



Somalia School of Government



President



Parliament



Council of Ministries

Rebuilding Somalia

One Institution at a Time



Providing Quality
Civics Education



Law and Justice
for all Somalis



Providing a Stable
Government



Somalia School of Government: Introduction

This online course in democracy Somsog.org was first completed in mid-2015 following an initiative by then Somali communications minister, Mohamed Ibrahim. With upcoming elections in Somalia in 2016, Mohamed saw the value of an online course in good governance – available everywhere to everyone with a smart phone.

Targeted initially at 275 Somali MPs and all government workers, the course aimed also to help anyone interested in how to do democracy. Although Somalia had experienced a military dictatorship for two decades, it had been the second African country to adopt democracy in the early 1960s. And by all accounts, for the first decade or so, it was a highly engaged one.

According to global surveys and independent monitors, democracies deliver high rates of citizen satisfaction. And if a sizeable majority engages in them, democracies still remain the only self-correcting forms of governance.

Obviously education is key. Especially in history. Aside from outlining the various forms of governance and how they work, these lessons explore why democracies matter – as well as how they have developed over time to serve more people. Crucially, then, knowledge of the histories of democracy and of Somalia needed to be included.

Although one-person-one-vote proved impossible for the 2016 election, ten years later it is now a legislated goal of federal government. If recovering states are to rebuild stronger foundations, the knowledge in these lessons is essential. If African governments are to move from 'Big Man' leadership to the more slowly built but longer lasting democratic institutions, knowing how other countries have done this is also essential. Choosing practical policies that will improve peoples' lives can empower

both city and pastoral communities. This project was an important step in that direction.

Much has happened in the last 10 years to shake the foundations of democracies (see Lesson 3). This 2026 updated version promotes the view that if civics education is regarded as the price of citizenship, the resulting higher engagement will bring proven rewards.

Meanwhile, given the majority of Somalis are still nomadic, better satellite coverage is needed to ensure widespread engagement. As are further developments such as complete translations into Somali and Arabic. Also, for the less literate, ability-levelled lessons and animations would promote greater participation and social progress – with the peace and prosperity that comes from these calm blessings.

TEN LESSONS IN DEMOCRACY - SOMSOG.ORG

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SOMALI SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

LESSON 1 – INTRODUCTION TO GOVERNMENT

Part 1: Learning the skills of self-government

Somalia's desire for self-government comes from a long-suffered thirst for both order and progress.

Government by Somalis, for Somalis can be traced back through a history of governance by tribal wisdom, with guidance from religious ideals. Somalia has also, in living memory, experience of some of the better aspects of colonial systems.

Unique identity

The Islamic religion and languages have given Somalia a unique African identity. As trading people for centuries, Somalis have also adapted traditional and imported systems of decision-making to suit their needs.

To rebuild their government, Somalia's Transitional governments have also drawn on experience from other successful systems in the region. And in the wider world. Government, Somali-style, now has an historic opportunity to learn from others' successes and mistakes – as well as from its own.

Parliamentary democracies promote both stability and progress

In 2015, a majority of the world's countries had become **democracies** (this is, systems of government where decisions are made by a **majority** of citizens, see Bkgrndr 1-1. In 2024, the number of democratic countries was 91. Democracies have elections and a national **parliament**, consisting either of one debating **chamber** (*unicameral parliament*) or two (*bicameral*).

This transition to democracies has mostly happened in the last 100 years. In 1900 less than 10 countries in the world were democratic, in 1942 (during WWII), it was just 12. However, in 2025, because of a loss of freedoms in many countries, democracies worldwide are in decline.

The impact of the past

The system in place when Somalia's General Siyad Barre was overthrown was one that *imposed* a vision of order and progress. Barre dissolved parliament when the prime minister was killed in 1971. However, after 21 years of top-down rule and **dictatorship**, this system left the country traumatised by wars and on the verge of economic collapse.

Clan co-operation, clan clashes, tribal wars and foreign interference are facts of history. And the introduced systems of government that were designed to bring the fruits of unity and peace - especially the delivery of education, medical progress and useful technology - turned out to be less than successful. And often disastrous.

The power of governments became excessive

Since independence from colonial rulers in the 1960s, new government systems in many parts of Africa mirrored the worst aspects of 'Big Man' excess.

Those who ruled without the feedback of representative councils, or who ignored such feedback, became corrupt and harder to remove than in traditional times., see Bkgrndr 1-2. Often backed by powerful militaries, many rulers lacked traditional restraints on personal power. Militaries took sides and interfered in politics. Most, if not all, were funded from abroad. With this new military power these Big Man leaders were able to survive longer than previous leaders who neglected the people.

For self-government, knowledge is power

The experience of the last 25 years is proof of the Somali proverb: 'To be without knowledge is to be without light.' This series of backgrounders aims to provide information about how different governments work, how they have developed, and how they can serve the people that they represent. They are guides to understanding the processes of good national and regional decision-making – so that all can enjoy the fruits of peace and unity.

This guide is organised into ten lessons or 'backgrounders', see Bkgrndr 1-3. It outlines different forms of government and compares their features and qualities. The lessons are on topics that aim to inform leaders, civil service workers, and all citizens about the origins and techniques of good governance.

How to participate in government

How well a system of government or rule actually works can be judged against traditional standards of *justice, accessibility and acceptance*. Modern standards also emphasise *efficiency, effectiveness and equity*. By comparing other governments, in the region and worldwide, especially ones similar and/or successful, leaders and citizens can better judge what to accept and what to reject. To make these comparisons, citizens must be aware of their own history. To learn how politics has worked – and to participate more fully – citizens should also know some of the language it uses.

Importance of history

The first wisdom of government is that history is important, see Bkgrndr 1-4. And that anyone ignorant of the past is in danger of repeating it. The **Development of Parliaments** topic (Lesson 2) will therefore examine the origins of parliaments as debating and decision-making institutions.

It will also outline the origins of parliamentary systems, including those assemblies headed by a president and/or prime minister.

Life is politics

According to the first person to compare more than 150 political systems 2, 350 years ago¹, all human life is political. Because we are naturally interested in the welfare of ourselves and those around us, we are in Aristotle's words "political animals".²

A useful definition of political activity is therefore: "a group activity that reaches collective decisions about how to relate to others, how best to use resources, and how to plan for the future."³

'Government' is the word given to 'ways of making and enforcing these collective decisions'. However, **governance** is used more often to emphasise that participating in this collective decision-making involves more than the organisation of government or its formal site.

The language of politics

There are two distinct activities in governance: **legislative** (law-making) and **executive** (the carrying out of laws) functions of government. They make possible future planning and wealth creation. **Executive government** is the name given to those with the power to enforce action – often the President and/or Prime Minister and cabinet. In modern democracies this power is checked by an independent **judiciary** (judges), using a written or unwritten constitution.⁴ Keeping a check on unresponsive or excessive executive power is a major reason **pollster** have recorded the widespread desire, in Muslim-majority countries where elections are held, for both democracy and the rule of law. And often with an express desire that **Shariah** is used for this role. See Bkgrndr 1-5.

Politics answers the questions: 'Who gets what, when and how?'

Politics is often called 'the art of the possible.' It deals with the problem of order and power, and seeks to answer the questions 'who gets what, when and how?' And as those with power will always be tempted to use it on others, governments have developed to protect

¹ Aristotle (1962 edition) *The Politics*, trans. T Sinclair: Harmondsworth.

² For Somalis this is reflected in the experience of the first ten years of independent government during which polls frequently showed political engagement of over 90 percent. Political commentators – those hired by news media or other governments to clarify issues – reported that Somalia was then a place of strong debate characterised by independent thinking and an egalitarian spirit. The phrase "every man is his own sultan", quoted to a British colonel in 1910, had then a positive meaning.

³ Hague, R., Harrop, M., (2013). *Comparative government and politics: An introduction*, 9th edition; Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. p.5-6

⁴ Preamble of Argentine Constitution: *We, the representatives of the people of the Argentine Nation, assembled in General Constituent Congress by the will and election of the provinces that compose it, in fulfilment of pre-existing pacts, with the purpose of establishing the national union, ensuring justice, consolidating domestic peace, providing for the common defence, promoting the general welfare, and securing the benefits of liberty for ourselves, for our prosperity, and for all people of the world who wish to dwell on Argentine soil; invoking the protection of God, source of all reason and justice, do ordain, decree, and establish this Constitution for the Argentine Nation.* [With changes of some language: 'men', 'God', and 'Argentine' – ideals in this constitution could usefully be included in many nations' Constitutions for emphases not just on equality and equity but also generosity. Like maxims, "If you find yourself more fortunate, build yourself a bigger table not a taller fence", WWII's Polish Free Army's: "For our freedom, and for yours." Aristotle (1962 edition) *The Politics*, trans. T Sinclair: Harmondsworth.

us from “the harm we would otherwise inflict on each other in our quest for gain and glory.”⁵

Modern politics (the word comes from *polis*: a ‘city-state’) often has to resolve complex problems involving many different interests.

Some politics are complicated

Some forms of “doing politics” may require expert knowledge, as well as tradition. For complex situations, an understanding of the many sides to issues is required. That is, if politics is to serve a community which has “grown too complicated for either tradition alone or arbitrary (unreasoned) rulings to preserve it – without undue use of force.”⁶

Government, then, is not just a bigger tribal council, a larger assembly or a national parliament. Government can include all small acts of governance. But simple or complex, government is the process of politics by which groups and organisations make and carry out decisions for the whole community.

Part 2: What knowledge is needed to participate in Somalia’s self-government?

The skills of compromise

Politics can itself be educational. It can enlighten those taking part about the difficulties involved in reaching decisions which are fair to all. 2, 500 years ago the word ‘*idiot*’ was invented to mean adults who took no part in politics. Politics can teach us not just the ‘art of the possible’ but also the skills of compromise. All political scientists agree that ***making and accepting compromises is the essential skill for democratic government.***

Seldom can everyone get exactly what they want. With compromise, decisions are taken, progress is made, but often no one gets exactly what they originally desired.

Different attitudes to politics: strength as widespread participation

Some still see politics as a competition producing winners and losers. Those who emphasise compromise see it as a “peaceful process of open discussion leading to collective decisions acceptable to all stakeholders.”⁷

However, ‘strong leaders’ or **dictators** with narrow views in pursuit of single goals, and with unchanging ideas, do produce many more losers than winners. Often, they themselves create these ‘losers’ by excluding minorities or sections of the community. Governments in Africa in the three generations after the 1960s were often dominated by such leaders.

Today’s success stories in Africa are developing **civic institutions** and **feedback mechanisms**. These include leaders who listen, meetings with **consensus voting**, **constitutional lawyers**, democratic **political parties**, trustworthy **pollsters** to measure **public opinion**, honest

⁵ Hobbes, T. (1651) *Leviathan*, 1968 edition. M. Oakeshott: Toronto: Cromwell-Collier.

⁶ Crick, B. (2005) *In defence of Politics*, 5th edition. London: Continuum.

⁷ Hague, R., Harrop, M., (2013). *Comparative government and politics: An introduction*, 9th edition Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. p.3.

scrutineers for elections, **ombudsmen** to oversee government departments, and easier ways for any citizen groups to make formal **submissions** to government about local issues.

Why study political systems and policies?

A key reason for studying different political systems is to learn the best ways to ‘pull the levers of power’. Another, at least in some forms of government, is to learn how to prevent the misuse of power. To prevent power misuse, we must understand how political and military power works. And the ways that have developed to check its misuse.

As the saying goes, no one wants to prevent death by foxes to be killed by lions. In low-income countries, these lions may be governments dominated by individuals, clans or unchecked executives. In high income countries they may be competing larger – or outside – forces. Death by such lions comes about by power inequalities, or loss of economic sovereignty. Manipulation of information or of electorate boundaries – or, as recently, a lack of interest in politics - can let loose lions. Knowledge of how power works can help citizens check or counter them.

The science of consultation

High income countries that develop effective systems of government can still decline. Even with feedback to government from organised **interest groups**, and the input of challenging ideas from gathered public opinion, a small group of ‘winners’ can dominate and exclude others. However, when well thought-out policies and ways of achieving goals become law – and are enforced for the good of all – disadvantaged groups in society rise along with others. Lack of participation, or lack of **corporate responsibility**, can still result in ‘the rich getting richer, and the poor poorer.’ But with effective **public consultation** and **fair taxation** - and public **watchdogs** with the necessary teeth of enforceable sanctions - excessive power can be checked. The science of consultation includes **scientific polling**, **focus groups** and well-advertised calls for **submissions to government** (with sufficient time to allow affected people to submit them.)

Good policies plus widespread participation leads to good governance

Grassroots organisations are the heart of what is called **civil society**. Formal centralised government has big advantages, however. With a centralised government decisions can be made and enforced peacefully. Policing, security and infrastructure can be guaranteed. Strong government, however, always carries the real danger of abuse of authority.

Also, studies have shown that rather than focusing on strong government, an emphasis on plans for action or **policies** of governments - along with activities that support them - ensures greater citizens participation. And ensures citizen satisfaction with ruling governments.

Participation equals good governance equals fairer outcomes for all. Many **international agencies** suggest that in new democracies effective governance is crucial to economic

development (World Bank, 1997)⁸. When examining the quality and effectiveness of rule, these agencies say, it is better to focus on **government policies and activities** - rather than on the institutions of rule themselves.⁹

Importance of the courts, the media, and vigilance

If we want to secure the benefits of government while limiting its dangers, a key question is the age-old one: who will guard the guards¹⁰. In low-income countries, political system can become the property of a dominant clan or even individual. In any country, political parties with little support can still manipulate public opinion: corporations with big pockets can still buy influence, block reforms, avoid or evade taxation responsibilities. And if, as the saying goes, the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, keeping politicians honest is everyone's job in democracies.¹¹

How to judge which system fits best

Modern communication has made our world inter-connected. It is easier, if we have satellite coverage, to know about others. Therefore, making sense of events is not just interesting but important. We cannot avoid knowing there are vastly different incomes, different methods of governance, low-wage economies, and countries with working social security safety nets. Of course, we could study other systems to congratulate ourselves on the superiority – or simplicity – of our own system. But by making comparisons we can often judge the correctness of our own ideas. We can also come to a solid basis for our judgements using agreed-on standards. This avoids both self-congratulation and guesswork.

Civic values: the art of politics teaches us tolerance – and produces stability

In politics, to “be a foreigner in your own land” has value in itself. This habit of seeing things as if we are foreigners, helps us to appreciate differences and the reasons for them. Tolerance, both as a personal and a **civic virtue**, can be learned. Examining why countries choose particular methods can also reveal the features of each system – in terms of basic values such as stability and effectiveness. And the methods they use to achieve justice for all, termed **social justice**.

Most countries adopt and adapt others' practices, wherever suitable. This process in business and in government is called best practice. Or simply 'good practice,' as it is termed in the guide for parliaments worldwide (See Bkgrndr 1-6), put out by the 125 year-old union of parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).¹² Modern leadership styles such as servant-leadership are also challenging previous corrupt models, both in business and government. Leadership that serves others is good for all.

⁸ World Bank (1997) *World Development Report: The State in a Changing World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

⁹ Hague, R., Harrop, M., (2013). *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*, 9th edn Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. p.6

¹⁰ Allen, R.E. (2006). Plato: *The Republic*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

¹¹ From a speech by abolitionist Wendell Phillips on **January 28, 1852**.

¹² <http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/guide.htm>

LESSON ONE FURTHER READING:

Parts 3, 4 & 5 are further readings on the ways governments can be categorised, the various types of democracies, and the ways both of these have developed. Or have not developed.

They also outline the ways in which power is achieved – and how it can be checked and balanced out in *responsive democracies*. That is, those with key institutions which do this.

[PART 3: Learning by making comparisons \[htxt P6\]](#)

[PART 4: Why democracy – and which type? \[htxt P6\]](#)

[Part 5: How some governments can self-correct while others self-protect \[htxt P6\]](#)

BACKGROUNDERS

BKGRNDR 1-1

ON MAJORITIES – KINDS, AND DEGREES OF, MAJORITIES

A general definition of 'majority' is any number greater than 50 percent. But in the development of democracy, varying degrees of majority rule have been agreed on as satisfying a definition of 'most.' This includes the need for an acceptable – and accepted – level of community agreement, 'buy-in' or assent.

Degrees of democracy: from unanimity to plurality

Unanimity: All need to agree, assent or at least acquiesce (agree to go along with)

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

Qualified majority: More than a simple majority: typically, two-thirds (for impeachment of a president, for example)

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

Absolute majority: More than half of those entitled to vote (even if 51 %)

Majority (simple majority): More than half of those who actually voted (even if 51%)

Plurality: The largest number of votes – but not necessarily a majority

BKGRNDR 1-2

Democracy – African style

African democracy before European colonisations

In his 1959 classic *African Nationalism*,¹³ Ndebele Sithole argued 'it is bad history and bad civics' to deny African democracy before European colonisation. And if the essence of democracy is the will of the people ('*intando yabantu*'), Sithole went on, his research proved African people had it 'since the dawn of their history.'

A call for self-rule and self-determination

He concluded his book with a call for the right to *ukuzibusa* (self-rule) and *kuziwitonga* (self-determination) in a way that showed 'the will of the majority of the people.'

After giving colonisers credit for some improvements to native African democracy, Sithole cites a number of examples from differing parts of Africa to contradict the idea 'democracy was European-introduced to Africa.'

'European dictatorship'

In fact, according to Sithole, since Europeans ruled 'not according to the voice of the majority, but according to that of a minority' the African did not 'come into contact with European on a democratic but on a dictatorial level.' Therefore African nationalism, Sithole maintains, is simply a stand against 'European dictatorship.'

And while European leaders at the time were self-appointed to their positions of authority, the African ruler on the other hand owed his power to the people themselves 'who dismissed him from office if they were dissatisfied with him.'

The king is the people

Declaring it typical of African history, Sithole quotes his own tribe's view that the Ndebele big chief or king embodied clearly what was in his people. And that if the king failed to reflect this, the people defied him. Ndebele asserts, therefore, the king's only true voice was that of his people. He quotes a Ndebele saying:

'The King is the people. To respect the King is to respect oneself. He who despises the king despise us. He who praises our king praises us. The King is us.'

Using other examples from Ghana's customary law, and from Nigeria's Yoruba people, Sithole says the people had real power against tyrants – and against abuse of power. A Ghanese chief who abused his power would be warned by elders that his behaviour was 'alienating his subjects and bringing his stool in disrepute.'

'We do not wish his ears to be hard of hearing'

¹³ N Sithole, *African Nationalism*, (1959; 1968) Oxford University Press, Capetown.

Sithole cites from the Ghanese chief-making ceremony the enstooler's chant on behalf of the people:

*we do not wish greediness ... we do not wish his ears be hard of hearing ... we do not wish that he should act on his own initiative ... that it should ever be said, 'I have no time. I have no time ... We do not wish personal abuse.'*¹⁴

Chiefs were dependent upon advice for their office

According to Sithole, it was obvious from the way elders dealt with the usual complaints against a chief: 'excessive drinking, going after other men's wives ... neglecting the advice of elders' that the chief was dependent upon for his office. And the elders were also dependent upon the common people for theirs.

Among the Swazi and Bechuana too, Sithole claims, a chief could be tried by his own council if he broke the law. And among the Yoruba, declaring war was such a grave responsibility that a king was expected, under the laws of his country, to die before his defeated army returned home – and if he did not, the people saw to it this law was executed

Real authority comes from the people

Good government, therefore, was popular government. A headman who had more persons in his village was regarded with envy by other headmen. And a chief with more villages under his jurisdiction than other enjoyed greater social and political prestige. Almost all the tribal institutions Sithole examines owe their real authority to the people and not to the office-holders.

Also, Sithole asserts, European powers had preserved the shell of kingship and chieftainship but emptied them of their real content.

Will of the people versus will of a foreign power

Thus such African kings and chiefs no longer represented the will of the people, but the will of a foreign power. Accordingly, Sithole wants not just to honour a pre-European native democracy, but also to make a claim for a real democracy all the peoples of Africa once enjoyed.

¹⁴ Apter, D. E. 1957: *The Gold Coast in Transition*. Princeton University Press, Princeton. P. 108; Sithole (1959) p. 93.

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LONGING FOR FREEDOMS IS UNIVERSAL

Though some countries have contributed more than others, “the longing for freedom and human dignity is not English or American or ‘Western’ ...”

“Centuries ago, when kings, emperors, and warlords reigned over much of the world, it was the English who first spelled out the rights and liberties of man in the Magna Carta. It was here, in this very hall, where the rule of law first developed, courts were established, disputes were settled, and citizens came to petition their leaders.

Over time, the people of this nation ... would ultimately forge an English Bill of Rights, and invest the power to govern in an elected parliament that’s gathered here today. What began on this island would inspire millions throughout the continent of Europe and across the world.... As Winston Churchill said, the “... Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, Habeas Corpus, trial by jury, and English common law find their most famous expression in the American Declaration of Independence.”

[W]e have learned better than most that the longing for freedom and human dignity is not English or American or Western -- it is universal, and it beats in every heart.”

— May 25, 2011. Part of US President Barack Obama’s speech to both Houses of Parliament in London’s Westminster Hall (during a state visit to the UK). In this he refers to the role of the English parliament in developing democracy, rights and liberties.

Shariah's role

The way forward: Shariah as a basis for the rule of law

Good social contracts have four major uses

Social contracts that offer a fair deal to communities are ones which are widely accepted – and therefore usually require the least oversight. Historically, these are ones which have majority 'stakeholder input,' where 'the people are sovereign'. To summarise: social contracts have four major uses:

- They legitimise governments – that is, they give governments authority to act on behalf of all sectors of society
- They constrain government – that is, they put limits on the authority and actions of governments and military so they don't abuse power. Especially executive power.
- They secure rights for citizens – that is, they ensure freedoms and services citizens can possess or enjoy simply because they belong to a country or region
- They secure protection for citizens – from, for example, other citizens, invaders, exploitative business interests or intrusive militaries

Constitutions reflect social contracts

One of the key roles of laws and constitutions is to define the limits of power. And constitutions which limit power and enshrine distinctions between unity (which ensures order and progress) and uniformity (which prohibits creative dissent) can be, and were, written in stone. However, as social contracts that reflect the relationship between the state and citizens, they can also be amended to reflect new conditions.

Debate about social contracts in modern countries is not therefore evidence of division. The rule of law is not written in stone or in that sense divine, although a high degree of agreement is usually required for change to take place. This is to reflect both the need for change and to ensure it.

Challenging the terms of contracts helps keep them relevant

And not all division is negative. In the golden age of Islam, between the 8th and 12th centuries, *ijtihad* (active intelligence and independent thinking) meant that 135 schools of interpretation flourished in Arab Spain. And there were up to 75 libraries per city. This process was only stopped, history tells us, when fanatics from Morocco crossed to Spain in the 12th century.¹⁵

Collapsed or 'failed' states, however, are unique. For Somalia, the state under Siyad Barre was not a protector but ended up being an extraordinary predator. Studies have found that in British Somaliland, the state has protected urban dwellers from violence better than other

¹⁵ Feldman, N. 2008 *The Fall and Rise of The Islamic State*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

forms of political organisation. They also found that for pastoralists in the savannahs of the Horn of Africa, neither colonial nor modern states have been able to protect them.

When a predator state collapses, the most powerful fill the vacuum

Following the Barre state collapse, neither the state nor clan elders could stop the shift from protection based on sub-clan communities to patron-client ones. In the major urban areas, warlords in conflict zones resulted in an impoverished general population. And a wealthy elite. The removal of state controls did create a class of businessman with great wealth able to pay for access to trading ports. And to buy and offer protection.

In these situations there have been calls for social contracts based on a rule of law that applies equally to everyone: urban or pastoralist, wealthy or impoverished, great or small. Hopes for Shariah law centre on the belief that it can be the equivalent of a 'rule of law' that everyone is bound to and reflects the core values of society.

Sharia as protection against power abuse

Islamist political parties which promise Shariah law are generally well supported in Muslim countries, as results and exit polls reveal. Their reasons for wanting Shariah include:

- it will guide rulers in the way of wisdom and virtue
- it will herald a new golden age of Islam where rights are respected which can come only from religion
- it is an alternative and antidote for what is regarded as a permissive or secular West that does not have these values
- it will bring a respect for contracts and a basis for unity not found in secular societies
- it will function as some kind rule of law and therefore check excessive executive power, weak if not absent especially in Arabic countries.

