party. These methods can be exclusive (selection by the leader or executive committee) or inclusive (a vote by the party members).

More inclusive is the choice of a party leader by a vote of registered supporters (a closed primary). Most inclusive of all is a vote by the entire electorate (an open primary).

Rank and file members help choose leader

With better understanding of the role of selectorates, the trend worldwide is to give all party members a greater say in selection of both candidates and party leader.

Giving rank and file members a stake in this important decision-making not only helps keep members more involved, but also gives leader a stronger mandate to speak on the party's behalf.

For this purpose, ballots of members using the OMOV method (one-member-one- vote) have been introduced in some countries, including Belgium and Canada – except for the Liberal party in the latter.

One-member-one-vote (OMOV)

OMOV works by party members voting for one of two candidates presented by the parliamentary wing of the party.[2] This party mandating accords leaders greater authority and legitimacy. Colleagues are usually better placed to make a first pick based on ability to lead the party, party members better placed to assess whether s/he has the capability to lead the country. Of course both can still be wrong.

It takes the best to judge the best?

Cadre parties, with assembly origins, elect their leaders only from within MP ranks. These parties can also be a feature of transitional governments before party structures are set up and seats are won on merit.

A small number of countries, including Australia, Denmark and New Zealand, also use this method. They do this on the grounds MPs are best placed to judge leaders' experience – as well as their ability to front television campaigns, to analyse concisely in soundbites, and to work cooperatively so as to win elections.

New Zealand's Labour party decided in 2015 to choose their leader using voting by both party members and elected MPs. In some countries the party leader and the leader of parliament can be different (Germany), or are required to be different (Belgium).

Safeguards against misjudging a leader

Another safeguard against parties' misjudging an ability to lead both party and country is the provision for a party to remove a leader, even if elected by popular vote in national elections. This change or 'spill' can occur mid-term if MPs can decide on an alternative minister, who on private inquiry behind the scenes 'has the numbers' to win majority support. This follows a majority no-confidence vote held within the party's caucus.

This is not done lightly, for obvious reasons. If a successful spill is not won by a substantial majority within a ruling party, if it leads to unacceptable factions, or if it is followed by unfavourable polling (after all, a general election result has been effectively overturned by a selectorate), it is often followed by early elections. In this way a new Prime Minister will 'return to the people' to seek from them a decisive mandate to govern for a new full term.

Financing of parties to ensure a level playing field

The financing of both parties and elections is still problematic in many modern democracies. But how can parties raise funds while avoiding this-for-that favours?

This practice of patronage leads to the expectation of special treatment that lies at the heart of corruption. For it effectively results in the buying of votes instead of the selling of ideas. For this reason, nearly all countries regulate party finances in some way.

Partial public funding prevents the buying of influence

At least partial public funding is now used in more than fifty percent of modern democracies.[3] Free or subsidised access to news media is also provided so as to counteract the influence of a biased or dominant media.

Some countries limit funding by private donors by matching funds already raised – up to a certain level. However, total public funding can reduce incentives for parties to attract members.

Partial public funding allows scope for enterprise and involvement

If less value is put on the process of subscribing members, a consequence could be the cadre party model. In this model, financing from personal contacts often comes with expectations that such 'favours' be returned rather than equal treatment on a consideration of merit and priority.

Public funds can also be misused by those in power. Established parties can become cartel parties by exploiting dominance of a political market to reinforce their own position. Such dominance of public funding inhibits growth of new parties with needed fresh ideas.

Differing attitudes to donations

The vast majority of governments worldwide ban political donations by governments. Twenty percent ban corporate donations and disallow overseas donations. However, only a minority of governments place limits on the size of donations. [See Hypertext on IDEA – facts and figures4]

Limiting donation size is often not effective because there is insufficient monitoring of private 'donations' and candidates can then be aided directly by vested interests.

The US is an outlier (strong exception) to all these limitations as regulation there is widely regarded as ineffective. There is no ban on funding because an absolute priority is put on free speech. However, many think US campaigns are overfunded. And consider their constitution is applied too literally.

Social cleavages create different interest groups

Every political party aims at a particular group of voters or segment of society. This is called a demographic. Presidential systems, to be truly representative, usually require support from a mix of demographics – that is, from a wide cross-section of society. Presidential systems usually require a clear majority of votes, and in multi- party systems often from a coalition of parties.

Older political systems appeal to a narrower social base. This means, they appeal to one side or another of social cleavages. Examples of cleavages are religious-secular industrial-rural, landowners and waged workers.

Parties and issues arise on each side of social cleavages

Older nations have experienced wide social cleavages. Historically these divides produced the foundation for four different political parties. These cleavages were:

- the church versus the state
- those at the centre versus those on the edges
- the agricultural sector versus the industrial one
- Employers versus industrial workers

Niche parties arise by appealing to new demographics

Many cleavages have ceased to exist or have been weakened. In Africa, cleavages may differ but urban-industrial versus rural-pastoral is a common one.[5] In an open society, new parties appeal to the changing demographics of an electoral market. These are called niche parties. These demographics may be urban low-wage earners, urban middle-class citizens, subsistence pastoralists and/or small business owners.[6]

Newer parties don't always appeal to well defined social interests, however. Instead they may cater to extreme views or anti-society malcontents. This has been proven by parties of the extreme right. However, having such parties within a nation's political system is regarded as preferable to alienating extremists whose poor treatment and lack of effective representation makes them intent on subverting it.

1 Wealthier taxpayers with more to lose – and contribute – often become a class of their own. Recently, with understanding of the consequences of growing 'inequality gaps' there has been increasing public and international objection to the methods of, and justifications for, tax avoidance by the rich. Also by trans- national companies who can arrange to pay comparatively little tax in any one country, including their country of origin.

2 Cross, W. & Blais, A. (2012) Politics at the Centre: The Selection and Removal of Party Leaders in the Anglo Parliamentary Democracies (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

3 Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance http://www.idea.int/publications/direct_democracy/index.cfm

4 http://www.idea.int/publications/direct_democracy/index.cfm

5 Fratkin, E, Roth, E A (Eds.) 2005: As Pastoralists Settle – Social, Health, and Economic Consequences of the Pastoral Sedentarization in Marsabit District, Kenya; Springer Publishing Company, New York. East Africa, home to many cattle- and camel-keeping pastoral societies, has been among the most recent to change. The shift to sedentism by East African pastoralists increased dramatically in the late 20th century as a result of sharp economic, political, demographic, and environmental changes. Prolonged drought, population growth, increased reliance on ag-culture, and political insecurities including civil war and ethnic conflict have all affected the ability of pastoralists to keep their herds. Still, the majority of pastoralist households in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Tanzania remain committed to raising livestock, even as they adapt to farming or urban residence. Pastoral production remains a major economic focus in the savannas and scrub deserts of Africa, due to both its ecological adaptability and the economic incentive to market livestock and their products (Fratkin, 2001). Pastoralists settle for a variety of reasons, some in response to 'pushes' away from the pastoral economy, others to the 'pulls' of urban or agricultural life.

6 Adano, W R; Witsenburg, K (eds) 2005: 'Once Nomads Settle – Assessing the Process, Motives, and Welfare Changes of Settlements on Mount Marsabit', in E Fratkin and E.A.Roth (eds) As Pastoralists Settle, Springer Publishing Company, New York.