However, the history of Shariah shows that for it to function as a rule of law it needs the existence of effective institutions interpreting a well codified set of laws and reinforced by regular practice.

A rule of law relies on civic institutions

This regular practice, history shows, needs to be backed by a recognition that citizens and residents have more to gain by remaining faithful to state rules than by disobeying or ignoring them. Acceptance of fair and equally applied law in civic institutions is a good test of this.

As has been often pointed out, *Shariah* functions more as a value system than a fully developed rule of law. And in countries where *Shariah* has been implemented, it is as the legal, primarily penal code (*hudud*), with severe punishments for adultery, theft and blasphemy. These gravely disadvantage the women, the poor and the religiously deviant or non-practising.

The scholars' role in the rule of law

The traditional Islamic constitution rested on a balance of powers between a ruler subject to law and a class of scholars who interpreted and administered that law. Yet the governments in most contemporary majority-Muslim states have lost these features.

Rulers often govern as if they were above the law, not subject to it, and the scholars who once wielded so much influence are much reduced in status. If they have judicial posts at all, it is usually as judges in the family-law courts.¹⁶

Shariah as a limitation on executive power

In 1928 and 1935, long before the coming of Islamism and Islamic political ideologies, arguments were made in Iran before the writing of their civil codes for making Shariah a limitation on government. And as a source of law. And in 1948 in Egypt, Shariah was used in this way in the writing of their civil code. This role for Shariah was accepted and subsequently Egypt's code served as the model for most other Arab countries of the Middle East.

The rule of law as *qanun*, rather than *Shariah*

The 150-year struggle by Muslims in the Middle East for the rule of law have not used the word 'Shariah' for it, however. Reformers recognised important distinctions in language should reflect distinctions in thought. Instead of Shariah the word in slogans and mottos was 'the rule of law (*qānun*),' 'limited government (*mashrutiyya[t]*)' and 'government limited by law (*qānun*)'. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century the key term for reformers was not *Shariah* or divine law but *qanun*. *Qanun*, public law or state law, is essentially the same as the Greek word 'canon,' used for church law in the West or as a word for an established or agreed-on list of classics.

Shariah as God's will – according to the scholars

For Shariah to function as the equivalent of the rule of law today it needs to establish itself as a check on the power of executive. And this is the role of an independent judiciary. The scholars had this role during an age when Shariah was associated with the rule of law. The ruler certainly had to obey God's law mediated through the Shariah, but it was God's will as the scholars interpreted it. As 'agents of stability and predictability,' therefore, the scholars controlled and administered the law according to well-settled rules.

The scholars as a check on governments' excess

By this control the scholars could, and did, limit the ability of the executive to take the property of private citizens. This was crucial in societies where the transition from one ruler to the next could be disorderly and even violent. This, in turn, pressured the executive to rely on lawful taxation to raise revenues – which itself forced rulers to be responsive to their subjects' concerns.

¹⁶ http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/16/magazine/16Shariah-t.html?_r=0

When Shariah, as interpreted, was a check on excess

The scholars and their law were thus essential to the tremendous success that Islamic society enjoyed from its inception into the 19th century. “Without Shariah, there would have been no Haroun al-Rashid in Baghdad, no golden age of Muslim Spain, no reign of Suleiman the Magnificent in Istanbul.”¹⁷

But a comprehensive legal code derived from, or dictated by Shariah, has never existed in Islamic history. And the application of the law in practice allowed a lot of leeway. This explains why modern advocates of Shariah as the source of law are not recommending the adoption of it as such.

Separation of religion and state in Muslim-majority countries

Both Indonesia and Turkey are countries which prefer a separation of the religious and political spheres. They do not see ‘secular’ as anti-religion but the common ground upon which all ideas can meet. Between 1999 and 2002, as a result of representations by Muslim organisations representing more than 30 million members, the Indonesian constitution was amended to uphold the separation of religion and state.

In Turkey where the military is staunchly secular and there is a tradition of state-centred secularism post WWI, Islamists are focusing more on establishing a rule of law to counter excesses of executive power. Shariah has been left to be an influence on personal and political morality. Even Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood has abandoned its pre-ideological position and is pushing for *Qanun* with the Shariah as a source of reference.

Judges as agents of the law and not agents of the state

Constitutional lawyer Professor Feldman concludes in his book *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State*¹⁸ that the future for societies where there is a ‘demand for law-based government embodied in Koranic law’ lies in the ability of parties to put pressure on executives. If this leads to a transformation of the judiciary, he maintains, a fairer, more inclusive society must result as judges ‘... come to think of themselves as agents of the law rather than agents of the state.’

When contracts fail – dishonour and lack of trust begins vicious circles

What makes leaders in executive positions unresponsive? Why do citizens begin to disengage from the state? Historically, if social contracts fail to deliver security or services, citizens soon disengage from them in some way or other. The vicious circle then begins: lack of participation weakens the state, the state then becomes less responsive. Citizens begin to give only what is directly punishable, executives to hear only what they want to hear. And citizen feedback, through fear or uncaring, is little different. How, then, can political institutions be developed that foster feedback and response?

¹⁷ http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/16/magazine/16Shariah-t.html?_r=0

¹⁸ Feldman, N. 2008 *The Fall and Rise of The Islamic State*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Strong leadership – reliance on personal morality versus strong institutions?

Sometimes flawed attitudes or a flawed leadership model is as much at fault as lack of real consultation processes. A study of previous leadership traditions, *The Islamic Middle East*¹⁹ describes how an 'ethic of masculine self-assertion dominated always by plotting against the victor to recapture lost honour' can be destructive of the trust essential for two-way contracts. It points to the not so obvious result of a 'reliance on personal morality to provide order instead of developing political institutions.'

Where does political strength actually reside?

Using historical comparisons from throughout the region, the author says a reliance on leaders' personal morality alone for good governance results is a kind of mental paralysis. What leaves reform-minded citizens unable to think practically about civic life, the study finds, is the circular reasoning: 'no Islamic state without virtuous Muslims, no virtuous Muslims without an Islamic state'. The resulting reform paralysis is usually then exploited by 'ambitious groups united by self-interest ... led by opportunistic power-seekers.'

Why is there often a lack of moral condemnation of leaders' tyranny?

This paralysis is based on the perception that the realms of citizenship and the state are mutually exclusive. When this thinking is also driven by a 'masculine' ethic of competitive individualism the study concludes, it results in the neglect of any moral condemnation of tyranny. Then, because claims to sacred authority "are always bound to be rendered questionable by the usual outcomes of secular power, the inevitable political failures led to an even greater disillusionment with government." The study looks at examples in regional language, at centuries-old proverbs and actual leadership examples. It finds that "reliance on personal morality to provide order is never as effective as the slower process of developing civic institutions."

Civic institutions can remain powerful when individuals are weak

When such institutions are developed, the study found, it can soon be demonstrated to citizens that "the state is indeed their servant and not the instrument of any ruler or rulers." The study concludes by highlighting the advantage of strong institutions over strong rulers. When reliable measurement and delivery mechanisms are in place, the state can function with integrity in its own sphere "despite the ever-present imperfections of fallible humans."

¹⁹ Lindholm, C. 1999, 2002: *The Islamic Middle East, Tradition and Change* Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.



'Parliament is the heart of a well-functioning democracy.' - IPU

Parliament: no single model is best but good practice can be shared

Parliament in a democracy is the name given to the place where a nation debates and decides how best to run itself, rule itself and use its resources. But as the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), a facilitator of parliamentary good practice since 1889, reminds its readers 'there is no single model of democracy.'

However, according to IPU, there is value in providing a framework outlining a clear sense of direction and a set of criteria. Its website includes results of a good-practice survey sent out each year to parliaments worldwide to show not only that parliaments are diverse and constantly evolving but also that they need to respond to different circumstances and challenges. That is, if parliaments are to be at the heart of a responsive government.

Parliaments have developed to meet changing needs

The way the debating chamber is organised and the actual practices of Parliaments, have been adapted over many hundreds of years to meet the needs of various and changing societies.

Although parliaments are at the heart of democracy, IPU points out that whenever members of any group decide what sort of policies and rules will govern them – and insist on being treated as equals in doing so – they are practising democracy. (*Demos* means 'people' in Greek, and *kratein* means 'rule').

Parliament's workings should be open, trustworthy and understandable to all

To ensure good decision-making parliaments decide on formalities and procedures to help them run smoothly. The IPU emphasises the physical places used by Parliaments should be accessible for public scrutiny – and that their workings should be open to all. This inspires trust and recognises the importance of honesty.

And the traditional ways of acting, deciding and carrying out decisions – which are part of the procedures or 'institutions' of Parliament – should be expressed in language understandable by all citizens.

Good parliaments institute inclusive practices – and guarantee rights

Good institutions or ways of organising government include:

- a guaranteed framework of rights for all citizens (most often in a constitution)
- ways to represent large numbers of citizens
- ways to make those in power accountable;
- ways to inform and include citizens, especially by the use of the news media and through the formation of political parties.

The 120-year old Inter-Parliamentary Union says **civil society** or an active citizen body is one of most important parts of parliaments' complex set of institutions and practices. These have evolved over time and will continue to do so.

Parliaments are more than buildings – and have many roles

Parliaments, then, are not just the buildings or offices where the debating and deciding of important issues takes place. Parliaments are also a set of practices and institutions that mediate between the will of the people and decisions made for their common good.

And as the IPU points out, Parliaments have other roles or dimensions which include:

- promoting civil society
- upholding the rights of a free press
- making themselves accessible and accountable
- protecting the rights of the judges and court system (the judiciary) which acts as one of the checks on their own power.

The IPU reminds us these roles or dimensions are what makes parliament the central institution of democracy. They offer examples of good practice submitted regularly to it from parliaments worldwide.

Good parliaments can be judged by these features – and activities

The IPU sums up the characteristics of truly democratic parliaments in five words.

Such parliaments will be: representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective.

And to be effective, the IPU says, good democracies should include: Citizen rights, institutions of representative government, citizen rights, institutions of accountable government, an active civil society, active political parties, active communicating media.

[Setting standards and guidelines](#), [Strengthening representative institutions](#), [Promoting inclusive parliaments](#), [Promoting and defending human rights](#), [Partnership between men and women](#), [Promoting knowledge of parliaments](#), [International Day of Democracy](#), [Global Parliamentary Report](#), [Guide on parliament and democracy](#), [Key documents](#), [Sustainable development](#), [Cooperation with the UN](#), [Peace and security](#),

[What is the UPU? http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/guide.htm](http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/guide.htm)

LESSON 2 – THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARLIAMENTS

Part 1: From consultation and advisory assemblies to decision-making ones

Introduction:

Most countries around the world now have developed parliaments. Some have developed parliaments earlier and furtherer than others. At least in terms of wider citizen representation and effective law-making. Others have simply developed differently in response to different needs.

Development of parliaments has generally taken the form of greater **inclusion**. Over centuries, a greater cross-section of groups in society was gradually included in either the consultation or decision-making process.

A modern parliament has three functions:

- making laws
- [representing](#) the electorate
- overseeing the government (using hearings and inquiries)

Three kinds of assemblies

Historically, these three functions in parliament have been done in three kinds of assemblies or meetings called:

- consultative
- deliberative
- judicial

Modern parliaments often have a number of these different assemblies or councils running at the same time but the main one is the national debating and law-making chamber variously called the 'House of representatives,' the House of Commons, or the People's Assembly.

Early developments in the history of parliament were shifts from consultative assemblies to ones with power to make decisions. Parliaments began as councils who would give advice to kings or rulers. Therefore, they usually included **people of wisdom and experience**. Early councils gave advice, often about how much tax could be levied, but had no real power. Others had power but were largely ignored.

Mother of all parliaments

Most parliaments worldwide are based on the one developed in the United Kingdom of Britain (UK). Called after the area of London where the main law-making assembly has been housed since 1259, the 'Westminster system' experienced more developments than

anywhere else. And in a shorter time period. That is why it is called ‘the mother of all parliaments.’

The usual way of tracing the development of parliamentary democracy is to divide it into time periods along with breakthroughs in **consultation** and **power-sharing**:

- Early development
- modern parliaments
- representative parliaments

Part 2: Today, parliaments can consult others worldwide

Learning from others

Parliament is the heart of a well-functioning democracy. Good rulers have always relied on advice from trusted experts and elders of their communities. Well run democracies, therefore, rely on advisory councils or *shura* that can give accurate information about the people’s concerns and needs.

To discuss national or regional issues, and to pass laws to deal with these, democracies use a special assembly room or **national debating chamber**. For this system to work properly parliaments decide on **rules, formalities** and **procedures** that allow it to examine laws carefully – and then to pass them by majority. These are often called **standing orders**.

The Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), a contributor to parliamentary good practice since 1889, says truly democratic parliaments are ones which are:

- representative
- accountable
- transparent
- effective
- accessible

No single model of democracy

The IPU quotes from a qualification made by the 2005 UN World Summit that ‘there is no single model of democracy.’ However, the IPU’s mission is to offer a set of criteria which will enable all interested ‘to recognise what a democratic parliament might look like.’ There is value, IPU says, in giving a framework for and outlining a ‘clear sense of direction’.

Ideally, all parliamentary institutions should be expressed in language understandable by all citizens. Often this will include other official languages of a nation, and interpreters of these.

Good parliaments are not just democratic

Good parliaments generally include:

- a guaranteed framework rights for all citizens
- ways to represent large numbers of citizens
- ways to make those in power accountable²⁰
- ways to inform and include citizens – especially via **news media** and by the formation of **political parties**.

Dimensions of democracy

The IPU also outlines what it means by ‘dimensions of democracy’. They are:

- citizen rights
- institutions of representative and accountable government
- an active **civil society**
- political parties
- the communicating media.

The Union reminds countries interested in **best practice** – what they more accurately call **good practice**, emphasising there is no single model of an effective democracy – that these roles or dimensions are what makes parliaments the central institution of democracy.

The institutions set up to carry out this important role can be physical places or organised ways of doing things. In democracies both kinds of institution are required to inform citizens about their ways of operating.

The institutions set up to carry out this important role can be physical places or organised ways of doing things. In democracies both kinds of institution are required to inform citizens about their ways of operating.

Openness encourages trust

The actual practices of this decision-making body, and the way the debating chamber is organised, have been adapted over hundreds of years to meet the needs of changing societies. As physical places, parliaments are expected to be open for the public to see and listen. This encourages openness or **transparency**, one of the key qualities of democracy.

The 125-year old IPU, based in Geneva, has a wealth of comparisons to make from parliaments worldwide. From this experience they declare one of the most important parts

²⁰ According to the IPU, good institutions or ways of organising government include: a guaranteed framework of rights for all citizens (most often in a constitution); ways to represent large numbers of citizens; ways to make those in power accountable; ways to inform and include citizens, especially by the use of the news media and through the formation of political parties. <http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/guide.htm>

of the 'complex set of institutions and practices' that make up modern parliament is a **civil society**, or in other words: an active citizen body of citizens committed to some change.

Wider roles of parliament

And as the Union points out, parliaments have other roles which include:

- promoting civil society
- upholding the rights of a free press
- making themselves accessible and accountable
- protecting the rights of the judges and court system (judiciary) which act as one of the checks on their power.

Traditional ways of acting, deciding and carrying out decisions are often borrowed from older institutions. They are then blended with local practices and traditional forms of expression. The institutions set up to carry out this important role can be physical places or organised ways of doing things. In democracies both kinds of institution are required to inform citizens about their ways of operating.

Many global examples of 'good practice'

In its annual report the IPU report includes the results of a **good practice survey** sent out each year to parliaments world-wide. The results of this reveal that parliaments need to respond to different circumstances and challenges.

Parliaments, according to the IPU, should not be seen just as buildings or offices where debating important issues happens. The most effective institutions and practices, IPU maintains, "will mediate between the will of the people and decisions made for their common good".

Such parliaments will be at the heart of a **responsive government** – that is, they will truly be government 'by the people, for the people, of the people'

Part 3: Key events: UK parliament's development into decision-making assembly

The following table summarises some of the main events in the development of the 'mother of all parliaments' in the United Kingdom of Britain during more than 1000 years.

Act	Date	Description	Effect
	1066	William of Normandy rules over a feudal system but includes a council of advisers who as yet lack power	Advisers are tenants-in-chief (a person who holds land) and ecclesiastics (religious officials)
	1215	Magna Carta (the Great Charter)	Limits power of kings and gives some rights to men of nobility , including the right to a fair trial
	1265	Simon de Montfort's Parliament	1st representative parliament of advisors from landowning society
	1295	Edward I's ' Model Parliament ' adopts Montfort's scheme	Also summons knights and burgesses; historically becomes known as the ' summoning of the Commons '
	1341	Commons first have a meeting separate from the Kings rooms	First example of bicameral system; the emergence of parliament as an institution
	1430, 1432	Introduction of formal property ownership qualification for voting rights: the forty shilling freeholders franchise	New county franchise sets uniform threshold for voting rights
	1547	St Stephen's Chapel , in the Palace of Westminster becomes meeting place of the House of Commons of England	

Petition of Right	1628	Asserts certain rights of Parliament and the individual	Taxation requires parliamentary consent; writ of habeas corpus is restated
	1649	Charles I executed	Commonwealth of England
Bill of Rights (England & Wales) Claim of Right (Scotland)	1689	Asserts certain rights of Parliament & of the individual	Contributes to parliamentary supremacy over the monarch – therefore a landmark in the development of civil liberties in the United Kingdom
Great Reform Act Second & Third Reform Act	1832 1867 1884	Wider male franchise & more even representation	See history of elections in the United Kingdom
Ballot Act 1872	1872	Secret ballot	See voting system
Parliament Act of 1911	1911	Payment of Members of Parliament is introduced	With Parliament Act of 1949 , supremacy of the House of Commons ²¹
Representation of the People Act 1918	1918	Universal male franchise and franchise is expanded to include some women (above age 30 and meeting certain conditions)	All male adults and about 40 percent of adult women gain suffrage (dependant on marital status, property ownership)
Equal Franchise Act 1928	1928	Universal male and female suffrage from age 21	Electoral equality between women and men
Representation of the People Act 1969	1969	Voting age is lowered to 18	Franchise is expanded

²¹ Note: In the UK, the monarch still has the right to ‘warn, encourage and be consulted.’

History of parliaments – animations

60 SEC ANIMATION

- <http://www.parliament.uk/education/about-your-parliament/history-of-parliament/>

8.23 SEC ANIMATION ON UK PARLIAMENT HISTORY AND WORKINGS

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAMblz3Y2JA>

60 SEC HOW PARLIAMENT WORKS

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbLTwQwXgWc>

6.47 SEC PARLIAMENTARY VS PRESIDENTIAL DEMOCRACY EXPLAINED

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4quK60FUvkY>

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RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT' AS PART OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Responsible government is the term given to a form of accountability in the [Westminster system](#) of [parliamentary democracy](#).

In Westminster democracies governments (or at least [executive branch](#)) are responsible to parliament rather than to the monarch. In [bicameral](#) parliaments the government is responsible first to the parliament's [lower house](#).

The lower house is always more numerous and because it is [directly elected](#) it is more representative of the people than the [upper house](#).

This form of accountability shows itself in several ways. [Ministers](#) account to Parliament for their decisions and for the performance of their departments. For example, Ministers of police and security, of health and welfare, of education.

This requirement to answer questions in Parliament about the running of such departments, and to make announcements, means that ministers have to have the privileges of the 'floor'. These are only granted to those who are members of either house of Parliament.

Secondly, although ministers are officially appointed by the [head of state](#) (president/king) and can theoretically be dismissed by that sovereign authority, they concurrently retain their office subject to their holding the confidence of the lower house of Parliament.

When the lower house has passed a [motion of no confidence](#) in the government, the government must immediately resign or submit itself to the will of the electorate in a new general election to be held as soon as practicable.

Lastly, the sovereign is in turn required to effect their sovereignty only through these responsible ministers. He or she must never attempt to set up a "shadow" government of executives or advisors and attempt to use them as instruments of government, or to rely upon their "unofficial" advice.

In effect the sovereign is an impasse breaker, putting decisions back to the people.' His/her ministers are required to counsel him/her (i.e., explain to him/her and be sure s/he understands any issue that s/he will be called upon to decide for the good of the entire nation, but generally these are issues which affect the whole nation and usually in times of emergency.

LESSON 3 – DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Part 1: Timeline of the history of democracy

Democracy timeline: a rocky road. This timeline features the democracy story, from its earliest beginnings in Mesopotamia in 4000BC through to advances like the Magna Carta and universal suffrage – that is, the right for all adults to vote.

It includes some setbacks like Hitler's Germany and the crushing of pro-democracy campaigns. It concludes with a tumultuous decade: 2005, in which Iraq's multi-party elections were held; and 2013, in which Tunisia's crisis during the 'jasmine revolution' of the so-called Arab Spring ended in multi-party negotiations.

Historically, these negotiations agreed on a new constitution for Tunisia, and the holding of fresh elections based on it.

Details of the key events are listed below. They are divided into three time periods:

- 1) **EARLY DEMOCRACY** (4000-27BC)
- 2) **REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY** (1215-mid 20th century) and
- 3) **MODERN DEMOCRACY** (mid-20th century to the present).

EARLY DEMOCRACY

Early Democracy: 4000BC - 27BC

Early democracy began in small societies, like city states. Discussions were held in public assemblies and decisions were made by consensus. Participation in the democratic process was intense but numbers involved were limited. It was male dominated: women, slaves and foreigners were excluded.



4000-2,500BC - Mesopotamia (Iraq)

Evidence of early democracies established in self-sufficient, autonomous Sumerian city-states, based on citizens' assemblies with presiding members and agreement by consensus.



508 BC - Greece

The Greeks evolve a system of government based on 'rule by the people' which they call democracy from the Greek for *demos* (people) and *kratein* (rule). All male citizens are members of the assembly and can vote, women and slaves are excluded.



510-27BC - Roman Italy

Nobles are represented in the Senate and commoners in the Assembly and governmental power is divided between them. The extent of the empire abroad, and conflict at home, leads to the decline of democracy in favour of strong dictators.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

1215 - mid-20th century This period sees growth of greater representation of the people and the freedom to vote within nation states. Political parties are born plus competitive elections and suffrage for women become increasingly common. Increasingly, democracy becomes based on written laws ensuring fixed terms and use of secret ballots – guaranteed by independent judiciaries.

1215 - 1847



1215 - England

Nobles force King John to sign the Magna Carta establishing written law as a higher power than the rights of the king. The transfer of some power from the king to the nobles introduces basic freedom and property rights to 'free men'.



1248 - Mexico

The Aztecs rule a vast empire from the Valley of Mexico using a system of government based on city-states paying tributes to the emperor. The emperor is chosen from a royal family by a high-ranking council of nobles which he had to consult before taking decisions.



1295 - England

Edward I adopts the idea of an elected body or 'Model Parliament'. It includes clergy and aristocracy, as well as representatives of boroughs and counties. A similar system was used by Simon de Montfort - but Edward is the first king to call a parliament.



1628; 1642-51 - England

1628: alarmed by excesses of royal power, the House of Commons submitted to [Charles I](#) the [Petition of Right](#), demanding the restoration of their liberties.

Charles accepts petition but dissolves parliament, rules without them for eleven years. **1642:** Charles I enters House to arrest five MP critics for treason, sparking war between Royalist and parliamentary supporters. In 1649 he is beheaded. England becomes a protectorate under ruler Oliver Cromwell from 1653.

1660: The monarchy is restored after an 11-year republic but the precedent is set for future kings: parliament can survive without a king and House of Lords.



1679 - England

Habeas Corpus Act is passed which enshrines in law the rights of the individual to legally challenge their imprisonment by the authorities.



1689 - England

The Bill of Rights legally establishes the civil and political rights that an English citizen living within a constitutional monarchy ought to have. The 'Tory' faction, later the Conservatives, emerges in this period heralding the birth of the party system. 'Whigs,' the pro-parliament group opposed to the royalist Tories, evolved into the Liberal party in the reforming 1850s. Post WWI it became the Labour party.



1787 - US

The US constitution, arguably the oldest written democratic constitution, establishes a federal system of government. Separating the powers – of president, Congress and judiciary – is intended to stop the abuse of power. Slaves and women still cannot vote.



1789-99 - France

French Revolution, a period of political upheaval which sees the removal of King Louis XVI who is later executed. Power is transferred from an absolute monarchy to a republic based on citizenship and the rights of the people, although women cannot vote.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY (contd)



1847 - Switzerland

A brief civil war leads to a national referendum, one of the first recorded uses in modern history, on a new federal constitution. Switzerland still holds more referendums than any other country.

1856 - mid-20th century



1856 - Australia

The first secret ballot is reportedly held in the former Australian colony, now state, of Tasmania on 7 February, 1856. Ballot papers with the names of those standing are printed at public expense. Secret balloting subsequently spreads to other countries.



1867 - Britain

Second Reform Act virtually doubles the size of the electorate by increasing the number of men who can vote. All male householders are given the right to vote and lodgers paying £10 a year rent.



1893 - New Zealand

Reputedly one of the first countries to achieve universal suffrage for women. But women did not achieve the right to stand for parliament until 1919 for the lower house and 1941 for the upper house. The first women politicians are, in fact, elected in 1933.



1906 - Finland

Women achieve the right to vote and to stand for election. Suffragettes in Britain adopt disruptive tactics in their bid for enfranchisement. Women's work in World War I munitions factories proves a turning point and in 1918 women over 30 gain the vote.



1917 - Russia

A series of social and political upheavals leads to the overthrow of the Tsarist autocracy. The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, seize power in the October Revolution and establish the world's first communist government ushering in totalitarian rule for the next seven decades.



1933 - Germany

Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor after the Reichstag elections. His Nazi party passes the Enabling Bill giving him absolute power and Germany becomes a one-party state. The triumph of fascism and communism leads to a dark age for democracy in many European countries.

Modern Democracy - mid-20th century to present

While de-colonisation leads to the birth of the world's largest democracy (India), national independence movements lead to many one-party states and military regimes. The end of the century sees democracy flourishing in Eastern Europe and Latin America after decades of totalitarianism and military rule.

1947- 1970



1947 - India

Indian independence marks the beginning of the end of the British Empire as anti-colonial nationalist movements challenge the imperialist power. Three years later India becomes a republic and the largest democracy in the world.



1948 - South Africa

Apartheid is a system of racial segregation in South Africa developed by Hendrik Verwoerd, where 'blacks' are disenfranchised in 'white' South Africa and only allowed to vote in 'the homelands', which are very poor economically.



1949 - China

Chiang Kai-shek resigns as president after steadily losing ground to the Communists and Mao Zedong's million-strong Red Army. He flees to Taiwan. Mao establishes the People's Republic of China, which is ruled by the Communist party to this day.



1955-68 - US

Combining civil disobedience with direct legal action, the African-American Civil Rights Movement reverses 19th century racist legislation and denial of votes in many southern states. The Montgomery bus boycott, led by Martin Luther King, proves a turning point.



1956 - Hungary

Soviet tanks crush pro-democracy protests. More than 3,000 are killed in the violence and hundreds of thousands flee.



1957 - Africa

The end of British Empire in Africa begins with the independence of Ghana (1957) and Somalia (1960). Like many of the newly-established democracies, they become socialist autocracies. Many French colonies also gain independence, including Algeria in 1962 where Ben Bella is elected in an uncontested ballot.



1968 - Czechoslovakia

The 'Prague Spring' of political reforms is crushed by Soviet tanks. Dozens are killed and many thousands flee the country which remains under Soviet control until 1989.



1970 - Chile

Salvador Allende of Chile becomes the first democratically elected Marxist president and begins an extensive programme of nationalisation and radical social reform. Three years later he is overthrown and dies in a military coup. General Augusto Pinochet replaces him.

Modern democracies 1970 to present: democracies rise to majority of nations then decline

**USSR**

Mikhail Gorbachev becomes Soviet leader, and launches 'perestroika' (reconstruction) reforms, but living standards plummet. In 1991, as some Soviet republics push for independence, hardliners stage a coup. It fails, the Soviet Union disintegrates and Gorbachev is swept aside by Boris Yeltsin.

**1989 - China**

Pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square are brutally suppressed by the authorities. Hundreds, possibly thousands, are killed by the army. While the Communist party remains in control, far-reaching economic reforms are introduced by Deng Xiaoping.

**1989 - Germany**

Hungary opens its border with Austria, allowing thousands of East Germans to escape to the West. After the Berlin Wall falls, largely peaceful demonstrations in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania lead to the dismantling of one-party systems.

**1990 - Poland**

Solidarity leader Lech Walesa becomes the first democratically-elected president, marking the end of Soviet control. The Solidarity party wins parliamentary elections in 1989.

**1994 - South Africa**

South Africa - Nelson Mandela becomes the first democratically-elected president of a multi-racial South Africa. The beginning of the end of apartheid comes with his release from prison in 1990.

**1995 - Yugoslavia**

The Dayton Accord sets Bosnia on the road to independent statehood after a bloody civil war. Six independent countries emerge out of the ruins of Yugoslavia, with Slovenia and Croatia the first to declare their independence in 1991.

**1999 - Qatar**

Qatar becomes first Gulf state to allow women to vote and stand for election. Bahrain and Kuwait since then do the same.

**2000 - Mexico**

Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (PAN) wins the presidential elections, ending 71 years of one-party rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

**2004 - Afghanistan**

After the overthrow of the Taleban, Mohammed Karzai becomes the country's first directly elected president. Parliamentary and provincial elections take place in 2005, for the first time in more than 30 years.

**2005 - Iraq**

Iraqis vote in first multi-party elections for half a century, following the 2003 US-led invasion. Amid an escalating insurgency, which many describe as civil war, the Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani becomes president.

**2011- Tunisia**

Jasmine Revolution: widespread protests in [Tunisia](#) against corruption, poverty, and political repression force President [Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali](#) to step down in January 2011. This is followed by [multi-party negotiations which agree on a new constitution and successful fresh elections](#). [htxtP24]

Part 2: Some countries in the democracy story

This map shows some of the countries which have featured in the democracy story, from its earliest beginnings in Mesopotamia in 4000BC.

The three time periods are:

- 1) early democracy (4000-27BC)
- 2) representative democracy (1215-mid 20th century) and
- 3) modern democracy (mid-20th century to the present).



Part 3: Timeline of key events in the history of human rights

The concept of human rights has a very recent history or a very old history, depending on your how it is viewed. Belief in universal moral values has in the past been the domain of philosophy and religion. These values are expressed in every system of thought ever recorded. But belief that governments are obligated to respect the fundamental equality of all individuals is an idea that only begins to be accepted in the 20th century. It is still being developed in all countries today.

2350 BCE: The Praise Poem of Urukagina

One of the first acknowledged champions of human rights is the local Mesopotamian governor named Urukagina, who weeds out corruption in his local government, regulates slavery, and issues decrees protecting widows, orphans, and the poor.

539 BCE: The Cyrus Cylinder

Cyrus the Great, ruler of the Persian empire, is such a liberating force in the ancient world that the people of Israel described him as a messiah and the early Greek philosophers called him 'The Great King'. His reforms allow local cultures to flourish, protected religious freedom and diversity, and allow for more localized government control.

231 BCE: The Edicts of Ashoka

When the Indian king Ashoka converts to Buddhism, he preaches nonviolence and issues a series of edicts, carved on 33 pillars throughout his empire, protecting the rights of the poor and vulnerable.

AD 161: The Institutes of Gaius

Gaius' magnum opus, the *Institutes*, forms the basis of legal education and jurisprudence for much of the Roman Empire's later history. It was Gaius who draws a distinction between *jus civile*, or Roman laws, and *jus gentium*, the "laws of nations," which regulate relationships between Romans and non-Romans. His principle of *jus gentium* assumes that some legal concepts can be universally applicable, a fundamental principle of human rights law.

622: The Charter of Medina

Prophet Muhammad is quite a **libertarian** or freethinker by the standards of his day. He protects religious freedom, grants women greater **autonomy**, and ends ethnic segregation policies. For centuries to come, Islam will occupy the same role that **secular progressivism** occupies today: as a protector of minority opinions (such as Greek paganism – the survival of Greco-Roman texts can largely be traced to Islamic protection), a promoter of science, and a symbol of **pluralism** and **modernity**.

1100: The Charter of Liberties

While the Coronation Charter of King Henry I (sometimes called the Charter of Liberties) is referred to as a predecessor to the Magna Carta of 1215, it is really more of a guarantee of royal good behaviour than anything we would recognize as a human rights agreement. Still, it sets the precedent of an English monarch voluntarily restricting his own power.

1215: The Magna Carta

The Magna Carta of 1215 establishes basic due process rights for nobles, limits the power of the throne, and forms the basis of bills of rights for centuries to come. While it is not particularly libertarian, and (like its predecessor, the Coronation Charter) is more about rights voluntarily *granted* than rights universally *owed*, it remains central to the development of the British and American criminal justice systems.

1689: The English Bill of Rights

The English Bill of Rights of 1689 is the most advanced document of its kind at the time, guaranteeing free speech in parliament, the right to bear arms, the right to petition leaders, and certain other '**due process**' rights.

1789: The U.S. Bill of Rights

The U.S. Bill of Rights does not really have teeth until the U.S. Supreme Court in 1925 interprets the Fourteenth Amendment as extending its rights to the states. But even as an unenforceable statement of principles it is still forward-thinking by 18th-century standards. Americans' civil liberties depend on it to this day.

1948: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

World War II leaves the world weary of fascism in all forms. Subsequently, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights—drafted largely by Eleanor Roosevelt —

addresses the Axis powers' authoritarian horrors by describing a vision of universal human rights. It is still unachieved or 'a work in progress' to this day.

1945: Institution of the International Court of Justice and Human Rights (ICJ)

UN initiated, the ICJ's function to resolve disputes between sovereign states makes it a valuable source of support for many countries in their political relationships with other countries. **Many have suggested that the ICJ should have the power of judicial review over the Security Council so it meets UN charter aims.**

2002: International Criminal Court (ICC)

Set up by UN member nations to complement national judicial systems, ICC prosecutes individuals for international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. Currently there 123 state signatories.

Part 4: Key developments in Representative Democracy (in detail):

1215 – 21st century

This period saw the growth of greater representation of the people and the freedom to vote within nation states. Political parties were born plus competitive elections and suffrage for women became increasingly common. Increasingly, democracy became based on written laws. These laws guaranteed that fixed terms of office, secret ballots, and all decisions about fair elections were backed by independent judges (the judiciary).

1215 is often given as the beginning date for the mother of all other parliaments. In that year King John is forced by landowner-nobles to agree to a Magna Carta or Great Charter of Freedoms. This document limits the king's power over both religious leaders and nobility.

Composed by the highest religious authority, this charter or document agrees to consult nobles before imposing any new taxes. From then on the consultative role of parliament is strengthened.

1236 is when 'parliament' was first used as a word. Therefore, the first breakthrough in parliament's development is a change from parliament as a council of nobility (the high born or aristocratic class) to one representing more of the people (the new landowning or 'gentry' class.)

1295: The 'model parliament' is a further breakthrough development. This name comes from the fact that from now on it becomes normal (almost) for all parliaments to have two respected representatives from each geographical area or county and two from each town. From now on those most affected by taxation have to agree to it.

The kings' desperation for money to fight wars becomes parliament's lever to gain concessions for greater powers on behalf of the people. During the 14th century the 'Lords', representatives of the aristocrats or nobles, and particularly 'the Commons', begin to demand an active say in government instead of merely consenting to tax.

1327: The pattern is now set for Parliament always to comprise three bodies: Lords, Commons and the Monarch. Representatives of the counties (knights of the shire) and of towns (burgesses) becomes a permanent part of Parliament.

1332: Parliamentarians first sit together in one chamber and become known as the House of Commons.

1341: These 'Commons' deliberate separately from the King and his nobles. This is the beginning of the Lower and Upper Houses, with the upper House a check on the lower.

1376: A spokesman is selected to take joint Commons' and Lords' complaints to the king. This 'Speaker' begins a tradition of a Commons member selected to chair its business and represent its views. Instead of everyone shouting at once so only the loudest are heard, the Speaker decides who may speak – and punishes members who break the rules.

1430: After complaints "many persons of low estate" are voting for MPs, a law is established that in county elections any '40-shilling freeholders' have the right to vote. (Today, an owner or renter of property worth at least £2,000 (US \$2, 870) per month.) These rules remain for 400 years.

Representative Democracy: 1215 – 21st century

The development of parliament parties and 'supremacy of parliament'

1628: Alarmed by excesses of royal power, the House of Commons submits to [Charles I](#) the [Petition of Right](#), demanding the restoration of their liberties. Charles accepts the petition but dissolves parliament. He rules without them for eleven years.

1642-1651: [English Civil War](#). Over the centuries, the English Parliament progressively limits the power of the English [monarchy](#). This power struggle between the king's 'divine right to rule' and parliament's right, ends in [English Civil War](#) (1642-1651). Those who back Charles I (royalists or Cavaliers) fight those supporting parliament (Roundheads). A king who dictates to parliament what they should do, or rules without them, is now regarded as a traitor to Magna Carta ideals. In 1649, after a trial, [Charles I](#) is executed for treason.

The 'God, King and country' royalists backing Charles become mocked as the Tories (Irish: 'outlaw' thus the ironically abusive 'Irish rebel'). Those supporting leader of the 'roundheads,' Oliver Cromwell, become mocked as 'Whigs,' slang then for cattle-drivers.

However, this marks the beginning of the competitive party system. The Tories evolve into the Conservative party and the Whigs into the Liberal party – and later the 'Labour' party.

The republic in England lasted 11 years. Cromwell, who becomes a sort of president plus prime minister ('Lord Protector'), dies soon after accepting this role. However, his successor son can't control the army.

1660: Parliament decide to restore the monarchy under Charles II. Religion then rises to be the main cause for dividing people. Crucially, the Restoration Settlement does not give back to the king financial control over the government and military. Thus Cromwell's legacy is to create conditions for a true parliamentary democracy.

1679: The Habeas Corpus Act is passed in England. This forever puts in law the rights of individuals legally to challenge their imprisonment by authorities.

1688. The religion of Charles II and of the army are different. To resolve this problem, parliament persuades a leader from another country to invade and unify the people under a 'protestant' Christian religion, independent of the cross-border one based in Rome (Charles II). This is called the **Glorious Revolution**.

It is called glorious because it brought radical change with relatively few deaths. It is called a revolution because part of the deal with the new leader from the Netherlands (William III) is that parliament should be the nation's lawmaker. Thus the 'supremacy of Parliament' becomes a settled principle for all future governments.

All future English and later British sovereigns are now restricted to the role of [constitutional monarchs](#) with limited executive authority. That is, they are no longer able to rule without the people's consent, as represented by parliament.

Representative Democracy: 1215 – 21st century

1688: The Bill of Rights: After 400 years of struggle to get views of the **common people** represented, this Bill allows this. It establishes the role of a representative Parliament in:

- law-making
- taxation,
- supply (finance)

The Bill of Rights also:

- confirms absolute freedom of speech in Parliament
- provides for free elections
- provides for Parliaments to be held frequently.

Parliament is still not wholly representative because the vast majority of men still do not have the vote. Also, often they are elected by only a small number of the most important people in the town – and the way MPs are elected still differs from place to place.

There is still no 'responsible government' – that is, government accountable to the Lower House – because the government does not then need to have the 'confidence' (majority consent) of the House. This means that executive government, the ability to use the power of the state to get things done, stays with appointed officials until almost 200 years later.

1707: The Act of Union merges the English Parliament with the [Parliament of Scotland](#) to form the [Parliament of Great Britain](#). When the [Parliament of Ireland](#) is abolished in 1801, its former members are merged into what was now called the [Parliament of the United Kingdom](#).

Federal systems and republics

1787 – US The US constitution, the oldest written democratic constitution, establishes a federal system of government. Separating the powers – of president, Congress and judiciary – is intended to stop the abuse of power. Slaves and women still cannot vote, however.

1789-99 – France French Revolution: a period of political upheaval which sees the removal of King Louis XVI who is later executed. Power is transferred from an absolute monarchy to a republic based on citizenship and the rights of the people. Women cannot vote but it leads to a codified law based on human reason and the rights of individuals. Human rights and obligations are based on values made famous in the motto: 'liberty, equality, and fraternity.'

1832 – UK Parliament changes the 400 year-old rules on elections. This ensures one in seven men can vote (813,000 of a population of 24 million). This is a direct response, in the 1830 election, to candidates who favour reform of Parliament getting wide support in elections.

The Great Reform Act redraws electorate boundaries to make representation fairer and simpler. It also gives the vote to anyone with property worth £10 a year or more. However, corruption continues because reformers do not win the secret ballot and other safeguards.

Chartrism, a social reform movement, begins in 1836 when a craftsman, William Lovett, and a tailor, Francis Place, form the London Working Man Association.

Representative Democracy: 1215 – 21st century

1838 - Petition for Reform: Millions of people sign the petition but Parliament rejects it in 1839, and again when it is presented in 1842 and 1848. Reformers want:

- universal male suffrage so all men over the age of 21 could vote
- voting to be by secret ballot to reduce corruption
- constituencies to be changed so each MP represents roughly the same number of people
- It wants to remove the need for MPs to own property and also to pay them a salary so working class men can become MPs.

The government's brutal response to protests and trade unions feeds the widespread feeling that Parliament itself has to change. Over the next century, reforms slowly change Parliament in the ways reformers intended, a direct response to these reformers.

1840s: Laws improve living and working conditions for working people.

1856: the first '**responsible government**' makes ministers and governments more accountable. Ministers since are officially appointed by the head of state and can be dismissed by that sovereign authority. However, they can keep their positions only by also holding the confidence of the Lower House.

If a **motion of no confidence** in the government is passed, the government must immediately resign. This puts everything back to the will of the electorate by way of another general election, to be held as soon as practicable.

Voting reforms

1856: Secret Balloting: Also, in Australia, the introduction of voting in secret stops voters feeling pressured by surrounding others – or from being intimidated during or afterwards for their political choices. 'Secret balloting' subsequently spreads to other countries.

1867: Second Reform Act: almost doubles voter numbers from 1.36 to 2.46 million. Many new voters are industrial workers in towns. In the 30 years since the 1831 Reform Act the United Kingdom has grown from 24 million to 29 million. Only about a million people have the vote. Very few of these were from the working class.

Social reforms

1868 – 1874: The government pushes through a series of major reforms to education, the army, the legal system and the civil service. It hopes reforms will improve things for ordinary people.

1870: The Education Act creates a larger budget so greater numbers of children, between five and twelve years-old, can go to school.

1872 Secret Ballot Act: voting would now take place in secret. This makes it much harder to bully voters.

Representative Democracy: 1215 – 21st century

1880 - A law makes it compulsory in the UK to go to school. Laws also improve the civil service, the army and the legal system. Attempts are made to improve public health but to get through Parliament, bills or acts have to be watered down. No one is happy with the end results.

When the UK's Prime Minister's own party argues against telling people how to live their lives he answers: "It is the duty of government to make it difficult for people to do wrong, easy to do right."

1882 Married Women's Property Act allows married women to own property and money – these no longer automatically belong to their husbands.

More reform: doubling voter numbers**1884** Third Reform Act: This doubles the number of men who have the right to vote to almost eight million men. However, Britain remains less democratic than many other places. Through the 19th century revolutions across Europe in several countries give all men the vote.

1893 - New Zealand is reputedly one of the first countries to achieve universal suffrage for women. But women there do not achieve the right to stand for parliament until 1919 (lower house) and 1941 (upper house). Finland's women win the right to be MPs in 1906. The first New Zealand women politicians are elected in 1933.

1889 to 1916: A series of UK Prevention of Corruption Acts from 1889 makes it a criminal offence if anyone, actively or passively, bribes an MP, an officer or any **public servant**.

1911: The UK Parliament Act of means the House of Lords can delay new laws only for two years. The Conservatives have a huge majority in the House of Lords. They use this to stop bills being passed by the liberal majority in the House of Commons.

The Liberals argue that the general public votes for MPs in the House of Commons and therefore they should decide the law. In a bicameral House, however, laws cannot be made without support from the 'Lords' so the Liberals limit the Lords' powers.

Further reform: tripling voter numbers

1918: The UK Representation of the People Act make radical changes to the electoral system – and finally give votes to women over the age of 30 and all men over the age of 21. As a result, the electorate – people with the right to vote – triples.

Anyone can now stand as an MP, so long as they pay a deposit of £150 – which they will lose if they do not get one eighth (12.5 percent) of the final vote.

Vote for men and women over 21

1928: UK's Equal Franchise Rights Act finally gives women the same voting rights as men. Until this time, women cannot vote until they reach 30. Women and men over 21 years old can now vote, 61 years after it is first proposed in 1867.

Representative Democracy: 1215 – 21st century

1949: The UK's new Labour government reduces the period the Lords can delay Lower House legislation to one year. (Since this time the Lords have consented not to delay laws that are in the government's election manifesto.)

1958 The UK Life Peerages Act creates 'life peers' in the House of Lords who are appointed 'for life' on their own merit. However, these positions cannot be passed on to their children. They have sat alongside hereditary peers whose positions have been handed on from father to son for hundreds of years. Under this act, women can become life peers for the first time.

After WWII there is a felt need for rapid social reform. As this House is full of old families of nobles, many feel it makes it too difficult to pass bills and change old ways of doing things. Also, many Lords only work part-time – as if it were a hobby.

Civics education and engagement as price of citizenship: 20th – 21st century

1958: Italy introduced compulsory civics as price of citizenship and as a measure to educate for a more engaged democracy and against its 25 years of fascist government. NB In 2020-21 school year it made civics a compulsory, stand-alone subject focusing on the Constitution, sustainable development, and digital citizenship.

1946: Czechoslovakia is first country to lower voting age to 18.

1964: Norway makes civics stand-alone subject compulsory for senior secondary schools (in 1974 becomes a legal requirement.)

1969: In the UK an act lowers the age at which men and women can vote from 21 to 18.

1967 and 1976: UK law changes made it illegal to discriminate against people because of their race or gender.

1979: While not compulsory Finland introduces civic education via ethics and comparative religions, differing from approaches emphasising patriotism favored in US and many Asian nations. Each year students choose between ethics or religion classes. To mould citizens, high schoolers are required to take additional course in psychology and philosophy. In 1979 research Masters degrees now required for all levels of teaching. Within 20 years Finland becomes world leading across board in PISA tests.

1985: United Arab Emirates introduce mandatory "national" or "civic" education, often emphasising patriotism and loyalty.

1998 Turkey introduces "Citizenship and Human Rights Education for grades 7 and 8 – building on **1980** "Religious Culture and Morals" following the military coup.

1999: The UK House of Lords Act is designed to make the upper house “more democratic and representative.” Hereditary peers are removed from the House of Lords altogether.

2001: Austria makes civics compulsory subject (History and Civic Education – with further reforms in **2008** when voting age dropped to 16.)

2002: England makes civics compulsory for increased political literacy and participation. In 2006, following 2005 London terrorist bombings adds critical thinking, terrorist psychology.

2003: Greece makes civics or ‘citizenship’ a separate subject at all levels of education.

2007: Austria lowers voting age to 16, Scotland follows in 2015, UK plans to do for 2026 elections. While early voting has been shown to create life-long habit, critics hold unless mandatory civics with critical thinking for schools and migrants, move will be counterproductive.

2010 – EU nations agree to mandatory civics. Kenya establishes a programme to develop a “nationally owned and sustainable programme of civic education”.

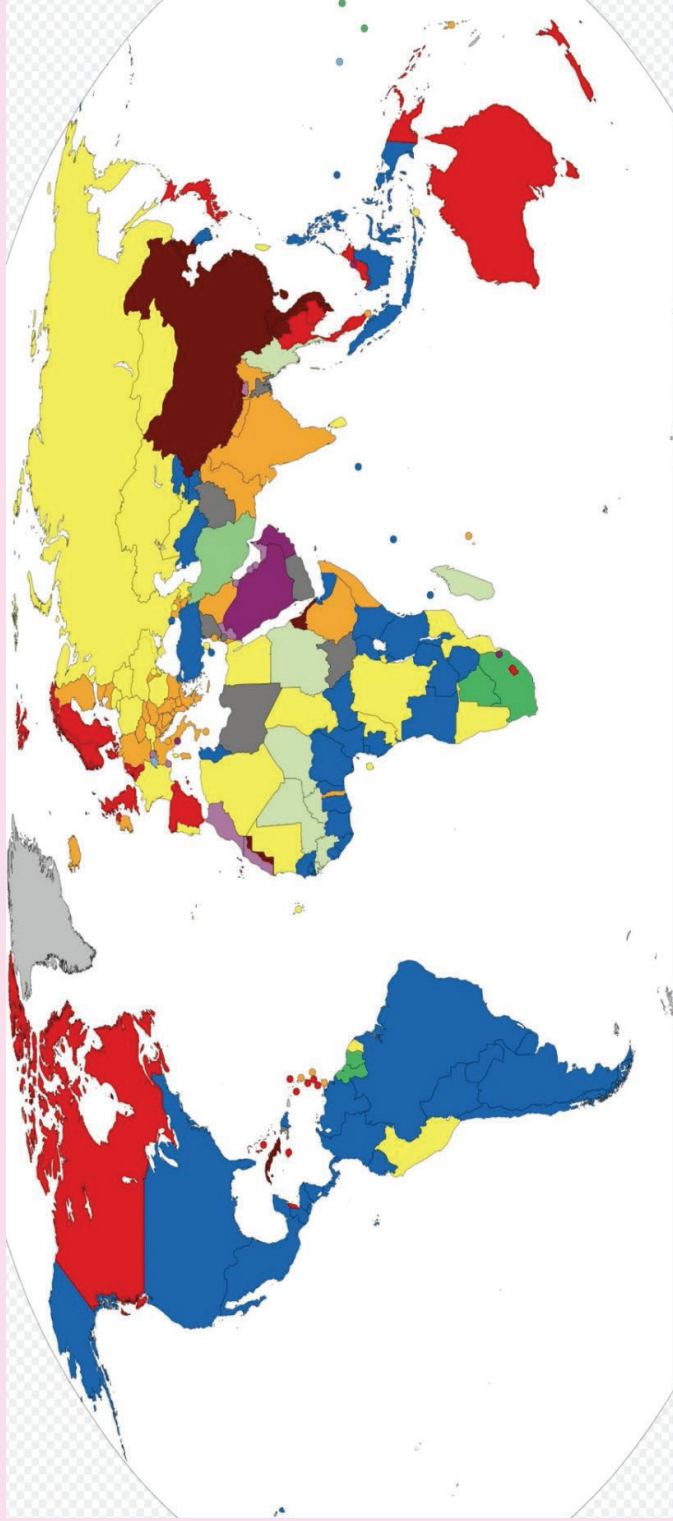
2013: Succession to the Crown Act This change allows next-in-line-to-be-monarch to be the eldest male, just the eldest. Also, marriage to another type of Christian (Catholic) would not exclude any future sovereign (king or queen). The ban on Catholics themselves becoming monarch is retained to ensure s/he will be a member of the established **Church of England**.

2015: France makes civics education a compulsory subject with introduction of Moral and Civic Education in both primary and secondary schools, after previous updates in the 1990s.

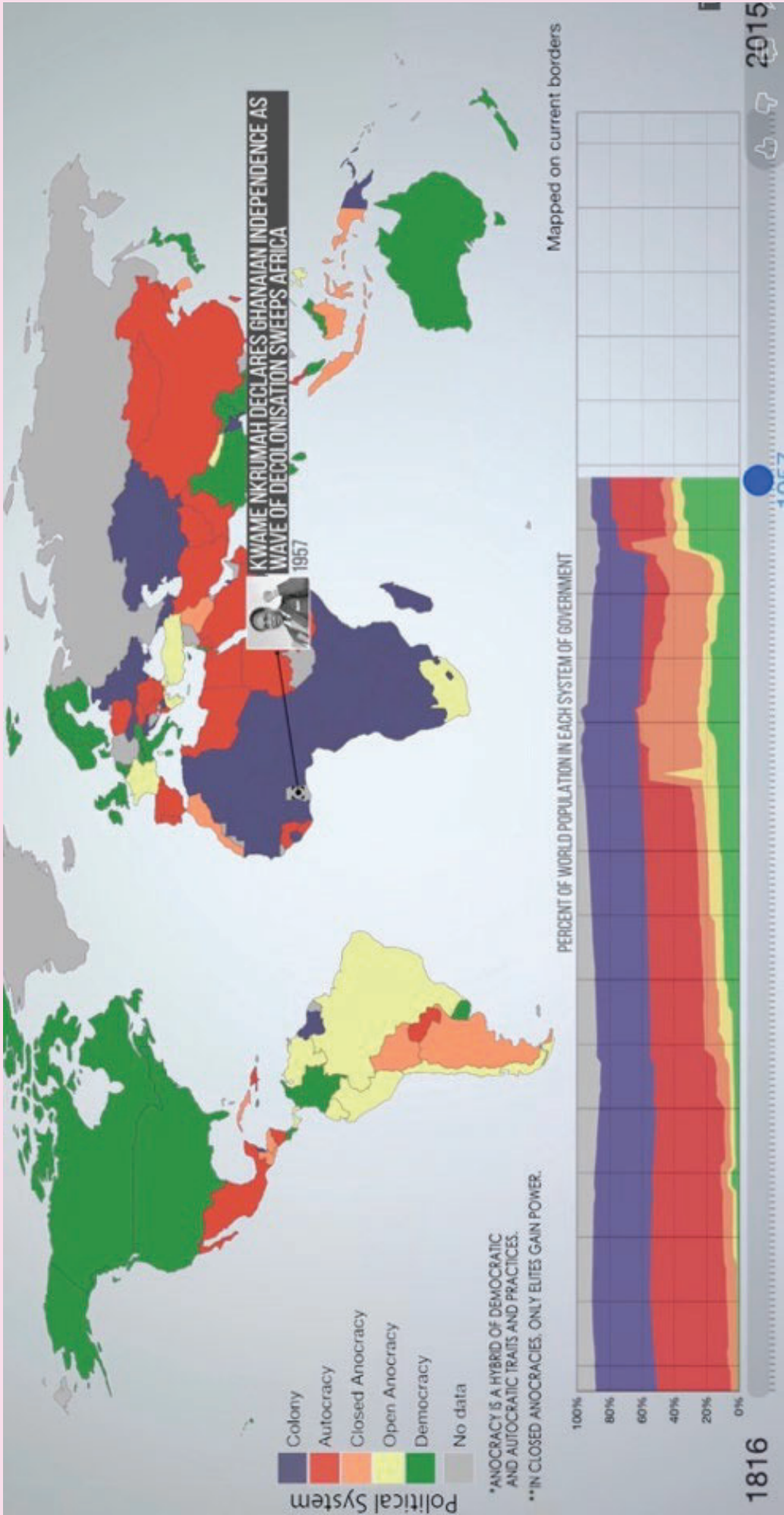
2025: Australia is first nation in world to ban under 16-year-old from 10 social media platforms in response to concerns of influence of manipulation of young minds. Critics say despite huge fines for not disabling accounts it is unenforceable - and education against harms is better.

World's states (nations & territories) colored by all type of government systems:

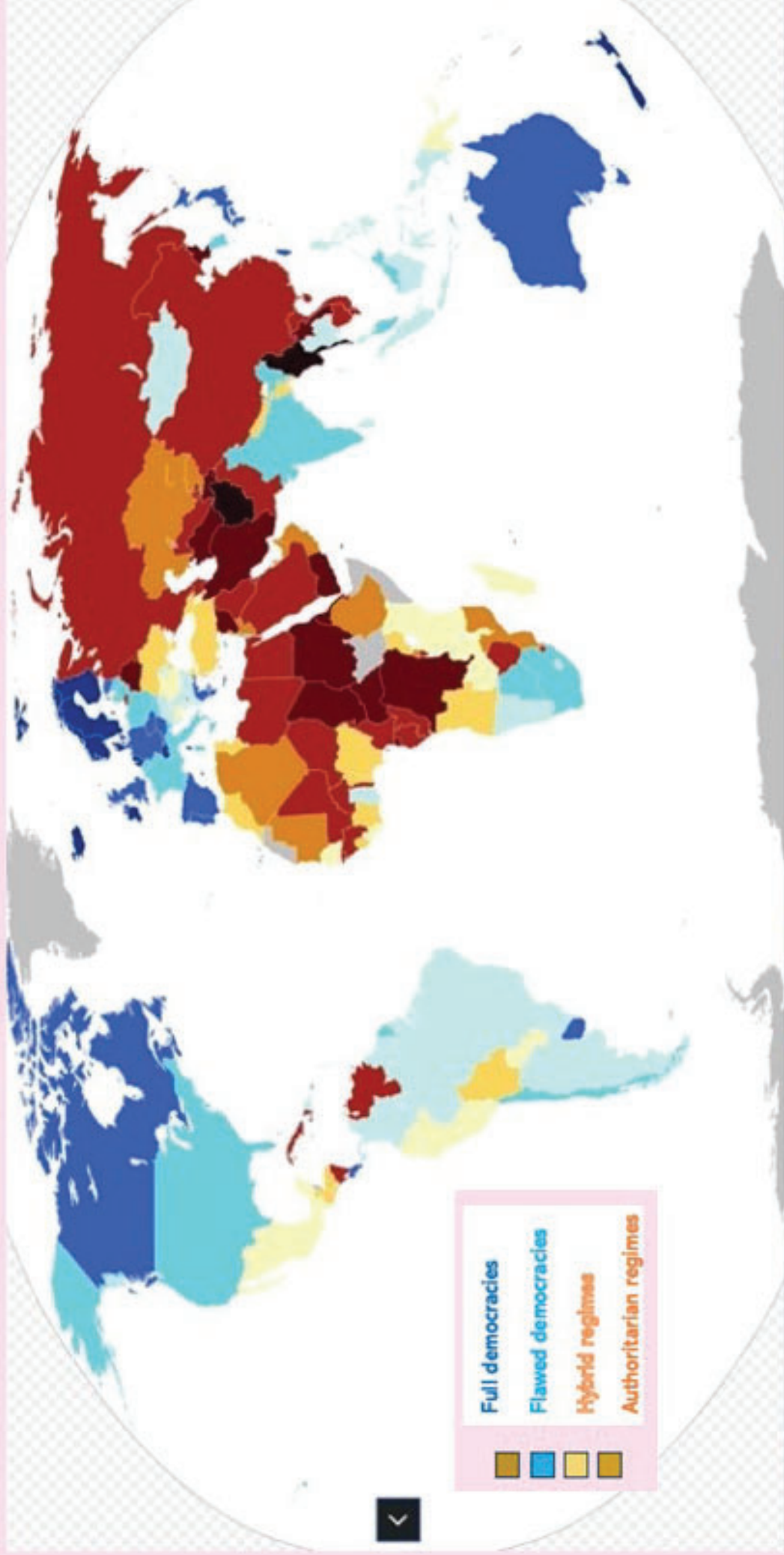
World's states colored by systems of government: **Parliamentary systems:** Head of government is elected or nominated by and accountable to the legislature. **Constitutional monarchy** with a ceremonial monarch **Parliamentary republic with a ceremonial president** **Parliamentary republic with an executive president** **Presidential system:** Head of government (president) is popularly elected and independent of the legislature. **Presidential republic** **Hybrid systems:** **Semi-presidential republic:** Executive president is independent of the legislature; head of government is appointed by the president and is accountable to the legislature. **Assembly-independent republic:** Head of government (president or directory) is elected by the legislature, but is not accountable to it. **Other systems:** **Theocratic republic:** Supreme Leader is both head of state and faith and holds significant executive and legislative power **Semi-constitutional monarchy:** Monarch holds significant executive or legislative power but is still restricted by the constitution. **Absolute monarchy:** Monarch has unlimited power. **One-party state:** Power is constitutionally linked to a single political party. **Military junta:** Committee of military leaders controls the government; constitutional provisions are suspended. **Governments with no constitutional basis:** No constitutionally defined basis to current regime, i.e., **provisional governments** or **Islamic theocracies.** **Dependent territories or places without governments** **Note:** this chart represents the *de jure* systems of government, not the *de facto* degree of democracy. v t e



World's states (nations & territories) colored by major political systems - & early history:



The Economist democracy degrees of democracy (by type) map:



The 2024 The Economist Democracy Index map Full democracies 9.00-10.00 8.00-8.99 Flawed democracies 7.00-7.99 6.00-6.99 Hybrid regimes 5.00-5.99 4.00-4.99 Authoritarian regimes 3.00-3.99 2.00-2.99 1.00-1.99 0.00-0.99





















Dashboard - Own work

Map showing countries/territories by Democracy Index score according to 2024 report Full democracies 9.01-10.00 8.01-9.00 No Data Flawed democracies 7.01-8.00 6.01-7.00 Hybrid regime 5.01-6.00 4.01-5.00 Authoritarian regimes 3.01-4.00 2.01-3.00 1.01-2.00 0.00-1.00

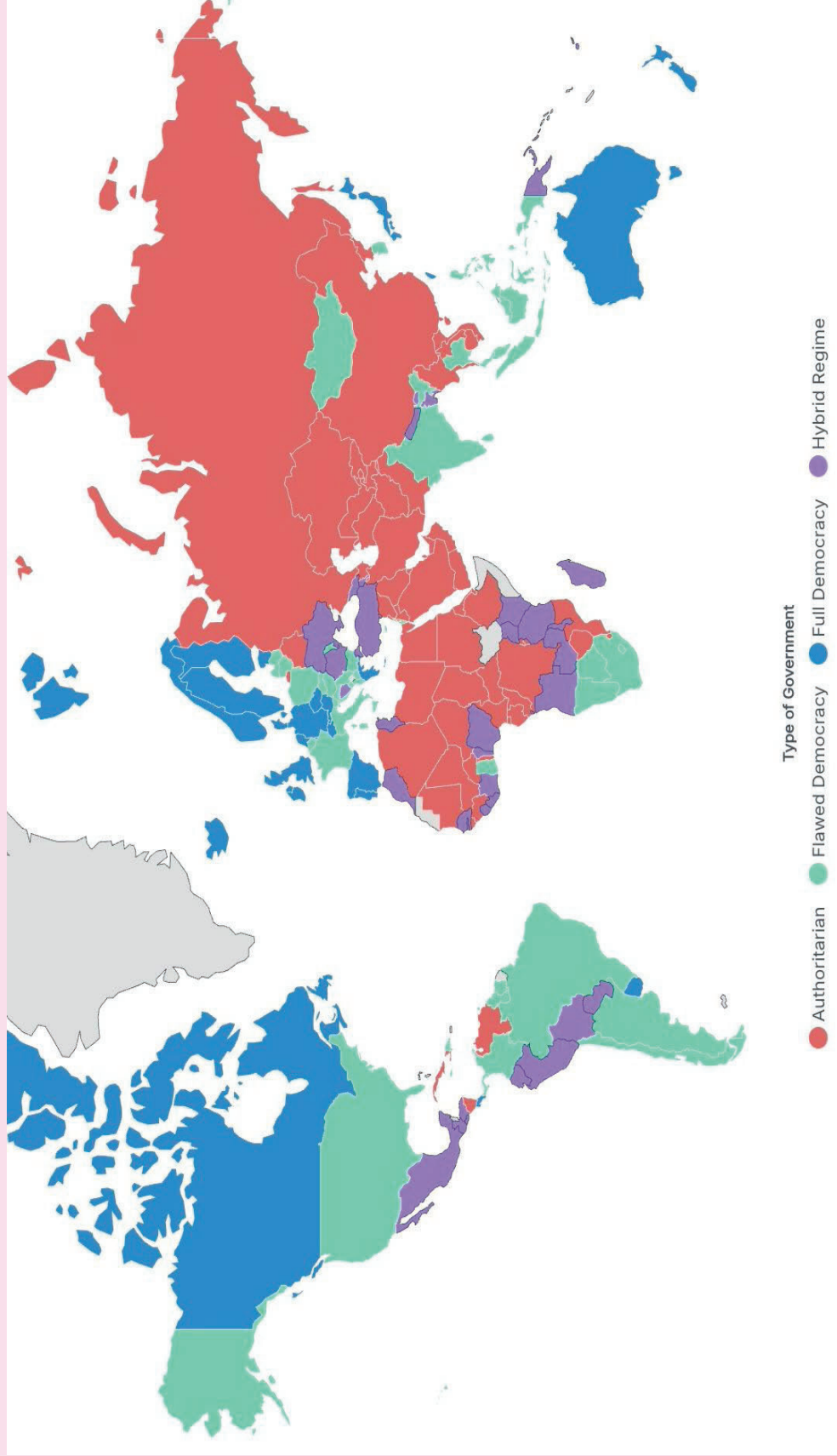
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File: Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2024.svg
Created: 28 February 2025
Uploaded: 28 February 2025

The Economist democracy index scores:

Type of regime ⇄	Score		Countries		Proportion of world population (%)	
	2022–present ⇄	2006–2021 ⇄	Number ⇄	(%)w ⇄	By types ⇄	Subtotal ⇄
Full democracies	9.00–10.00 	9.01–10.00 	25	15.0%	6.6%	45%
	8.00–8.99 	8.01–9.00 				
Flawed democracies	7.00–7.99 	7.01–8.00 	46	27.5%	38.4%	
	6.00–6.99 	6.01–7.00 				
Hybrid regimes	5.00–5.99 	5.01–6.00 	36	21.6%	15.7%	
	4.00–4.99 	4.01–5.00 				
Authoritarian regimes	3.00–3.99 	3.01–4.00 	60	35.9%	39.2%	
	2.00–2.99 	2.01–3.00 				
	1.00–1.99 	1.01–2.00 				
	0.00–0.99 	0.00–1.00 				

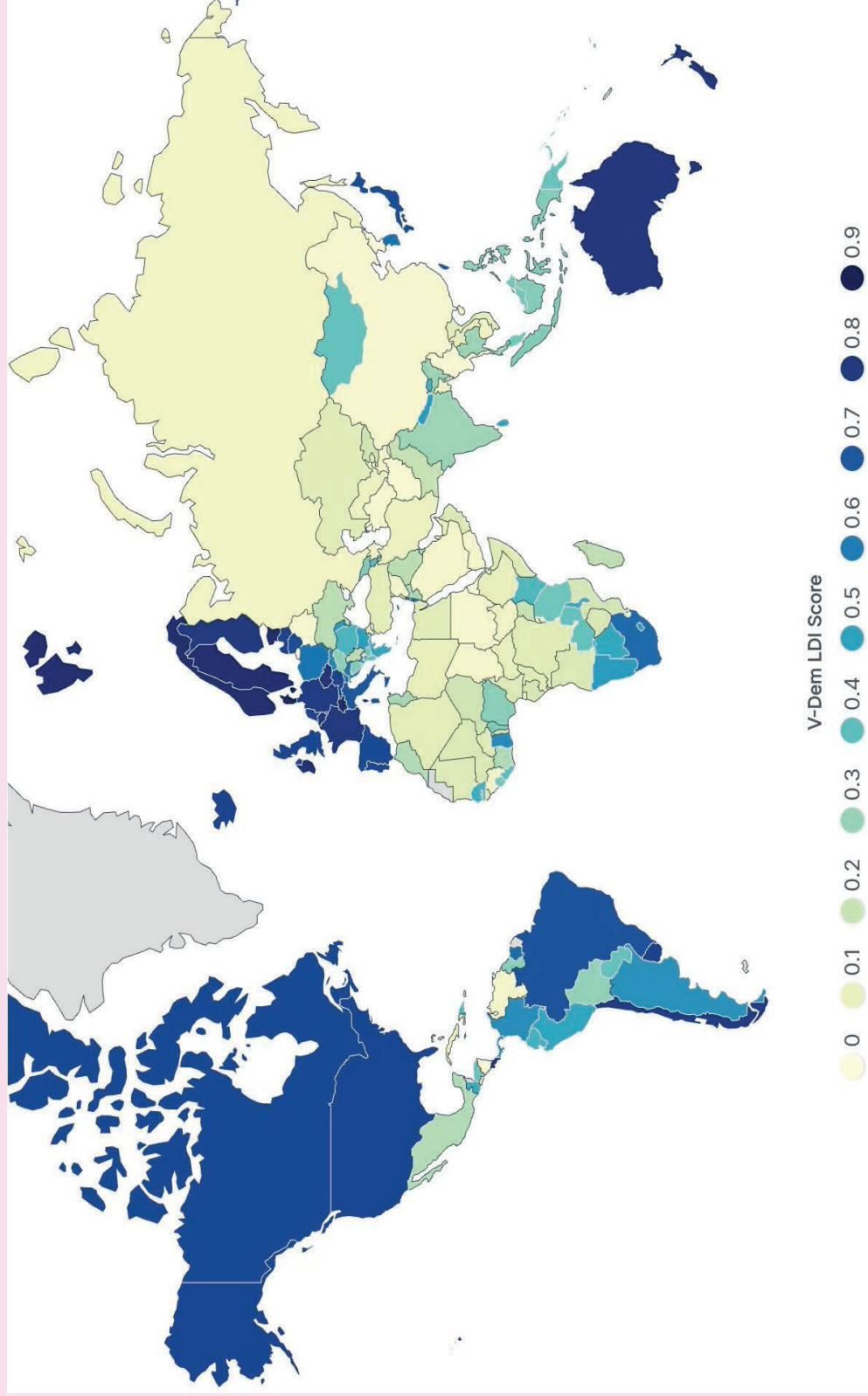
Democracies 2025 – by percent of countries




Type of Government



Democracy Without Borders (V-Dem) democracy index map – by overall score:




 Denmark
0.88

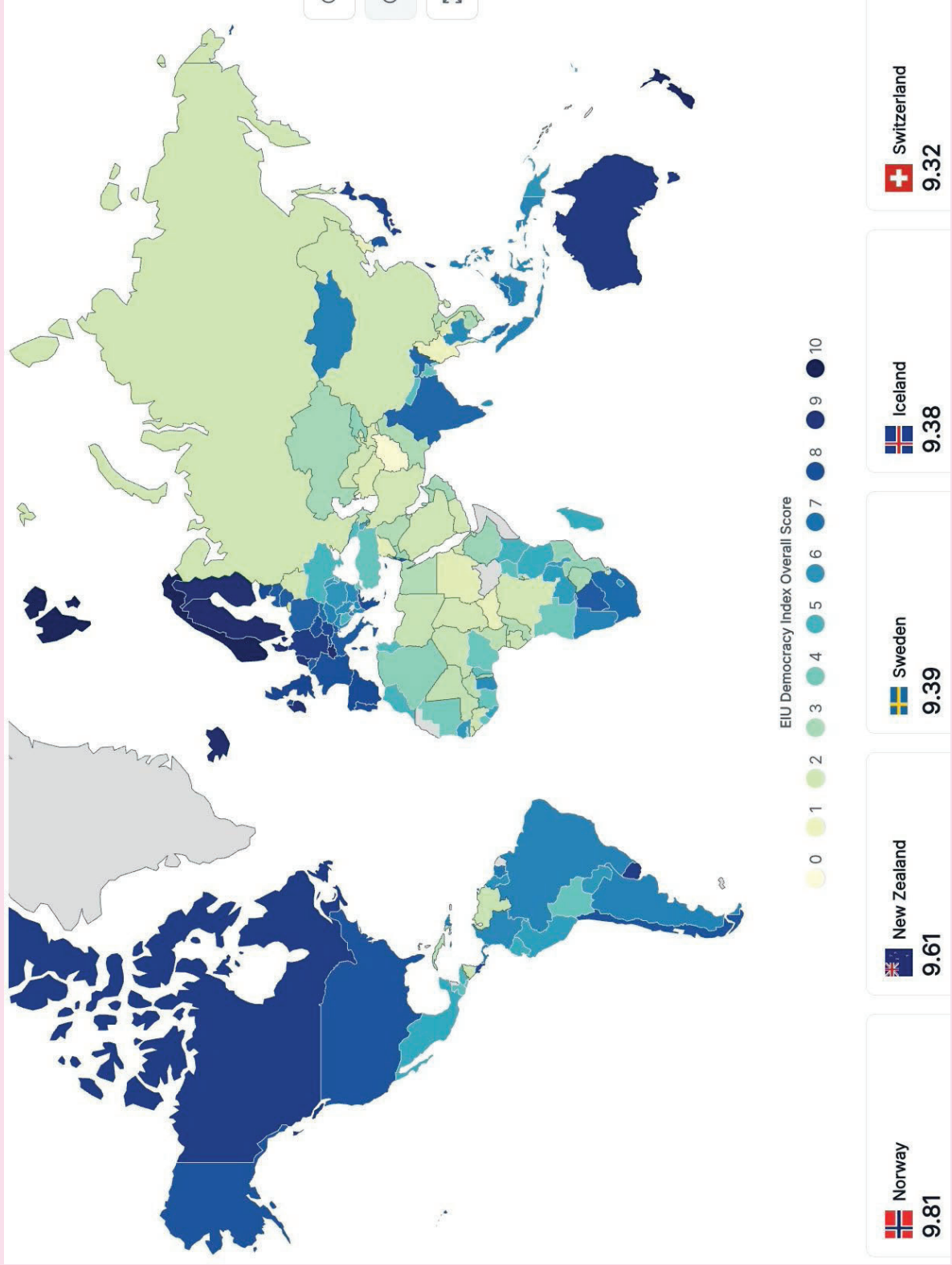
 Switzerland
0.85

 Estonia
0.85

 Norway
0.84

 Sweden
0.84

The Economist (EIU) democracy index map – by overall score:

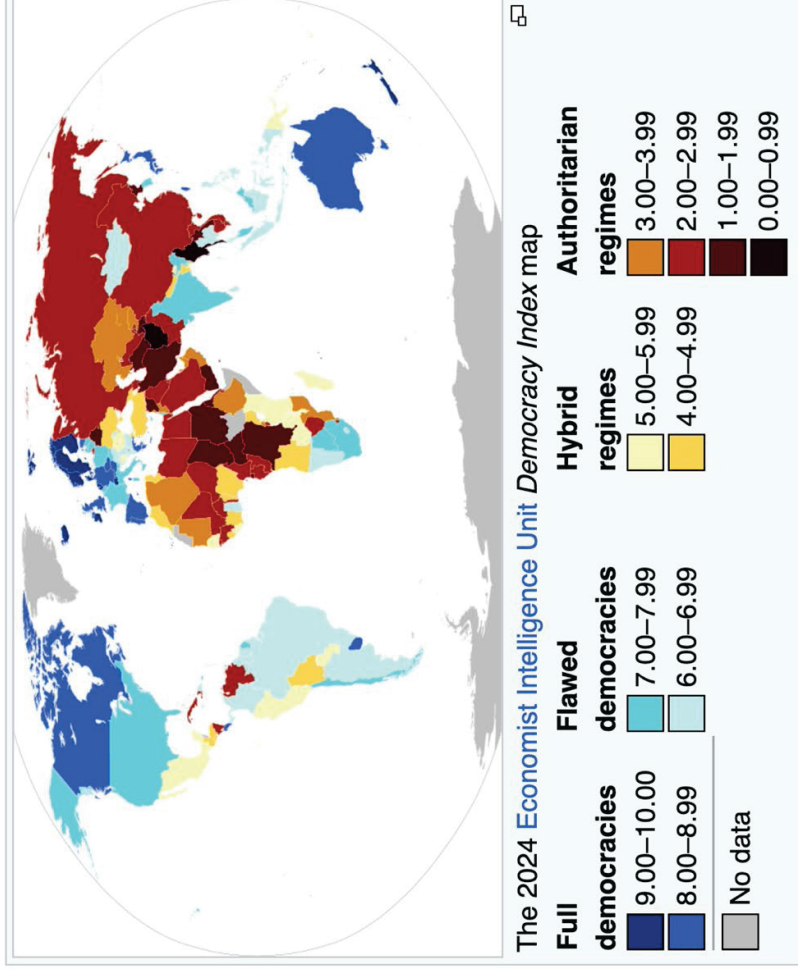


EIU Index of democracies worldwide – by democratic rights and institutions



For overview of democracy indices, see *Democracy indices*.

The **Democracy Index** published by the **Economist Group** is an index measuring the quality of democracy across the world. This **quantitative and comparative** assessment is centrally concerned with democratic rights and democratic institutions. The methodology for assessing democracy used in this democracy index is according to the **Economist Intelligence Unit** which is part of the Economist Group, a UK-based private company, which publishes the weekly newspaper *The Economist*. The index is based on 60 indicators grouped into five



UPDATE ON GLOBAL DEMOCRACIES: 2014 - 2026 - Preamble

The past decade or so (2014-2026) has seen more countries decline in their democratic performance than improve in it. However, active resistance and commitment to democratic norms in countries like Poland, Brazil, Senegal and step-by-step Somalia show that democratic recovery is possible.

Historically this 'third wave of autocratization' or 'democratic backsliding' is driven by political, economic, and social factors. As this decline is not a sudden event but a gradual process, its causes are harder to identify and counter. But we now know that anti-democratic actors – including not only extremist's citizens but also 'deep state' activists and foreign state subversives – have purposefully sought to undermine institutions and norms.

This backsliding restricts public's ability to participate in the process of government selection or contest it. Typically, it involves the weakening of democratic institutions, such as the peaceful transition of power or free and fair elections. It also violates the individual rights that underpin democracies – especially freedom of expression.

Key causes and contributing factors include: a rise of populism and personalism, economic inequality and social discontent, political polarization and distrust, erosion of institutional checks and balances (this includes threats to judicial independence, media freedom, electoral integrity, and rule of law), external threats and geopolitics (rise of autocratic great powers such as China and Russia who are willing to support like-minded regimes) and cultural shifts (for example, rises in ethnic diversity can lead segments of a population to favour homogeneity over diversity and individual freedoms.)

In the late twentieth century, during a period known as the third wave of democratization, many new, weakly institutionalized democracies were established. Like early 1960s African democracies, these regimes were most vulnerable to democratic backsliding. Following 2008's Great Recession, democratization's third wave has been ongoing with the number of liberal democracies dipping but still higher than before 1990.

A source of some optimism is that of all autocratization episodes from 1900–2025 a majority have a U-turn shape. Due to civil society pushbacks and outside support, such states more frequently achieve subsequent democratization.

Countries' governance systems can be rated

Credible democracy indices have been devised over the past 50 years, primarily New York based Freedom House's Freedom in the World 1-7 scale introduced in 1972 (but with data going back to 1950s), the London based Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in 2006 with a 0-10 scale, and Sweden's V-Dem's in 2014. V-Dem uses a 0 – 1 scale to measure quality of government and

Democracy gains and losses 2014 – 2026

2014 – 2020



Xi Jinping takes power in China
2014

Xi Jinping, the new CCP leader, is formally appointed as China's president. Initial hopes that he might loosen political controls and tolerate greater dissent are dashed as he maneuvers to centralize power and launches a crackdown on grassroots activists, journalists, and online speech. (Photo: APEC 2013/Wikimedia Commons)



Hungary's Orbán proposes "illiberal" democracy
2015

Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán, who has been removing checks and balances since taking power in 2010, declares that liberal democracy is in decline and outlines a competing "illiberal new state based on national values," pointing to Turkey, China, Russia, and Singapore as models. The speech provides an ideological grounding for the rise of right-wing populism in Europe and North America. (Photo: Wikimedia Commons)



Thailand's democracy falls in coup d'état
2015

Thailand suffers its 13th military coup since 1932, and unlike after previous interventions, democratic forces are not permitted to return to power. Frequent coups have contributed to the country's 13 status changes over the history of the report, and it remains Not Free to date. (Photo: Takeaway/Wikimedia)



Yanukovych flees Ukraine, Moscow seizes Crimea and eastern Donbas
2015

Authoritarian president Viktor Yanukovych flees Ukraine amid an uprising known as the Revolution of Dignity, and lawmakers enact a series of democratic reforms. Russian armed forces invade Crimea immediately after Yanukovych's ouster, and occupation authorities silence independent media, persecute political opponents, and conduct a sham referendum to support Moscow's illegal annexation of the peninsula. Russian operatives also set up separatist administrations in the eastern Donbas area, triggering a military conflict with the new government in Kyiv. (Photo: Anton Holoborodko/Антон Голуборозько/Wikimedia Commons)



Umbrella Movement protesters demand democracy in Hong Kong
2015

Prodemocracy protesters in Hong Kong occupy the semi-autonomous city for 79 days after Beijing imposes antidemocratic restrictions on the next elections and rejects calls for genuine universal suffrage. The demonstrations are dubbed the Umbrella Movement due to protesters' use of umbrellas to protect themselves from pepper spray wielded by police. (Photo: Pasu Au Yeung/Wikimedia Commons)



Hungary declines to Partly Free
2019

After eight years of illiberal rule by Prime Minister Orbán, Hungary becomes the first European Union member state to lose its Free status. Several major antigovernment protests take place during the year. (Photo: Пресс-служба Президента Российской Федерации/Wikimedia Commons)



Sudan's al-Bashir ousted amid popular protests
2020

Demonstrators turn out to demand that longtime Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir step down, leading the military to intervene and remove him from office. A transitional administration in which civilian and military leaders share power lifts some restrictions and plans for elections, but the military later seizes control in 2021 and cracks down on ensuing prodemocracy protests, which continue through 2023. (Photo: Osama Elfaki/Wikimedia Commons)



Another prodemocracy movement sweeps Hong Kong
2020

Introduction of a draft law that would allow extradition of Hong Kongers to face trial in mainland China's CCP-dominated courts prompts months of large-scale protests that persist despite violent police repression and the eventual withdrawal of the bill. Prodemocracy candidates win a landslide victory in year-end elections to district councils. (Photo: Wongan4614/Wikimedia Commons)

Democracy gains and losses 2014 – 2026



US Capitol insurrection 2022

In the United States, a mob assembled at the urging of outgoing president Donald Trump turns violent and temporarily takes over the US Capitol in an antidemocratic attack aimed at preventing Congress from confirming the 2020 election victory of Joe Biden. Congress later reconvenes to complete its certification, and Biden is peacefully inaugurated as president. Trump has since continued to make false assertions about large-scale fraud in the election, but such claims were roundly dismissed by independent state and federal courts. (Photo by Samuel Corum/Getty Images)



Cubans demand freedom 2022

In the largest antigovernment mobilization in decades, Cubans take to the streets to protest economic deterioration and demand fundamental freedoms after more than 60 years of communist rule. Security forces respond with violence and arrest over 1,400 people. The regime has since come under intense international pressure to release political prisoners who were detained for participating in the movement. (Photo: 14ymedia/Wikimedia Commons)



Taliban rule returns to Afghanistan 2022

Afghanistan's elected government is overthrown by the Taliban as US military personnel withdraw from the country. Taliban authorities reimpose draconian restrictions on the population, including the exclusion of women and girls from nearly all aspects of public life. Groups of women continue to protest sporadically, despite the near-certainty that they will be beaten and dispersed by Taliban personnel. (Photo: Wikimedia/VOA News)



Democratic opposition criminalized in Hong Kong 2022

Authorities arrest dozens of prodemocracy politicians and activists for alleged violations of the draconian National Security Law, which CCP authorities in Beijing had imposed on the territory the previous year. Independent news outlets, civic groups, and labor unions are forced to disband. New electoral rules that require "patriotic" prescreening of candidates result in a Legislative Council with no members from the prodemocracy camp. (Photo: Iris Tong/VOA/Wikimedia)

2020 –
2026



Xi begins third term amid protests in China 2023

Xi Jinping secures a third term as CCP leader, setting the stage for his appointment to a third term as president of China in 2023. However, Xi's cult of personality and claims about the effectiveness of China's autocratic system are undercut by mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic, and nationwide protests prompt the government to abruptly abandon its harsh and inhumane public health restrictions. (Photo: China News Service/Wikimedia Commons)



Full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine 2023

Russia's authoritarian regime launches a massive invasion of Ukraine, dramatically escalating its attempts to seize Ukrainian territory since 2014. Despite fears that they would quickly overrun the country, Russian forces encounter fierce resistance from Ukrainians, who are determined to defend their sovereignty and democratic freedoms. Other democracies increase their military aid to Kyiv and agree to break off economic ties to Russia. (Photo: Marc Sorel/Getty Images)



US violates UN Charter and Venezuela sovereignty 2026

Following a January US-led operation to remove Venezuelan President Maduro, independent democracy watchdog Freedom House call for urgent international cooperation with Venezuelan opposition for a peaceful, democratic transition. While the regime was undemocratic, Freedom House said US actions must support genuine democratic governance, not instrumentalise democracy for geopolitical aims. 23 Venezuelan security officers and 32 member of Cuban military and intelligence agencies are killed in the attack. Photo: J-Media



Protests anti Iran's theocratic government 2026

Beginning 28 December, 2025 in Teheran, demonstrations by January 9, 2026 reach 280 locations in 27 of Iran's 31 provinces. The government responds by blocking the internet and international telephone calls in a bid to cut off the country of 85 million from outside influence. HRANA, a human rights agency focusing on human rights in Iran, says violence around the demonstrations has killed at least 42 people while more than 2270 others have been detained.

LESSON 4 - DEVELOPMENT OF SOMALIA

TIMELINES: DEVELOPMENT - ANCIENT ERA TO PRESENT

Ancient

- c. 2350 BC: The Land of Punt establishes trade with the Ancient Egyptians.
- 1st century AD: City states on the Somali coast are active in commerce trading with Greek, and later Roman merchants.

Muslim era

- 700–1000: City states in Somalia trade with Arab merchants and adopt Islam.
- 1300–1400: Mogadishu and other prosperous Somali city-states are visited by Ibn Battuta and Zheng He.
- 1500–1660: The rise and fall of the Adal Sultanate.
- 1528–1535: Jihad against Ethiopia led by Ahmad ibn Ibrihim al-Ghazi (also called Ahmed Gurey and Ahmed Gran; "the Left-handed").
- 1400–1700: The rise and fall of the Ajuran Sultanate.
- late 17th – late 19th century: Sultanate of the Geledi (Gobroon dynasty).
- mid-18th century – 1929: Majeerteen Sultanate also known as Migiurtinia.
- 1878–1927: Sultanate of Hobyo.

Modern era

- 20 July, 1887 : British Somaliland protectorate (in the north) subordinated to Aden to 1905.
- 3 August, 1889: Benadir Coast Italian Protectorate (in the northeast), unoccupied until May 1893.
- 1900: Mohammed Abdullah Hassan spearheads a religious war against foreigners and establishes the Dervish State.
- 16 March, 1905: Italian Somaliland colony (in the northeast, central and south).
- July, 1910: Italian Somaliland becomes a crown colony.
- 1920: Mohammed Abdullah Hassan dies and the longest and bloodiest colonial resistance war in Africa ends.
- 15 January, 1935: Italian Somaliland becomes part of Italian East Africa with Italian Eritrea (and from 1936, Ethiopia).

- 1 June, 1936: The Somalia Governorate is established as one of the six governorates of Italian East Africa.

World War II

- 18 August, 1940: Italian occupation of British Somaliland.
- February, 1941: British administration of Italian Somaliland.

TIMELINES: DEVELOPMENT - SIGNIFICANT EVENTS ON ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

Pre-Independence, unification, constitution, British double game

- 1 April, 1950 Italian administration begins of former Italian Somaliland; made a Trust Territory of Somaliland by the United Nations, in November, 1949. Independence promised within 10 years. (1941: Italian Somaliland occupied by British and South African troops as part of the East African Campaign of WW II.)
- 1950s: UN aid to Trust Territory, plus Italian expertise and regional commitment, contributes to growth of educational and other infrastructure. Political education and self-government reputedly explains later difference in development between post-colonial Italian and British Somalilands.
- 1954: Law, economics and social studies institutions established in Mogadishu
- 1956: Britain's unsuccessful bid to buy back Somali lands of the Haud (a Somali grazing area 'protected' by British treaties with Somalis in 1884 and 1886) and the Ogaden granted to Ethiopia (based on a treaty in 1897 in which the British ceded Somali territory to Emperor Menelik II in exchange for help against raids by Somali clans.)
- 1958: Referendum held in neighbouring Djibouti (then 'French Somaliland') on eve of Somalia's independence in 1960, to decide whether to join Somali Republic or remain with France. Expulsion of Somali voters there and widespread vote rigging is later condemned.
- April, 1960: leaders of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland (Trust Territory of Somaliland - TTS) agree to form unitary state with elected president as head of state and full executive powers to be held by a prime minister answerable to an elected 123-member National Assembly

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN LIFE OF REPUBLIC

Early republic politics, tribal loyalties, internal dissent, war fronts

- 26 June, 1960: British Somaliland is granted independence as the State of Somaliland, with the understanding it is to reunite with Italian Somaliland.
- 1 July, 1960: Somali Republic is established by unification of British Somaliland and the Trust Territory of Somaliland. Legislature appoints Aden Abdullah Osman Daar as first president of the Somali Republic.

- 1960-1967: Presidency of Aden Abdullah Osman Daar.
- 22 July, 1960: after appointing Hagi Bashir Ismail Yousuf as first president of the Somali National Assembly, Abdirashid Ali Shermarke is appointed first Prime Minister
- October, 1960: Mahmoud Harbi, pro-unification Vice President of the Government Council of French Somaliland from 1957 to December 1958, during Djibouti's pre-independence period Farah (محمود الحربي) dies in a mysterious plane crash in Italy on a return trip from China to Somalia.
- June-July, 1961: national referendum.
- June 20, 1961: 91 percent of 2 million voters ratify both the president confirms

Agden Abdullah Osman Daar as first president of the Somali Republic, and the new constitution in national referendum (< 50 percent approval of referendum in the north, however).

- 1961: The constitution provides for all ethnic Somalis, no matter where they reside, to be citizens of the republic. Somalis do not claim sovereignty over adjacent territories, but argue Somalis living in them be granted right to self-determination.
- 1961: Britain calls for commission to find out popular opinion on Somali demands for separation of Northern Frontier District (NFD) from Kenya.
- November, 1963: Somali Youth League party wins 74 percent of seats in countrywide municipal elections.
- February, 1964: armed conflict erupts on the Somali-Ethiopian frontier; Ethiopian aircraft raid targets in Somalia.
- Late 1964: mediation of Sudan, acting under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Under the terms of the cease-fire, a joint commission is formed to examine the causes of frontier incidents, and a demilitarized zone ten to fifteen kilometers wide is established either side of the border
- March, 1964: First post-independence national elections. Somali Youth League party (SYL) wins 69 of 123 seats.
- Mar-September, 1964: Somalia is left without government as President nominates Abdirizak Haji Hussein as new-broom prime minister over previous four-year incumbent, Abdirashid Ali Shermarke. Hussein enjoys SYL endorsement.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN LIFE OF REPUBLIC (contd)

Kenyan and NFD, party hopping, army dissent, assassination

- 1964: Kenya's post-colonial government opts for a centralized constitution drawn up in 1963 denying Hamitic and other Somalis in the Northern Frontier District autonomy in the predominantly Somali region within a federal system. (The Kenyan constitution has been twice revised, in 1969 and 2010, in response to 1) an end to cold war politics, 2) demands for more control over executive government, and 3) treatment of minorities.)
- 1964: Kenya signs mutual defence pact with Ethiopia.
- October, 1967: Arusha Memorandum of Understanding signed by Somali and Kenyan governments (Security achieved in 1969).
- 1967: presidential elections are conducted by a secret poll of National Assembly members with the central issue again moderation versus militancy on the Greater Somalia issue plus need for emphasis on social development.
- 1967-1969: Presidency of Abdirashid Ali Shermarke
- March, 1969: Elections combine municipal and National Assembly voting for first time. 64 parties contest elections but only the SYL presented candidates in every election district. Eight other parties present lists of candidates for national offices in most districts. Of remaining fifty-five parties, only twenty-four gain representation in assembly, but all of these disband almost immediately when their fifty members join the SYL.
- May, 1969: party swapping to SYL possible under party list system results in parliament increase from 73 to 109. Widespread discontent continues because: most previous deputies lose their seats; official corruption seems to be ignored by top office holders; the Supreme Court refuses to accept election complaint petitions; post-election party hopping means voters feel mandates are often betrayed or compromised; deputies trade votes for personal gain. Both intellectuals and the army are vocally bitter with General in charge of police resigning pre-elections in protest against SYL behaviour
- October 15, 1969: President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke shot dead by bodyguard.

LIFE AFTER 1969 COUP: SOMALI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Coup, dictatorship, nationalisations, Pan-Somalia war, dissent

- October 21, 1969: Army commander Major General Mohamed Siad Barre leads bloodless coup d'état, renames country Somali Democratic Republic (SDR), dissolves parliament, Supreme Court and suspends constitution.
- 1969–1991: Siad Barre, leader of the Supreme Revolutionary Council, rises to power
- 1970: Women in Mogadishu protest in solidarity against the wrongful arrest of Afro-American activist, Angela Davis.

- July 1976: Supreme Revolutionary Council which assumes power after revolution disbands itself in favour of a one-party state based on a mix of socialism and Islam, the official state religion. Revolutionary army establishes large-scale public works, literacy campaigns.
- 23 July 1977 – 15 March 1978: Ogaden War with its goal of retrieving Somali-inhabited Ogaden (see earlier entry).
- July-September, 1977: By September 90 percent control is gained, with rail link to Djibouti threatened.
- March, 1978: Somali troops are expelled from Ogaden, after intervention of Cuban troops backed by soviet advisers.
- 1978: Unsuccessful coup against government leads to crackdown and execution of plotters. Escapees abroad plot to oust increasingly unpopular regime.
- 1979: Second constitution drafted and elections for a People's Assembly held. Barre's Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) politburo or executive committee continues to rule.
- 1980s: End of Cold War between Russian and US limits Somalia's strategic value for both sides. Many Ethiopian-supported resistance movements rise up nationwide, eventually leading to the Somali Civil War. Militia groups include: Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) is created by Majerten clan members; (United Somali Congress (USC) Hawiye clan members, Somali National Movement (SNM) mostly Isaaq clan members and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) mostly Ogadenis. Non-violent political oppositions include: Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), the Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA) and the Somali Manifesto Group (SMG). (World Bank 2005: 10)
- 1982: Ethiopian–Somali Border War.
- 1987-1989 – a systematic, state-sponsored massacre of Isaaq civilians by Barre dictatorship's SDR. While numbers of civilian death are estimated between 50, 000 and 100, 000 by various sources, local reports put figure closer to 200, 000. This "forgotten genocide" was accompanied by destruction of Hargeisa and Burao, second and third largest cities in Somalia. In 1988 up to 500, 000 fled to Ethiopia as refugees , another 400, 000 were displaced. Hargeisa's destruction (90 percent) led to it being called "the Dresden of Africa".

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS: CIVIL WAR - TRANSITIONAL GOVTS

Civil war, violence, famine, interventions, transitional governments

- 1991-1992: Civil War breaks out after 21 years of rule by Siad Barre's SRSP. It ruins the country's economic competence, kills about 250,000 people, brings devastating famine, and shapes a serious refugee problem (World Bank 2005: 11-13).

- 1990-1992: Armed factions compete for influence in power vacuum; temporary collapse of customary law. Arrival of UNITAF and UNOSOM peacekeeping forces in December 1992.
- 1995: Fighting persists, especially in south. UN withdraws after suffering significant casualties; dozens of journalists, most local, are killed
- 1997-98: Two autonomous regional governments are established in northern part of the country. Relative decrease in the intensity of the fighting follows. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) removes Somalia from list of major armed conflicts for the years 1997,1998. SIPRI is an independent Swedish think-tank dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.)
- 2000: Abdiqasim Salad Hassan is selected as the President of the nation's new Transitional National Government (TNG), an interim administration formed to guide Somalia to its third permanent republican government.
- 10 October, 2004: a Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) session elects former Puntland President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed President of the succeeding Transitional Federal Government (TFG), an interim federal administrative body he has helped establish earlier in the year. Vote, in third round: 189 votes from the TFG Parliament versus 79 to Somali ambassador Abdullahi Ahmed Addou. Incumbent President of Somalia, Abdiqasim Salad Hassan then withdraws.
- 14 October, 2004: President Ahmed is sworn in.
- November, 2004: Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is one of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) recognised internationally until 20 August, 2012 by the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) and defined in the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC).
- 2005-07: sustained and destructive conflict takes place in the south but the fighting is of much lower scale and intensity than early 1990s.
- 2006: the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), an Islamist organization, assumes control of much of the southern part of the country and promptly imposes Shari'a law.
- 2006 – Jan 2007: The Transitional Federal Government seeks to re-establish authority. With the aid of Ethiopian troops and air support by the United States, African Union peacekeepers drive out the ICU and solidify rule.
- 2006-2009: War in Somalia

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS: WAR IN SOUTH, RECOVERY

Mogadishu falls, AMISOM, piracy, new constitution, ethics

- May-July 2006 - Battle of Mogadishu.

- December, 2006 - Fall of Mogadishu. In 2006, Ethiopian troops seize most of the south from the newly formed Islamic Courts Union (ICU). ICU splinters into more radical groups, notably Al-Shabaab, still fighting government forces and an AU-mandated AMISOM peacekeeping force for control of country.
- 8 January, 2007: TFG President and founder Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, a former colonel in the Somali Army and decorated war hero, enters Mogadishu for the first time since being elected to office.
- January, 2007: Government relocates to Villa Somalia in Mogadishu (from interim location in Baidoa.) This marks the first time since the fall of the Barre regime in 1991 that the federal government controls most of the country.
- 2008-2013: Somalia tops annual Sweden's independent Fragile States Index. (In 2014-15 it is described as a recovering state 'making some progress to stability.')
- May 31-June 9, 2008: representatives of Somalia's federal government and the moderate Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) group of Islamist rebels participate in Djibouti peace talks brokered by former United Nations Special Envoy to Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah.
- October, 2008: Parliament subsequently expanded to 550 seats to accommodate ARS members. Former ARS chairman Parliament is then elected to office by parliament.
- 2008: Pirate activities in Somalia bring in over \$50 million making it the most productive industry in Somalia (Worth and McDonald, 2008.) Continue until 2012.
- 29 December, 2008: Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed announces his resignation as President of Somalia in Baidoa.
- March, 2009: Somalia's coalition government announces it will re-implement Shari'a as the nation's official judicial system.
- September, 2010: Former Premier Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke resigns after dispute with President
- 10 September, 2010: Parliament elects Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as the new president of Somalia.
- 12 November, 2010: Prime Minister Mohamed names a new Cabinet, reducing 39 portfolios to 18. Cabinet ministers fully disclose their assets and sign a code of ethics.
- 14 June, 2011: 20 years since last functioning govt administered Somalia.
- 19 June 2011: Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed resigns from his position as Prime Minister of Somalia.
- 12 June, 2012: Latest constitution is drafted
- 1 August, 2012: Provisional approval of constitution.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (FGS)

Transition to Federal Government, Parliament restarts, roadmaps

- 20 August, 2012: Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) begins with inauguration of parliament after Transitional Federal Government (TFG) interim mandate ends. First permanent central government in country since start of civil war
- 10 September, 2012: Parliament elects as new president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.
- 6 October, 2012: President Mohamud appoints Abdi Farah Shirdon as new Prime Minister.
- April, 2013: In resumed national reconciliation talks between central government and secessionist Somaliland authorities President Hassan agree to cooperate on security – and allocation to Somaliland its portion of development aid previously earmarked for Somalia as a whole.
- September, 2013 - International donors promise 2.4 billion dollars in reconstruction aid in three-year "New Deal".
- September, 2013 - Al-Shabab seize shopping centre and kill 60 people in Kenyan capital Nairobi declaring it was “in retaliation for Kenya's military involvement in Somalia”.
- 21 December, 2013: Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed succeeds Abdi Farah Shirdon as new Prime Minister.

2014 - 2025 From ‘failed state’ to ‘fragile’ to recovering state

- April, 2014: AMISOM (African Union Mission to Somalia) convoy reinforces Somali military.
- May, 2014 - Al-Shabab claims bomb attack on restaurant in Djibouti as it was “used as launch pad to strike Muslims”.
- June, 2014 - Al-Shabab claims two attacks on Kenyan coast killing more than 60; threaten more against Kenya.
- August, 2014: Somali government-led Operation Indian Ocean to eradicate remaining insurgent-held pockets in countryside.
- September, 2014 - Al-Shabab leader Ahmed Abdi Godane killed in US drone strike. Government offers 2 million dollar bounty for successor, Ahmad Omar.
- October, 2014: AMISOM joins Operation Indian Ocean to fight against Al-Shabab.
- November, 2014 - Government launches country's first postal service in more than two decades. Mogadishu's first ever cash withdrawal machine installed in hotel.

- November-December, 2014 - Al Shabab carry out mass killings in north-east Kenya, including on a bus and a camp of quarry workers.
- 17 December, 2014, former Premier Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke reappointed Prime Minister.
- 6 February, 2015 Deputy Prime Minister Omar Arteh appointed.
- April, 2015 - Al-Shabaab claim responsibility for killing 148 people, mostly Christians, at Garissa University College, northern Kenya. Kenya retaliates with air raids on Somalia's Al-Shabab bases.
- May, 2015 - US Secretary of State John Kerry visits Mogadishu, first US officeholder to do so, a few weeks after Al-Shabab kill 17 people in the city's government quarter.
- January 2016 - Somali Media Law passed.
- February, 2016 - African Union leaders agree on more support for their military presence in Somalia after weeks of increased Al-Shabaab attacks on public spaces and pro-government troops. Government and African Union troops recapture southern port of Merca that al-Shabaab briefly seized.
- September 4, UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) issue first-ever public human rights report which corroborates NISA's abuses, including repressing the rights to free speech and peaceful assembly.
- November, 2016 - After fighting displaced up to 90,000 in Galkayo leaders of Puntland and Galmudug agree to respect ceasefire there.

2017–2021: Farmaajo presidency

Expanded diplomacy, reduced cabinet, greater security, emphasis on technocratic competence

- 8 February, 2017 - Parliament elects as president former prime minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (Farmaajo). Al-Shabab threatens to target anyone collaborating with him.
- 23 February, 2017 President appoints former humanitarian worker and businessman Hassan Khaire as Prime Minister.
- March, 2017 - Pirates seize tanker off coast of Puntland in the first hijacking of a large vessel since 2012.
- March, 2017 – Govt amends Somali Media Law
- May, 2017 - President Mohamed at London conference calls for lifting of arms embargo to help defeat al-Shabab. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres says conditions now in place for Somalia to become a recovering state, "success story".

- October 14, 2017 - Mogadishu suffers deadliest double truck bombing that kills more than 512 people injuring 316 with 62 people missing presumed incinerated by the following inferno. Al-Shebab is prime suspect.
- 5 September, 2018 - Somalia, Ethiopia & Eritrea sign agreement to advance political, economic and security integration to lessen reliance on Gulf or Western actors mediating regional relations.
- 24 September 2019 – President Farmaajo awarded Concordia Leadership Award jointly with Ethiopia’s and Eritrea’s Presidents for cooperative efforts in promoting regional peace and economic integration.
- 25 March, 2020 - Somalia's debt greatly reduced through IMF/World Bank (IDA) Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, facilitating international financial reintegration. [Due to pace of fiscal and governance reforms since 2017: Paris Club cancelled US\$1.4 billion of 3 owed; IMF/IDA/African Development Bank: 806 of US\$974 m. owed; others incl. Russia: \$US1billion.]

3 May, 2020 On World Press Freedom Day Mogadishu lawyers sue then NISA chief Fahad Yasin and cousin Villa Somalia communications Deputy Chief of Staff Abdinur Mohamed Ahmed for a violent April raid on Mustaqbal Media by the Turkish-trained special police unit, Hamacad.

8 September, 2020 Special prosecutor appointed to investigate crime against journalists. With highest rate at killings and maiming in Africa for decades (70 killed since 1992, 10 since 2017 and only 11% judicially resolved, National Committee of Safety of Journalists calls for regulatory oversight following 2019 UNESCO-Somali Journalist Syndicate Mogadishu workshop.)

- 23 September, 2020 Mohamed Hussein Roble appointed as Prime Minister.
- 26 August, 2020 Somali Media Law approved. SJS & SOMA oppose some amendments to 2016’s media law for its coverall definitions: “false news” “promoting tribalism” “incitement” “propaganda against the dignity of any citizen ... (or) the state”.
- 29 September, 2020 Farmaajo criticised by SJS, SOMA for comments re journalist’s lack of knowledge, linking journalists critical of govt to al-Shabaab. SJS cited media shut-downs and restricted information access being justified by “alleged national security concerns”.

2021

Constitutional crisis emerges when President Farmaajo’s term expires without new elections: armed clashes erupts in Mogadishu between rival factions.

- February, 2021: With expiry of President term and no date set for successor elections, fighting breaks out in Mogadishu. Continues until May when government and opposition agree elections within 60 days. Later set for 10 October.

- May 2021 - President Farmaajo announces he will not remain in office beyond original mandate
- 26 September, 2021 – Australian international lawyers file lawsuit with the Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) implicating the FGS in four cases of crimes against humanity. Lawyer Yusef Abdi Farah outlined separate cases in their lawsuit.
- 1 November, 2021 - Long delayed electoral process begins, to finish December.
- December, 2021 all President Farmaajo revokes PM's authority to organise upcoming elections.
- 26 December, 2021 - PM Roble counter-accuses President of sabotaging electoral process.
- 27 December, 2021: President suspends PM over alleged obstruction of investigation into land confiscation corruption.

2022–2024: Return of President Hassan Sheikh

Territorial gains, renewed conflict in north, contested media regulations

- February-April 2023 Las Anod conflict begins in north (south-east Somaliland). After 1991 Somaliland breakaway, growing discontent amongst over Somaliland's "economic embargo" results in violence against protests. Dozens of civilians killed, more than 154,000 people flee internally or to Ethiopia. Amnesty International finds Somaliland forces indiscriminately shelled Las Anod town, damaging hospitals, schools, & mosques.
- 1 April, 2022 - AMISOM replaced by African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).
- 15 May, 2022 - Academic & Islamist politician Hassan Sheikh Mohamud re-elected president (previous term: 2012-17), defeating Farmaajo.
- 3 June, 2022 ATMIS withdraws 2,000 of c. 20,000 forces from Somalia as part of expected withdrawal by late 2024
- 25 June, 2022 House of the People votes to approve Hamza Abdi Barre who was appointed 9 June to replace Roble as PM.
- August, 2022 – Amended Media Law bill becomes primary regulatory framework for media oversight. Condemned by media unions and rights groups for imposing heavy monetary fines on journalists/managers and too wide security definitions resulting in restricted access to government information and impunity culture.

2023

- Major government-led offensive supported by local "Ma'awisley" militias liberate significant territory in central Somalia.
- Al-Shabab continues to conduct targeted indiscriminate attacks killing hundreds of civilians.
- Five consecutive below-average annual rains continue to have a devastating impact on food and health, with at least 4.3 million people in urgent need of food assistance.
- 22 February, 2023 Senate passes bill granting National Security and Intelligence Agency (NISA) sweeping powers of arrest, detention, and surveillance with minimal independent oversight.

2024

Somalia navigates complex mix of climate shocks, persistent terrorism, and governance challenges, with humanitarian situation remaining critical. Despite ongoing security challenges, economy's GDP growth increases by estimated 4% bolstered by agricultural recovery and private consumption

- 1 January, 2024 Ethiopia-Somaliland MoU: Ethiopia signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland to lease a Red Sea port for naval base access in exchange for potential recognition of Somaliland's independence. Somalia responds by strengthening ties with Egypt and Turkey.
- March, 2024 Puntland's breakaway: semi-autonomous state of Puntland withdraws recognition of FGS following unilateral changes by federal parliament.
- March 2024 Official Information Bill approved by council of Ministers but still pending FGS signing. following concerns by journalist and rights groups that it criminalises journalism by promoting a culture of secrecy that violates constitutional rights to information.
- 20 March, 2024 Somali women MPs rally against opposition to women in politics.
- June, 2024 Somalia elected as non-permanent member of UN Security Council for 2025-2026 term, first time on SC since 1970.
- August 2024 - Direct Election Bill: Somali cabinet approves landmark bill to move from indirect clan-based system to universal suffrage (one-person-one-vote) for future elections.
- November, 2024 - Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi wins Somaliland presidential election defeating incumbent Muse Bihi Abdi.
- 17 Dec 2024 Somalia criminalizes consensual same-sex conduct with up to three years in prison.

2025

- 2025-2026 Somalia begins two-year term as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.
- 1 January, 2025 - African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) officially replaces ATMIS to continue security support, endorsed by SC Resolution 2767.
- Parliament continues reviewing provisional constitution with disputes over electoral models persisting between FGS and states like Puntland.
- Media restrictions: journalists face arrests and violence with incidents in Mogadishu and Puntland.
- Friction between FGS and regional states (like Jubaland) hamper counterterrorism efforts, with clashes occurring.
- July, 2025 - Despite bombing at Mogadishu military base (May) major offensives, including attacks in Middle Shabelle (February), recapture of strategic towns like Sablid and Anole (July).
- 21 August, 2025 – Cabinet approves new Cybercrime Bill aimed at strengthening national security and fighting online crime.
- 15-16 December, 2025 ff - Somali forces with international partners (including US AFRICOM) continue active strikes against al-Shabaab and ISIS cells in Golis Mountains and southern regions.
- 30 December, 2025 Israel announces recognition of Somaliland. Protests erupt across towns and cities in Somalia including Mogadishu, Buhoodle, Galkacyo, Guriel, Hudur, Bahdo, Las Anod, Adado, Dhusamareb, Merca, Baidoa, Hobyo, Harardhere, Abudwak, and Borama.

2026

- Jan 2, 2026 - FGS condemns Israel's recognition of the breakaway state of Somaliland, as well as Somaliland's decision to open an embassy in Israel.

LESSON 5 – HOW PARLIAMENTS WORK

Part 1: People in Parliament

Many people have specific duties in Parliament — the President, the Speaker, the Prime Minister, Ministers and other members with special roles, the Clerk of the House, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and the historical office of ‘Usher of the Black Rod’. Their titles and functions are set out here.

President/Sovereign

The President or sovereign (literally, an over-ruler) is an essential part of Parliament and has a formal role. This role includes assenting to bills passed in the House of Representatives so that they become ‘Acts of Parliament’.

After a general election, the President opens Parliament by delivering the President’s speech. This speech sets out the Government’s intentions for the coming term of Parliament. The President also brings a parliamentary term to an end. This is known as the dissolution of parliament.

The President has no part in the daily activities of the House of Representatives but receives reports on the performance of various portfolios of Ministers. (Note: A semi-presidential system, differs from a parliamentary republic in that the people elect the president who is more than a ceremonial figurehead. It differs from the presidential system because the cabinet, although named by the president, is responsible to the legislature, which can force the cabinet to resign through a motion of no confidence.). See Bkgrndr 1-1.

Speaker of the House

The Speaker presides over the House of Representatives. It is the Speaker’s role to act as a neutral referee, to apply the rules of the House (**Standing Orders**), and to oversee procedures and day-to-day operation of the House. S/he ‘calls’ MPs during question time to deliver their questions – and then the various ministers to answer them.

The Speaker:

- represents the House to the President
- chairs the meetings of the House
- ‘calls’ Ministers during question time
- makes rulings on points of procedure
- chairs select committees
- usually acts as landlord for Parliament’s buildings
- represents the House to other Parliaments and organisations.

Deputy and Assistant Speakers

The House appoints a Deputy Speaker from amongst its members. The Deputy Speaker may perform the Speaker’s role when the Speaker is absent.

Up to two Assistant Speakers are also appointed from amongst the members of the House. An Assistant Speaker can preside over the House when the Speaker is not in the Chamber.

The Deputy Speaker, or an Assistant Speaker, chairs committees of the whole House. Committees of the whole House or Select Committees mostly consider bills in detail, part by part.

Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is the practising leader of the Government. This is largely an executive role, separate from Parliament itself.

The Prime Minister's role in the House is to:

- account for Government activity by replying to questions directed to the Prime Minister during question time
- deliver the annual Prime Minister's statement
- lead the Government's contribution to major debates.
- report to the President on the performance of Cabinet portfolios and passage of bills.

Ministers

The President appoints **Ministers of the Crown** on the advice of the Prime Minister. Ministers of the Crown are members of the Executive Government and may also be part of **Cabinet**. Only members of the House of Representatives can become Ministers.

Ministers are each responsible for particular areas of public administration and / or policy, called ministerial portfolios. Ministers are politically accountable to the House for these responsibilities.

A Minister's role in the House is to:

- introduce bills to the House that relate to their portfolios and lead debate on those bills through all its later stages in the House
- account for Government activity in their portfolios by replying to questions during question time.

Leader of the House

The Leader of the House is the Minister appointed by the Prime Minister to manage Government business in the House.

The Leader of the House:

- moves motions for the Government that relate to House and committee procedure
- determines the order of Government business in the House
- has primary responsibility for the Government's law-making programme.

Leader of the Opposition

The Leader of the Opposition is the member who leads the largest political party that is not part of the Government.

The Leader of the Opposition's role in the House is to:

- be the leader of the 'government-in-waiting'
- lead opposition responses in major debates.

The Leader of the Opposition usually sits directly opposite the Prime Minister in the debating chamber.

Whips

'Whips' are members of Parliament who are organisers and administrators of the MPs in each of the political parties in the House. Whips:

- prepare lists of members from their party to speak in debates
- make sure that members of their party are in the House when needed
- negotiate with other whips on House business
- cast votes on behalf of their parties during a party vote.

All parliamentary political parties have people carrying out the role of whips. (As a term from mostly outdated animal control and a different age in England, there is provision for other appropriate local words to be used.) In one agricultural, English-speaking country the Green party prefer the word 'musterer ...'.

Clerk of the House

The Clerk of the House is the principal permanent officer of the House of Representatives. The Clerk is appointed by the Governor-General as an expert in parliamentary law and procedure.

The Clerk:

- advises the Speaker and members on the rules, practices, and customs of the House
- records the proceedings and decisions of the House – or appoints others to do so
- certifies bills ready for Royal or Presidential assent
- issues the Order Paper (order of business) for each sitting day
- administers the oath or affirmation of allegiance for members of Parliament after a general election
- is chief executive of the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives, which provides a secretariat for the House and its committees.

Sergeant-at-Arms

The Sergeant-at-Arms is a permanent officer of the House. The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible to the Speaker for the maintaining proper standards of behaviour in the galleries and areas around the debating chamber.

At the start of each sitting day the Sergeant-at-Arms, carrying the Mace, precedes the Speaker into the Chamber and announces the Speaker's arrival.

While the House is sitting, the Sergeant-at-Arms sits by the door of the Chamber.

Usher of the Black Rod

This office derives from the time when Parliament had both an upper and a lower house. The Usher of the Black Rod then played a role in the upper house similar to that of the Sergeant-at-Arms in the lower house.

The role is often kept to provide Presidents with a messenger to communicate with the House on ceremonial occasions.

For example: when the President summons members of the House for the State opening of Parliament, the Usher of the Black Rod raps three times on the door of the debating chamber. Only then does the Speaker permit entry so that Black Rod can inform members that the President *requests* their attendance.

This symbolises the achievement, first made historically in England in the 17th century, of preventing the Sovereign (King Charles I) from entering the House using his superior armed force to intimidate parliament. This practice or convention symbolises the independence of the House of Representatives to rule, not for a king or the benefit of a privileged few, but for all groups and individuals in society.

Part 2: How laws are made

New laws begin as documents called bills. Bills are drafts or first versions of proposed new laws. Parliament considers several different types of bill in formal stages. If they pass through all those stages they become new laws, called Acts of Parliament. If not, they cannot be resubmitted until the next term of parliament.

How laws are made

How a bill becomes law

There are several stages that a bill passes before becoming an Act of Parliament. These stages ensure that a bill is debated thoroughly in public and scrutinised. This careful examination during these stages also provides an opportunity for a bill to be changed.

- Introduction
- First reading
- Select committee
- Second reading
- Committee of the whole House
- Third reading

How laws are made

- Presidential assent.

The term 'reading' dates from the time when bills were read aloud in the House of Commons in Great Britain. Today, only the title is usually read aloud in the Lower House.

Introduction

A bill is publicly available after its introduction. Introduction is an administrative process that is later announced in the House. A bill has no formal existence until it is introduced.

First reading

A first reading debate provides the first chance to debate a bill in the House. It can occur no sooner than the third sitting day after a bill's introduction. This delay allows members time to look at a bill and decide if they agree with it. It also allows the Attorney-General (the state's chief lawyer) time to ensure a bill is consistent with a Bill of Rights Act, usually enacted beforehand for this purpose.

At the end of the debate the House decides if a bill should progress and votes on whether it should be 'read a first time'. If a bill is defeated in the vote, that is the end of the bill. If the 'first reading' is agreed, the bill is usually referred to a select committee to be considered in more detail.

Select committee

Once a bill is referred to a select committee, the committee usually has six months to examine the bill and prepare a report for the House.

Select committees normally invite public submissions on a bill. Then they hold public hearings to listen to some of those who made submissions. After hearing submissions, they work through the issues raised, and decide what changes, if any, should be made to the bill.

The select committee's report contains:

- a reprint of the bill with recommended changes (known as **amendments**)
- a commentary in which the committee explains its recommended changes and the issues it has considered.

Second reading

A bill can be read a second time no sooner than the third sitting day after the select committee reports to the House. Members can then debate the main principles of a bill, and any changes recommended by the select committee in its report.

Changes not supported by every committee member are subject to a single vote at the end of the second reading debate.

Changes that are supported by every committee member are automatically included in the bill if the second reading is agreed.

If the vote is lost, that is the end of the bill. If the second reading is agreed, the bill is ready for debate by a committee of the whole House.

Committee of the whole House

How laws are made

Any member of the House can participate when a committee of the whole House debates a bill. The members sit in the Chamber, but the Speaker does not take the chair. The debate is less formal than other debates but is no less important.

Members have many chances to make short speeches and debate the provisions of a bill. These debates are a chance to examine the bill in detail. Ministers and members can propose changes. These changes may be published before the debate in a **supplementary order paper (SOP)**.

There is no time limit on these debates. Large or controversial bills may be before a committee of the whole House for several days.

Once the final form of a bill is agreed, it is reprinted to show any changes that have been made. The bill is then ready for third reading.

Third reading

This is usually a summing-up debate on a bill in its final form.

The vote at the end of the debate is the final vote in the House to either pass the bill or reject it. Bills are rarely rejected at this stage. If the bill is passed there is one final step before it becomes law — Presidential assent or final signing off.

Presidential assent

A bill is not a law until it is signed by the Sovereign or President This is called the Presidential assent.

Types of bill

The House considers several types of bill.

- Government bills
- Members' bills
- Local bills
- Private bills

Government bills

The Government has a legislative or law-making programme so that it can act on its policies. As part of this programme, Government bills or laws are prepared for Ministers to introduce to the House.

The Government decides the order in which the House will consider Government bills.

Members' bills

Members who are not Government Ministers can put forward bills that are not part of the Government's programme. These are called Members' bills.

The House allocates its sitting time to Members' bills every second Wednesday when the House is sitting. Because there are always more Members' bills proposed than time to consider them, a ballot system is used to choose the bills that are introduced. The ballot may contain around 40 drafted bills, but only four may be available for first reading at any one time.

How laws are made

Few Members' bills become laws though they may affect the Government's law-making priorities if they attract sufficient support. For example, the Government may decide to introduce its own more extensive bill with similar policy aims to a Member's bill.

Local bills

Local authorities may put forward a local bill to deal with specific issues in their area. For example, a local bill may ask Parliament to lift a land-use restriction or permit a land-use for a particular place that would normally be outside the law.

The local member of Parliament is likely to be the member in charge of a local bill.

Private bills

Private bills are rare. They ask for a change to the law for the benefit of a particular person or group. They may relate to personal or business activities. A private bill's promoter asks a member of Parliament to take charge of the bill as it passes through the House.

LESSON 6 - SOCIAL CONTRACTS

Part 1: Introduction: All societies have some sort of social contract

All orderly and unified societies and countries have a 'social contract.' This can be understood as an agreement of covenant between citizens and their motherland. Or fatherland.

This contract may be spelled out in key laws, a formal constitution or a code of expected behaviour. However, it is often an informal understanding about two-way obligations and rights.

A social contract, therefore, sums up the obligations of individuals and groups to work with each other for the good of a parent. Whether that parent is a clan, a regional grouping, a city-state or an identified country is of little importance. What is important is the difference it makes to survival, order and unity of societies.

All good agreements are two-way and fair in their obligations. They sum up the obligations of a parent-clan, a parent-country or a parent-state to provide services like safety and access to justice. And they sum up the obligations of communities and their children-citizens/clan-members to know and meet them.

What is the value of using the term 'social contract?'

The value of using a phrase like 'social contract' is that it can focus attention on what is needed to make them work. And why their demands, their terms, can change. Or need to change. If individuals need to band together to protect each other or to develop fully, one of the functions of social contracts is to spell out the exact nature of obligations and expectations. This includes where and when action is required and what sort of roles are demanded of whom.

Social contracts require education

Like all reciprocal agreements with rights and obligations, social contract need to be educated for. Even when unstated, they work best when their terms are clearly understood and commitment to them is renewed on a regular basis. Politicians with a good grasp of how social contracts have developed can ensure citizens stay committed to the social contract(s) which affect them.

They can do this by:

- educating themselves about their obligations
- promoting to citizens the ideal of engaged and participating citizenry
- working to ensure they themselves meet these obligations

- speaking out when terms are broken or dishonoured
- speaking out when contracts need renegotiating
- discussing with communities what contracts are suitable

Working for the common good – or against it

In return for meeting basic needs, clans and countries governing bodies expect obedience to laws and contributions towards ‘the common good’. These include such obligations as putting time into education and playing the adult roles that contribute to the survival, order and unity of the group.

For larger modern societies this may involve activities such as

- paying fair taxation
- informing oneself about issues affecting your community
- undertaking military/public service in times of emergency
- behaving safely in traffic vehicles

Like the parent-children relationship, social contracts can be honoured, dishonoured, neglected or broken.

If security is not provided – or itself becomes a source of exploitation and violence – the social contract has been dishonoured. If unresolved, a contract may be no longer valid and/or need renegotiating.

‘Where it is well, there is one’s country’

Over centuries communities, clans and sub-clans have developed customary practices. The aim of these is to make clear the obligations on all to ensure the care and protection of all. Such practices and expectations underpin all relationships between these groups and the state. And contain agreed-on sanctions and penalties.

The 2000-year-old saying ‘Where it is well, there is one’s country’ (*‘Ubi bene, ibi patria’*) recognises that loyalty to a country goes both ways. Under terms of a just social contract, appeals for individuals to honour patriotic obligations are matched by state obligations to individuals and groups.

In modern understandings of social contract, the obligations of the more powerful state to intervene to guarantee security are accepted by all who enjoy their advantages. Provision of food, shelter and security – including an independent police force and military – have developed since humans began living in cities 10, 000 years ago.

And the development of independent, salaried police forces (invented only after the 17th century in industrialised cities) meant that a community-enforced, revenge-based justice was kept in check by written laws and an independent judiciary.

The right to security is basic

Security against threats by more powerful external (or internal) forces often requires a high degree of organisation. These threats can involve health, welfare or warfare.

Solving these insecurities may involve a mix of gathered information and organised activities, including:

- payment of sufficient salaries to security agents (to prevent corruption)
- providing education and facilities for people to help themselves
- co-ordination of social agencies to address complex issues
- the use of enforceable sanctions for those who refuse to obey

Purposes of social contracts

Social contracts, then, perform many legitimising functions including to:

- limit or exclude the power of exploitative individuals or organisations
- give leading figures or governments lawful authority over others
- ensure protection of, and rights for, groups of citizens
- enable public acceptance of the right of authorities to impose sanctions or penalties

Rule by general consent, for the general good

If a majority of citizens understand and accept a social contract, then a government is legitimate. That is, it can rule by consent, despite particular cases of rule breaking.

This consent is achieved through the two-way acceptance of – and commitment to – responsibilities and obligations. For example, if tax is understood as necessary to pay for security, most people will pay for its benefits on that basis.

Such agreements recognise that humans are both social and political animals. They emphasise individuals and groups need for others. They also rely on an awareness of the fragility of human lives when confronted with superior forces of nature – or of others.

Examples of common need are the just distribution of wealth for medical and educational needs. For countries where there is a reliable tax take, this can take the form of socialised medicine and welfare payments (retirement or sickness benefits as ‘transfer payments’ from contributing taxpayers to others in need). For rural communities’ common need can mean access to affordable education and medicine.

Part 2 – Permanent records of contracts can ensure equal treatment

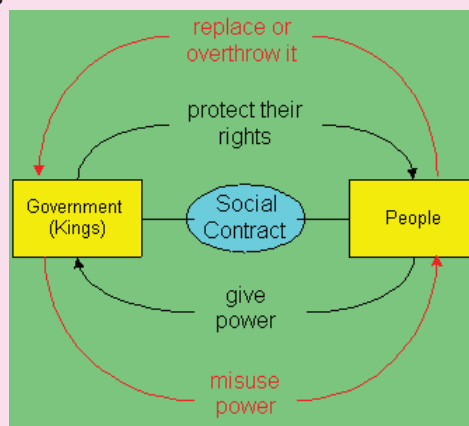
Oral history can also preserve the terms of social contracts. However, both city-states with scattered rural communities have felt the need to record them on tablets, pillars, cylinders, parchment, pottery or some permanent material. These were then erected publicly to ensure both public knowledge, respect, and equality of obligation.

Social contracts are preserved in many of the world’s oldest records. Many are inspired by religious ideals and some come from arguments emphasising their basis in wisdom, logic and mutual human advantage.

The authority of pre-European African tribal chiefs (See Bkgrndr 6-1) came from, and was checked by, orally preserved contracts with the common people. And when the basis of social contracts is customary laws (such as *Xeer*), or based on instructions by inspired individuals in writings accepted as divine (the *Quran*), then greater acceptance of its obligations usually results. See Bkgrndr 6-2.

Recorded history of social contracts

The 2400-year-old dialogue *Crito* is regarded to be one of the first recorded expressions of the idea of a social contract. In the *Crito* the Greek Plato cites the words of his teacher Socrates who refuses to go out of prison in his city-state to avoid a death sentence. Despite what he and his friends regarded as an unjust guilty verdict, Socrates regarded the city’s laws as his moral ‘parents’. His obligation to those who had brought him up in truth – and his obligation to give an example to others of keeping law – was greater than the obligation to save his own life. And for him to live in any other city without such laws would leave him a morally stunted orphan – as well as give a bad example to his sons.



contract. In *Crito*, Socrates describes how he bribed his friends to help him escape a death sentence. He calls this obligation the way of moral and order.

Epicurus declared 2,300 years ago there was no such thing as absolute justice but only agreements that are made to prevent the infliction or suffering of harm. The 2000-year-old Buddhist *vinaya* spells out the behaviour for the common good expected of monks, including not chopping down trees that had a social function for other villagers.

The Quran spells out the obligation to respect treaties and contracts. This obligation is mentioned specifically in often quoted verses. It is also in many chain hadiths and reasoned interpretations that have helped over centuries to make moral obligations clear.

Role of scholars' interpretations

Scholars and thinkers since have explored when obligations are fair, how they should be applied, and what sanctions would help keep them. And when and why they apply.

For example, how much tax is a citizen obliged to pay? Is it permissible, under conditions of war, to pay more than the Quranic 2.5 percent *zakat*? And can an unjust state be ignored or even disobeyed (civil disobedience)?

And more recently, whether a Muslim in a non-Muslim majority-state can participate in democracy – or in that country's wars.

Abuse of power can make contracts invalid

After decolonisation of African states in the 1960s and the collapse of Russia and socialist states in the 1980s, Africans have had plenty of reason to question governments' abuse of power.

When regions are deprived of their ability to produce food for their people, or when inhabitants can no longer use traditional pastoral lands, social contracts involving 'citizens' lose validity. And relevance. There is little advantage in citizenship when centralised government cannot provide services.

For politician, then, the language of social contracts may be necessary and useful to counter arguments of those who try to impose invalid contracts and obligations. This is because invalid contracts can be imposed in various ways by:

- those who demand obligations without services
- those who insist on contracts through force or psychological coercion
- those who abuse the language and historical concept of contracts to try to confuse moral with political obligations; for example, fighting for unjust wars
- those who apply contracts unequally or hypocritically (*they* do not keep them)
- those who use unnecessarily harsh sanctions or punishments no longer required for moral or civic enforcement
- those who use selected texts and concepts out of context to justify exploitation

Part 3 – What makes a valid contract?

To know the language of contracts and obligations – like knowing the language that describes how ideas can be twisted and minds forced – is an important part of representative politics.

Debates which seek, on behalf of the people, to renegotiate new terms for the social contract between state and citizen, need to know that makes contracts valid. People, politicians and law enforcers should have a basic knowledge of previous contracts and be able to use the language of valid contracts.

When a state fails, independent courts no longer apply the same using principles for all. Therefore, a recovering state begins with principles agreed to by consensus. Communities revert to customary laws but for larger concerns IPU identifies the following: a constitution, a representative law-making parliament, and sufficiently salaried, independent judges to interpret them.

Contracts entered into freely are longest lasting, the best kept

Valid contracts usually begin with groups feeling secure enough to put into words their felt injustices and/or ideas for a better life. When laws are made in national and state debating chambers, and when fair taxation system provides money for security and equal enforcement of laws, citizens can enjoy the fruits of a larger community.

Parliaments are the best-known device to achieve consensus about what most people want. The IPU lists the many advantages of centralised government. This includes the power to enact and ‘execute’ laws that will improve people’s lives.

Valid social contracts made at the local level by consensus politics can then translate the general will into the commonwealth.

One-sided contracts exploit others

In times of regional conflict, militant groups sometimes attempt to reinforce their claims to state status by promising a social order previously weakened by war and/or injustices. See Bkgrndr 6-3. They can do this by drawing up **one-sided social contracts**. These can make taxation demands seen to be excessive.

Such contracts can be shown, over time, to lack the freely-given consent which gives legitimacy.

Parliaments can reflect the people’s will – and ensure it

Parliaments, as the law-making institutions representing all people, are one of the best tests of consensus for what is called 'the general will of the people'. In its law-making role parliaments can write or rewrite a social contract regarded to be fair on – and to – all citizens. Parliaments that are run well can therefore be representative of all sectors of a society. And can achieve agreement for policies from all sectors through their debate-and-vote system.

The 'general will,' therefore, is best assessed by a truly representative one. When wisdom and common agreement come together in this way, it has been shown that governments can rely on a high degree of 'buy-in' from the general public. Laws, constitutions, or customary practices that are seen to be both necessary and fair will be more generally followed – and can be more easily enforced.

Therefore, the development of parliaments (see Lesson 2) has ensured the people's will is both informed by, and reflected in, values agreed to be important. As a result, such things as fair taxes, fair wages, better security and welfare for all, are possible to achieve. And to be improved.

Social contracts can change – and have

The history of parliaments shows how social contracts have changed over decades. Changes in social contracts are a reflection of changes in societies, in economies and in improved understandings of what motivates – or prevents – human behaviour. We no longer have monarchs whose 'divine right to rule' mean they only listen to nobles' advice on occasions, or when they want to tax more.

Social contracts demanding obedience while exploiting public resources are not uncommon in post-colonial Africa. As are companies who pay as little tax as possible. The refusal to grant aid until on-the-ground security can be guaranteed can also be seen in the light of international social contracts.

Such cases have motivated thinkers to re-examine both divine texts and natural arguments in the light of shared principles of social justice, equal treatment and compassion.

Democracy has the capacity to self-correct

The 130-year-old **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)** states in its principles of democracy that it is the 'only political system with the capacity for self-correction'. According to their guide democracy can create a society that promotes and strengthens:

- the economic and social development of the community
- the togetherness of the society

- national tranquillity
- a climate favourable for international peace
- the fundamental rights of the individual
- social justice

This independent parliamentary union, which regularly draws on the freely offered experience of its member states, sums up its findings: “peace and economic, social and cultural development are both conditions for, and fruits of, democracy”. According to the union, therefore, for good governance a social contract drawn up by a state should include these state responsibilities:

- a commitment to education to all groups and minorities
- a special commitment to civic education and awareness
- the shaping of responsible citizenry through involvement programs

For maximum participation, IPU maintains, the state should ensure: ‘the enjoyment of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.’

IPU’s formula for effective social contracts

The IPU has found that for rights to be enjoyed in a modern social contract, governments – including all smaller units of civic organisation – should be:

- effective
- honest and transparent
- freely chosen
- accountable for their management of public affairs

In its guide to good governance the IPU states that the rights of citizens to justice can be effectively guaranteed by the rule of law as well as the provision of:

- strong judicial institutions
- independent and effective oversight mechanisms
- access by all to administrative and judicial remedies
- respect for administrative and judicial decisions by all
- removal of obstacles to the lack of genuine choice and alternatives

- measures designed to redress imbalances or discrimination based on social grouping, culture, religion, race or gender. See Bkgrndr 1-6 of lesson 1.

When states are recovering

But what happens when a state is too fragile to protect individuals or groups without the patronage of powerful non-government groups?

When the state cannot protect its citizens without the help of outsiders (often with unpredictable agendas), there is a reversion to a mix of customary law and Shariah. Or complete anarchy.

In such situations, the way forward may require a mix of old and new. Social contracts involving international agencies need to be negotiated until such time as central government and its security arms can be re-established.

BACKGROUNDER

BKGRNDR 6-1

ADVANTAGES OF DEMOCRACY FOR LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES

African democracy before European colonisations

In his 1959 classic *African Nationalism*,²² Ndebele Sithole argued 'it is bad history and bad civics' to deny African democracy before European colonisation. And if the essence of democracy is the will of the people (*'intando yabantu'*), Sithole went on, his research proved African people had it 'since the dawn of their history.'

A call for self-rule and self-determination

He concluded his book with a call for the right to *ukuzibusa* (self-rule) and *kuziwitonga* (self-determination) in a way that showed 'the will of the majority of the people.'

After giving colonisers credit for some improvements to native African democracy, Sithole cites a number of examples from differing parts of Africa to contradict the idea 'democracy was European-introduced to Africa.'

'European dictatorship'

In fact, according to Sithole, since Europeans ruled 'not according to the voice of the majority, but according to that of a minority' the African did not 'come into contact with European on a democratic but on a dictatorial level.' Therefore African nationalism, Sithole maintains, is simply a stand against 'European dictatorship.'

And while European leaders at the time were self-appointed to their positions of authority, the African ruler on the other hand owed his power to the people themselves 'who dismissed him from office if they were dissatisfied with him.'

The king is the people

Declaring it typical of African history, Sithole quotes his own tribe's view that the Ndebele big chief or king embodied clearly what was in his people. And that if the king failed to reflect this, the people defied him. Ndebele asserts, therefore, the king's only true voice was that of his people. He quotes a Ndebele saying:

'The King is the people. To respect the King is to respect oneself. He who despises the king despise us. He who praises our king praises us. The King is us.'

Using other examples from Ghana's customary law, and from Nigeria's Yoruba people, Sithole says the people had real power against tyrants – and against abuse of power. A

²² N Sithole, *African Nationalism*, (1959; 1968) Oxford Univeristy Press, Capetown.

Ghanese chief who abused his power would be warned by elders that his behaviour was 'alienating his subjects and bringing his stool in disrepute.'

'We do not wish his ears be hard of hearing'

Sithole cites from the Ghanese chief-making ceremony the enstooler's chant on behalf of the people:

*we do not wish greediness ... we do not wish his ears be hard of hearing ... we do not wish that he should act on his own initiative ... that it should ever be said, 'I have no time. I have no time ... We do not wish personal abuse.'*²³

Chiefs were dependent upon advice for their office

According to Sithole, it was obvious from the way elders dealt with the usual complaints against a chief: 'excessive drinking, going after other men's wives ... neglecting the advice of elders' that the chief was dependent upon for his office. And the elders were also dependent upon the common people for theirs.

Among the Swazi and Bechuana too, Sithole claims, a chief could be tried by his own council if he broke the law. And among the Yoruba, declaring war was such a grave responsibility that a king was expected, under the laws of his country, to die before his defeated army returned home – and if he did not, the people saw to it this law was executed

Real authority comes from the people

Good government, therefore, was popular government. A headman who had more persons in his village was regarded with envy by other headmen. And a chief with more villages under his jurisdiction than other enjoyed greater social and political prestige. Almost all the tribal institutions Sithole examines owe their real authority to the people and not to the office-holders.

Also, Sithole asserts, European powers had preserved the shell of kingship and chieftainship but emptied them of their real content.

Will of the people versus will of a foreign power

Thus such African kings and chiefs no longer represented the will of the people, but the will of a foreign power. Accordingly, Sithole wants not just to honour a pre-European native democracy, but also to make a claim for a real democracy all the peoples of Africa once enjoyed.

²³ Apter, D. E. 1957: *The Gold Coast in Transition*. Princeton University Press, Princeton. P. 108; Sithole (1959) p. 93.

THE QURAN AND HADITHAT ON HONOURING CONTRACTS

¹ A well-known series of Qur'anic verses exhort Muslims to honour any contract which they enter into, including: "Fulfil God's/Allah's covenant when you have entered into it and break not your oaths after asserting them, for you thereby make God your guarantor." [Q. 16:91] And "Fulfil every contract for contracts will be answered for [on the Day of Reckoning]" [Q.17:34].

There is also a famous *hadith*, reported through multiple chains and in multiple forms, about the sinfulness of breaching contracts:

When God gathers all earlier and later generations of mankind on the Day of Judgement he will raise a flag for every person who betrays a trust so it might be said that this is the perfidy of so-and-so, son of so-and-so. (Muslim 1998, 3: 1094)

Aman, trust or security, is the value and most common present-day Islamic justification, in both Sunni and Shi'ite sources, for honouring non-Muslim interests while residing in non-Muslim lands.

The idea that Muslims should not ally themselves with non-Muslims or non-Muslim polities is often argued by quoting Q: 3:28:

Let not the believers take the infidels for their allies in preferences to the believers – for who does this, has nothing to do with God/Allah – unless it be to protect yourselves from them in this way. God/Allah warns you about Himself and the final goal is to Allah/God.

Also, a series of other verses including 60:1, 3:118, 4: 139 4:144 and 5: 80-81 – which seem to prohibit 'loyalty,' 'friendship,' or 'alliance' with non-Muslims – have all been used by some to prohibit residence in non-Muslim states, contributions to non-Muslim welfare, and cooperation with non-Muslims in common ventures. However, Faysal Mawlawi addresses the question of solidarity and civic friendship, raised by these loyalty verses, by stating that secular solidarity is universal. He claims Muslims can feel a form of 'innate love' [*hub fitri*] for non-Muslims, meaning affection based on shared humanity and common interest, to be distinguished from 'creedal love' [*hubb 'aqa'idi*] shared among Muslims.

In essence arguing for a common, neutral ground of secular space, Mawlawi argued in 1994:

Islam would prefer to be expressed through a community where politics and metaphysics are fused. But given the reality of sharing political space with non-

Muslims, it is preferable to limit solidarity and political power to that which all humans have in common.

Mawlawi seems to affirm the neutrality of that space as it has developed in the western practice of the separation of Church and State, while acknowledging that there are times when it may be difficult:

If non-Muslim states made wider claims to metaphysical truth, then it might be more difficult for Muslims to affirm citizenship within them. (Mawlawi 1999, 210-19)

March, A. F.. (2007). Islamic Foundations for a Social Contract in Non-Muslim Liberal Democracies. *The American Political Science Review*, 101(2), 235–252. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27644443>

UBUNTU: SOCIAL JUSTICE WITHOUT REVENGE

The specifically African word of *ubuntu*, 'regard for common humanity,' has much to offer the future prosperity of those suffering from past injustices in all parts of Africa.

Where militant political groups still seek single-solutions to complex problems, governments representing development for all have special responsibilities to promote alternative solutions. One of these is the African idea of *ubuntu* which refers to a specific kind of 'African humanism', humanity towards others. Or: 'the belief in the universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity.'

It emerged from a 1960's trend to Africanisation by political thinkers rebelling against colonisation. This idea was written into the very constitution of South Africa in 1993:

There is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for ubuntu but not for victimisation.

Rightly or wrongly, political commentators came to regard this attitude as a specifically African (originally South African) kind of socialism or humanism, to be often found in indigenous blacks but often lacking in colonising whites. The term was often used in the context of the transition to black majority rule in [Zimbabwe](#) and [South Africa](#).

This circuit-breaker way thinking, *ubuntuism* or regard for humanity, takes into account the need to address the past in the light of the need to progress freely into the future. And to do so without victimisation. The 'Truth-and-Reconciliation' process championed by South Africa's Desmond Tutu after apartheid was abolished in the 1990s became an essential part of that country's healing, social progress.

'Bottom-up government,' customary law or even religious law solutions may be ineffective when communities are traumatised, confused or have lost knowledge of reasonable alternatives. Tribal or national grievances can lead to traditional solutions of *Xeer*, or vendettas fuelled by revenge ethics. These traditional ways may work as balancing mechanism but also lead to an inability to enjoy the fruits of cooperation. Or result in progress-crippling victimisations.

Ubuntu is a concept that fits the 'Horn of Africa' as well. There is everything Islamic about the concept of forgiveness and virtue for the sake of a common humanity. Scholars who grapple with seeming contradictions of textual calls to jihad have resolved these by reference to later hadiths pointing to the higher obligation to the broader jihad of education or communal peace. Or a justice which is obliged to respect

solutions which no longer need literal solutions to ensure citizen security, especially in non-Muslim majority nations. See....

https://scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1727-37812011000400003

LESSON 7: POLITICAL PARTIES

PART I: 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 1974²⁴ various forms of multiparty political systems have been introduced around the world. See Bckgrndr 7-1.

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. See Bckgrndr 7-2.

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. See Bckgrndr 7-3.

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.

²⁴ Huntington, S. (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press).

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 advantage 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 systems of government**. Since 1990 there has been increasing awareness of party 'selectorates'.²⁵ 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**. See Bckgrndr 7-4. The advantages of ideas produced by the increased competition of multi-party systems became more obvious although there were other factors to consider. See Bckgrndr 7-5. This was especially true in countries able to harness the political power necessary to pass reforms (See Bckgrndr 7-6), 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. See Bckgrndr 7-7.

What are the main functions of parties?

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

²⁵ Rahat, G. (2007) *Candidate Selection: The Choice before the Choice.* Journal of Democracy (18) 157-71.

- 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).²⁶

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. See Bckgrndr 7-2.

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.

PART II: Internal party structures and functions

²⁶ 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

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.²⁷ See Bckgrndr 7-8.

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

²⁷ Erdmann (2004:71) claims that fully-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.

- 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**²⁸ 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.²⁹

In newer democracies, however, systems are beginning to operate more flexibly. The 'iron law' predicting that all organisations become elitist over time³⁰ 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.³¹

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.

²⁸ The ability to make independent decisions under the 'brand' of a centralised or parent organisation.

²⁹ Michels, R. (1911) [1962 edn] *Political Parties* (New York: Free Press). Often expressed as 'Who says organisation, says oligarchy.'

³⁰ 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.

³¹ Kreis, D. (2012) *Taking Our Country Back: The Crafting of Networked Politics from Howard Dean to Barack Obama* (New York: Oxford University Press).

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.³²

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, see Bckgrndr 7-9 (called a **plurality**)³³, 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

³² 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.

³³ The differing ways of defining – or setting – a majority are given in the hypertext on [majorities](#). [htxt-6]

If a proportional system (see Bckgrndr 7-9) 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.

PART III: How parties can be hijacked – and re-invented

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.³⁴

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

³⁴ *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.* – Mbutu Sese Seko, President of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) from 1965-1997.

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,' See Bckgrndr 7-10, the People's Action Party, increasingly used control of public resources to shut out or side-line opposition ideas.³⁵

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).'³⁶

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

³⁵ Tremewan, C. (1994) *The Political Economy of Social Control in Singapore* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

³⁶ Lawson, K. (2001) 'Political Parties and Party Competition', in *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, 2nd edn, ed. J. Krieger (New York: Oxford University Press) pp. 670-3.

- 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.³⁷

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.³⁸ 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, See Bckgrndr 7-11.

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. See Bckgrndr 7-12.

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

- build-up of communities

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ Kulik, A. (2007) 'Russia's Political Parties: Deep in the Shadow the President', in *When Parties Prosper: The Uses of Electoral Success*, ed. K. Lawson & P. Merkl (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner) pp. 27- 42.

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

LESSON 7 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, see below.

[PART IV: Ways of making parties more responsive and representative](#)

[PART V: Learning from past and present systems](#)

BACKGROUNDERS

BCKGRNDR 7-1

Three waves of democratisation

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: Cameroon, Uganda

Cameroon's corrupt one-party regime is an example of a Big Man one-party dictatorship. President Biya had 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." In November 2025 Biya began his eighth consecutive seven-year term.

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 is often the split vote of his opponents that leaves him the victor.

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

Here distraction from real issues have also been 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.

Museveni has won multiple presidential elections since 1996, though these victories have been widely disputed by the opposition and international observers due to allegations of fraud and suppression of dissent. Constitutional amendments in 2005 and 2017 removed presidential term and age limits, respectively, allowing him to run for office indefinitely.

Cameroon's 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.

Opposition parties have been calling on Biya to step down but there are no signs the 92-year-old president will. He is rarely seen in public and makes frequent trips to Switzerland He has ruled with an iron fist, repressing all political and armed opposition, holding on to power despite social upheaval, economic disparity and separatist violence.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/oct/14/cameroon-opposition-leader-declares-victory-presidential-election>

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

Parties and tribal identity – advantages and disadvantages

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 more than a generation since the genocides of Rwanda. 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.

BCKGRNDR 7-4

Background to development of multi-party politics in Africa³⁹

³⁹ Meredith, M (2013) *The State of Africa – A History of the Continent Since Independence*, Simon & Shuster: London.

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, Equatorial 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 from 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.

HYPertext - P2A: Advantages and disadvantages of 2-party systems for selected African countries

<i>African party systems – what can be learned from them?</i>		
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)

At least five observations can be taken from the table, according to the authors.⁴⁰

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

⁴⁰ Salih, M. Nordlund, P (2007) Political Parties in Africa, Challenges for Sustained Multi-party democracy in Africa. Based on Research and dialogue with political parties IDEA (Sweden)
http://www.msu.ac.zw/elearning/material/1257171344Africa_report_inlay_final.pdf

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).

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Africa's parties development and reversals since 1950s

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: 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.⁴² (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 reduce 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."⁴³

Unsurprisingly, what became established political practices in Africa were most often defined by widespread and extreme poverty, low literacy levels,

⁴² Sklar, (1979) "The Nature of Class Domination in *Africa*," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 17, no. 4

⁴³ Huntington (1968) *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press)

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.

BCKGRNDR 7-8

Case study: Zambia - Are one-party or multi-party states more competitive?

(And: Do bans on 'ethnic campaigning' work?)

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.

<i>Incumbents Defeated in Multi-Party and One-Party Elections in Zambia 1968 to 1996</i>				
Year	Election type	Number of incumbents running for re-election	Number of	Percentage of
			incumbents defeated	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

Proportional representation

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 government⁴⁴, 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.

⁴⁴ Israel's attempt to keep all views 'within the tent of politics' is widely seen as self-defeating: with only a 3.25% threshold of votes needed for their 120 MPs to enter parliament, extreme views have become more dominant.

When governments are usually coalitions, some political parties are ever-present 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.

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:

$$\text{Quota} = (\text{votes} / (\text{seats} + 1)) + 1$$

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. (see Footnote 1)

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 per cent (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 *Überhangmandaten*. (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, their first MMP elections, in the constituency of the capital city's 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.

Singapore's PAP

Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP) – the politics of one-party choice

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>

Political parties in Somalia

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 parties

- [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 by [Hassan 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.^[12]
- [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 parties

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: [Faysal 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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Redesigning parties to make them more responsive

Since the 'third wave of democratisation' in 1974 (Huntington, 1991) more and more countries have introduced different forms of multiparty political systems.

African states inability to progress beyond a one party state, or their stalling at the two party stage of development, has been well documented.

The need to find African solutions to electorates divided by ethnicity, language, culture, region and class relies on strong and flexible institutions that can bring both change and progress.

The first step is recognition of why African political parties are still fragile. At least six factors have been identified:

- The majority of African governing political parties are still heavily dependent on the use – and abuse – of public funding
- The African private sector is still too small to support strong and vibrant civil society and a non-political middle class detached from the state. The relationships between civil society, the party and the state are often blurred and intertwined. Therefore there are few interest associations that form the backbone of civil society that are not attached to the state therefore they have little leverage to make demands on the state.
- Because of the above the business sector often controls political parties making it harder for parties to create 'coalitions of interest'. Therefore parties have a client-patron relationship rather than 'creating a transparent platform for the negotiation of interests'
- Rather than seeing politics as a way of protecting public interests against private gains, political parties often see access to public funds and personnel as a source of enrichment
- African parties are often motivated more by ethnic and regional loyalties rather than ideas or party programmes. However urban living and the decline of identities based on ethnic base means there is a trend to more **secular** politics (in the sense of loyalty to the best ideas rather than birth connections)
- The weakness of opposition parties and their inability to be detached from the above identities makes it difficult to combine their interests with governing parties so as to fill guardianship or oversight roles. Also pressures from institutional donors or transnational institutions such as the IMF or World Bank for 'good governance' is still another force for oppositions to remain silent, not criticise or not just not suggest other models in return for government favours

After identifying the strengths and weaknesses of African party systems recommendations are put forward to make them more inclusive, accountable, competent and responsive to the needs of ordinary people. These recommendations or remedies include the need to:

- Increase party capacity building and awareness by holding seminars and workshops on the importance of political parties for thriving democratic governance
- address deficiencies in party organisation, structures and functions in the light of knowledge about how they actually do function
- examine more closely how parties are managed and internally organised – especially how party **policy platforms** or programmes are developed, how they are referred to and how they plan to influence governments
- give more attention to training and decision-making processes so gender equality and imbalances can be addressed
- investigate which aspects of party systems have been institutionalised, which not, and why. Why regime turnover through elections are so low in Africa needs to be analysed further from the point of view of opposition parties and coalitions. (African party systems are changing rapidly either towards a (i) growth of regional, quasi-ethnic and religious parties at the expense of nationwide ones; or (ii) a concentration of dominant party and two-party systems.)
- counter corruption by establishing a code of conduct accompanied by programmes into how to curb it. (These could be based on findings about the many ways corruption is justified. Case studies could also be used to expose the mechanisms by which ruling parties dominate through abuse of state funds and resources.)
- investigate further how and why coalitions are formed and what legal instruments govern their power-sharing mechanisms; also, examine the effect of concentrations of power in the office of the president (Coalition politics needs to be better understood including Kadima's 2006 findings that presidential systems are more prone than parliamentary systems to post-election break-ups of winning coalitions.)
- examine more closely *between elections* the relationship between political parties, government and parliament. While there are training programmes for parliamentarians about the machinery of government there are few for party leaders and key members? (These could create cross-party synergies as well as build a solid base for democratic practices that flow from parties up the line into parliament.)
- detail case studies on how parties are actually configured on the ground so knowledge can be increased of how parties are financed pre and during elections. (This will better enable them to compete for elections and participate in national debates.)

- document more fully party laws and regulations in a range of African countries. (Some have delayed these until government parties have established an advantage over opp parties.) – then thoroughly debate before implementing hasty regulations
- build on IDEA current work with African regional and subregional forums, communities and networks to form vibrant institutions promoting democracy. (South-south exchanges of ideas and other sharing is important, especially with places such as Latin American where some similar challenges exist).

Some political parties have widened their scope by being active not just in political mobilisation but also in self-help activities, conflict management, reconciliation processes and political education.

All of these party functions therefore have a major influence on politics. In fact the test of whether a democratic system is strong or fragile depends on how well parties institutionalise and carry out these functions.

A strong organisation is a feature of authoritarian systems. This is because the function of parties in these regimes is more to influence attitudes and behaviour. Their function is not to win the free and fair elections that characterise competitive political systems.

Whatever the system, such organisations still need to:

- Set up a structure
- Raise money
- Recruit members or ‘cadres’
- Elect or select officers
- Establish and agree on internal rules and procedures

Parties, therefore, can represent many things. They can be a channel for groups’ ideas for a better life (or simply a more stable one), they can be a place of apprenticeship for teaching, testing and choosing the best leaders – a place where people and leaders meet.

By being a representative choosing and testing place, they therefore give leaders a degree of authority and legitimacy difficult to gain anywhere else. Leaders who gain their skills within the opportunities for political participation that parties provide, and then go on to gain majority popular support in elections, form the ‘machinery of government’ from parliament to the political executive.

Political parties are still generally regarded as indispensable for making democracy work and deliver. But how they function and are internally regulated is only beginning to be systematically studied.

A 2007 study on party systems in Africa examined 30 countries in Africa. In east Africa these were Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. In Southern African Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In west Africa: Benin, Burkino Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

The study observed that political apathy and withdrawal from the political process was confirmed by low voter turnout in some countries and that there was an absence of 'African party programmes' as alternatives to the 'global, liberal thinking and policy options formulated by the IMF and the World Bank.

The study points out there is a need for better understanding of how parties are managed, internally organised and how they develop their party programmes. Little is also known about how and why coalitions are really formed, for what purpose, or the legal mechanisms governing their power-sharing arrangements. With coalitions and minority governments persisting, more needs to be known about these things.

Africa's biggest challenges in the progress of its democracies

Africa's democratisation process faces two serious challenges: 1) party financing; and 2) the politics of succession.

The first challenge is the way political party financing corrupts the political institutions which are based on political appointments. And the second, the politics of succession, is still the 'enigma' and 'conflict-inducing factor' in almost all African countries, including collapsed states.

African party systems are subject to both fragmentation and the consolidation of dominant-party and two-party systems. To combat these two contradictory tendencies the authors conclude more informed party programmes and improved knowledge about policy formulation processes are needed.

These could be achieved by 'increased South-South exchanges of experience, especially between Latin America and Africa.

LESSON 8 – ELECTIONS

PART I: Introduction and overview

Elections define democracy. They are also one of the best ways to educate both politicians and people about democracy.

Obviously good governance is much more than elections. However, free elections have been found to be the fairest way citizens can choose or change leaders who have power over them.

‘Free and fair’ elections can be judged on four outcomes of them. These are:

- Choice
- Accountability
- Dialogue
- legitimacy

Four of the prime reasons for elections are therefore:

- to provide competition among candidates to decide members of parliament to provide a way of later holding these representatives of the people (Members of Parliament or ‘MP’s) to account. See Bckgrndr 8-1.
- to set up a dialogue between voters and parties (and between the state and society) so as to define needs and refine good ideas
- to give to office holders authority and legitimacy. That is, if they win elections on merit they will be recognised by all as the best persons available for the job.

Competitive elections give authority

By winning competitive elections office holders therefore enjoy an authority that enables them to carry out duties confidently and effectively.

On the contrary, in authoritarian regimes where rulers are above the law, competition is limited. By manipulating campaigns these regimes give the illusion of choice (for outsiders in particular), and the reality of power (for their own people).

In these regimes ruling parties manipulate election outcomes by control of:

- the media
- the electoral system
- the resources of government

Egypt before ‘the Arab Spring’, and many newly independent African countries since the 1960s, have provided typical examples. In Egypt’s case widespread

disaffection resulted from President Mubarak's government manipulation of 'contests' which gave only the appearance of a strong multi-party system.

From 1976 numerous parties competed unsuccessfully for seats in Egypt's Peoples' Assembly until millions of people rebelled in widespread protests in 2013.

Africa's 'Big Man' Political culture

In **competitive authoritarian regimes** There can be as many rewards for voting for a dominant leader as there are threats made by these regimes against competing parties and leaders. Dominant leaders in Africa's 'Big Man' presidential culture were a feature of post-colonial independence.

These leaders rely on being already well known. This is not only because they are able to dominate the media but also because of their often-legitimate achievements.

Other ways these regimes dominate elections, without always rigging them, are:

- by calling in credits for handouts given to their election districts – as well as others given out while in office
- by putting off credible opponents (because of regime control of media and government resources, the odds against opponents seem hopeless.⁴⁵)
- by numerous 'clients' of their patrons seeking to gain favours, post-election, through helping with the election campaign, and its results
- by permitting some opposition victories – but not enough to affect the overall result
- by banning independent politicians from standing – or the unequal applying of rules to do with registration of parties or leaders, which restrict their exposure

Franchise: who has – and should have – the right to vote

In the 1960s and 1970s most democracies worldwide extended the **franchise**, or right to vote, to 18 years-olds.⁴⁶

In many democracies the only persons excluded from this right are convicted criminals. However, some countries, including Canada and Israel, have argued that 'if you are locked up you don't have to be locked out.' Another reason put

⁴⁵ Bratton, M. (1998) 'Second Elections in Africa', *Journal of Democracy* (9) 51-66: 'In a "Big Man Culture" it is unclear whether the re-election of an incumbent constitutes the extension of a leader's legitimacy or the resignation of the electorate to his inevitable dominance.'

⁴⁶ Austria, Brazil and Scotland have now made their franchise at age 16.

forward to justify inclusion of criminals in the franchise is that societies can separate 'contempt for the act from respect for right(s)'⁴⁷ and still be just.

Voting rights for non-residents?

Today many people around the world live, work and pay taxes – often for many years – within other countries. Strong arguments have been made that residents should have some say in conditions that affect them. Forty countries now allow some form of non-citizen rights, including the right to vote and dual citizenship.

Purpose of elections: a summary

Elections bring together most of the virtues of democracy. The order of importance of these virtues or values – for people and politicians – will depend on the level of education of those involved. And the level of development of the particular democracy involved.

Emerging democracies may have different priorities from this list:

1. the choosing of leaders
2. the creation of ideas (for use in policy **platforms**)
3. the estimation of **public opinion**
4. the education of voters

Elections have been described as the most important event in the political lives of candidates and Members of Parliaments (MPs).⁴⁸ This is because **they educate politicians in the policy-making process** while providing citizens with **opportunities to give their feedback** about policies.

Electoral Systems – important things to know

An electoral system has three important aspects:

- The **structure of the ballot** – how many candidates per party are listed
- The electoral formula– how votes are converted into seats in parliament – including the kind of majority used to award winning seats
- **Districing**, See Bckgrndr 8-2 – how a country's territory and people are divided into electorates – also called **constituencies** or **electoral districts**. [See [glossary for districing and 'boundary delimiting' terms](#). See Bckgrndr 8-3.

⁴⁷ Manza J. & Uggen, C. (2008) *Locked Out: Felon Disenfranchisement and American Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press.) Whatever the rights and wrongs of such exclusion policies, the social consequences in the US is that one in seven Afro-Americans cannot vote.

⁴⁸ "No part of the education of a politician is more indispensable than the fighting of elections." (Winston Churchill)

Test of effectiveness of electoral systems

The test of whether an electoral system is effective is whether it delivers both **acceptance** and **stability**. If a **balance of power** is reached, an electoral system can be said to be successful.

In other words: if winners do not try to change the system to their own advantage, and losers do not blame the rules for their defeat, a system is judged to be effective.

Electoral formula

The system used to convert votes into representative 'seats' is called the **electoral formula**. It works out how many MPS are obtained by the winning party or parties that form the ruling party/**coalition** or government.

- Of five options, there are two basic types of electoral formulas or systems (See Bckgrndr 8-4).
- proportional systems – using proportional representation – PR;
- winner-takes-all or First-Past-the-Post systems (FPP or sometimes FPTP)

How seats are distributed when votes are counted

Proportional representation (PR) is the calculation method by which seats are allocated to parties, according to their share of the total nationwide vote.

Bottom-lines or **thresholds** are set beforehand. For example, a party must win more than five percent of the total vote to get any seats in parliament.

Non-PR systems are where voting is not rewarded in proportion to the share of the vote. In these systems, the winner within each electorate district 'takes all' by gaining the most number of votes and therefore winning a seat in parliament as an MP. There are advantages and disadvantages to all the systems (See Bckgrndr 8-5), depending on such things as:

- citizens' education levels
- the country's development
- the history of conflict and
- the types of divisions within the country.

PART II: VOTING SYSTEMS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

Move away from two-party to proportional systems

In the 19th and 20th centuries the most common reform of electoral systems was the change from majority or plurality systems to proportional ones.⁴⁹ A majority of democratic countries in the last century have now opted for proportional systems.⁵⁰ In Africa the situation is mixed depending on colonial heritage, level of development and dominant party influence, amongst other factors.⁵¹

The first wave of demand for proportional systems was in the first quarter of the 20th century. In response to demands for **universal suffrage** – where every adult has the right to vote – both conservative and liberal parties opted for proportional systems. See Bckgrndr 8-6.

Socialist parties also opted for this because for minority parties like them, it removed the bias of majoritarian systems. In these systems major parties, usually just two of them, took all the seats despite significant proportions voting for minor parties.

Second Wave of reform

In the late 20th century reformers pushed for proportional systems so as to include a wider range of a country's minority voices in assemblies. This was termed the 'second wave of democracy'.⁵²

For parties representing minority groups, these proportional systems ensured at least some representation. As the **coalitions** these systems produced were some protection against dominance by single ruling parties, they became popular with countries wanting support or 'buy-in' from all social groups. For some countries, however, two-party systems are still seen to be more stable.⁵³

Thresholds and smaller district magnitudes reduce discord

By setting percentage thresholds that parties needed to be above, as well as creating smaller **district magnitudes**,⁵⁴ (See Bckgrndr 8-7), countries reduced previous fragmenting and discord. At the same time these measures excluded from ruling power any of the small anti-system parties. It did not ban them outright, however.

⁴⁹ Colomer, J. (2004b) 'The Strategy and History of Electoral System Choice', in *Handbook of Electoral System Choice*, ed. J. Colomer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) pp. 3-80.

⁵⁰ <http://www.proportional-representation.org/>

⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_of_voting_systems_by_country

⁵² Huntington, S. (1991) *The Third Wave of Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press).

⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_of_voting_systems_by_country

⁵⁴ There is a complex formula for establishing district magnitudes or the number of voters per district.

These proportional systems also produce a higher turnout than plurality or FPTP systems (IDEA, 2006)⁵⁵

Electoral campaigns and party loyalty

If the function of elections is to promote:

- choice
- accountability
- dialogue
- legitimacy

then election campaigns are not only for choosing leaders but also an intense education lesson in democracy for a country as a whole.

Significantly, studies have found big conversions from one party to another are unusual. Party loyalties go deep. It follows that one of the major function of elections, at least in dominant two-party systems, is to “record the decisions of individuals rather than create them.”⁵⁶

Campaign strategies

It has also been found that few voters switch parties from one election to another. These findings mean that campaign strategies, rather than trying to change deep-seated loyalties, usually focus on:

- mobilising existing supporters
- winning over new voters

Therefore, effective campaign strategies target:

- first time electors
- previous abstainers (those not voting in the last election or elections)
- previous defectors (those who changed parties in last election or elections)
- supporters of minor parties
- ‘undecided’ voters

Campaigns can still be decisive

Campaigns can still be decisive in changing minds and hearts, however. Short term campaigns have been found to have limited effects on second-time voters but can still tip the balance in favour of well-prepared candidates.

⁵⁵ IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) (2006) *Engaging the Electorate: Initiatives to Promote Voter Turnout From Around the World*, <http://www.idea.int>, accessed 13 June 2006.

⁵⁶ Butler, D (1989) *British General Elections since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell.)

Research has also revealed that when campaign resources are relatively the same – ensured usually by laws on advertising and laws limiting television coverage – the effects of these resources tend to cancel out. Under these conditions, results depend almost entirely on the quality of candidates and their ideas.

Campaigns as a national education lesson in politics

As stated, even when campaigns do not change a result, they are always a **national political seminar**. They enlighten voters about parties, about candidates and about policies. Most candidates report that in campaigning they are uniquely educated about their electorates – either by the expression of public opinion, research, or direct encounters on the campaign trail.⁵⁷ These effects hold, irrespective of the impact of the campaign on levels of party support.

Campaign issues

Parties tend to focus on issues in which they have a natural advantage. But they cannot entirely control the agenda of a campaign. In the cut and thrust of exchanges about issues, political reputations can still be made. More importantly, policies are proposed, examined, refined – and often rejected. A good campaign, moves forward agendas for action. And if run well, a campaign not only educates voters and politicians but also provides voters with a vision ‘to new expectations about what politics should yield over the coming years.’⁵⁸ See Bckgrndr 8-8.

PART III: VOTING SYSTEMS AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF DEMOCRACY

Democracies are not all the same

Democracies can vary according to the:

- types of electoral systems they have
- the type of elections they have

For example, a basic distinction between a presidential and a parliamentary system (See Bckgrndr 8-9) is that in a presidential one the president is directly elected by the people whereas the prime minister is elected as a member of the legislature. The prime minister becomes head of government because he is leader of his or her party – or of a coalition of parties which together form a majority of possible seats.

Electing Presidents

In democracies most president are elected. There are three different systems:

⁵⁷ Schmidt-Beck, R. and Farrell, D. (2002) ‘Do Political Campaigns Matter? Yes, but It Depends’, in *Do Political Campaigns Matter? Campaign Effects in Elections and Referendums*, ed. D. Farrell and R. Schmidt-Beck (London: Routledge) pp. 183-93.

⁵⁸ Hague, R., Harrop, M. (2013). *Comparative government and politics: An introduction*. 9th edn, Basingstoke: Macmillan. p. 116)

- Presidential (USA)
- Semi-presidential (France)
- Parliamentary, with a presidential figurehead (Ireland, Somalia)

Most presidents are directly elected, usually by a two-round system. The main choice is between **plurality** and **majority** methods.

Delegate systems – a level of discretion or an outdated form?

Some voting systems for presidents feature indirect voting. For instance, the US votes through a **college** by delegates themselves previously elected by a wider body. Versions of this are also used for elections of Upper Houses or House of Elders.

By the mid 1990s, most presidents were directly elected by majority systems. These systems are increasing as more countries dispense with both indirect elections and plurality. (Note: A **plurality contest** is one in which candidates with the most votes win on the first and only round, often with an unacceptably small share of the vote.

For example, in 1992 the Philippines' Fidel Ramos won with just 24 percent of the votes.) This matches the trend to direct elections in parliamentary elections.⁵⁹

Election of public officials

Legislators (MPs in federal or national parliaments) are mostly elected directly, both on the regional and national levels. While lower houses are more likely to be directly elected there is a variety of techniques for upper houses to ensure a mix of wisdom and competence.

Direct presidential elections encourage broad participation

It is becoming more common for presidents to be elected from a ballot involving all citizens. This is because most countries believe it is more important for unity to confirm majority backing for a single president than for every single MP.

Distribution requirements made by these countries also encourages presidential candidates to broaden their support. For example, Indonesia requires a first round victory of at least 20 percent of votes in a majority of provinces. Such thresholds and provisions can be especially valuable in regionally divided societies. And can be further guaranteed by recording them in constitutions.

Majority elections

Most majority elections for presidency feature run-off voting between the top two candidates. A saying from the French experience that 'French voters choose

⁵⁹ Negretto, G. (2008) 'Political Parties and Institutional Design: Explaining Constitutional Choice in Latin America', *British Journal of Political Science* (39) 117-39.

in the first count, and decide in the second' emphasises the advantages of 'a second look'. Most often the winning candidate leads in both rounds. Not always, however – in Latin America between 1979 and 1992 the leading candidate in one third of the run-offs lost in round two.

Direct vs indirect elections

One third of presidential elections are still not by direct election. This is understandable in the case of transition governments and where there are strong regional and tribal divisions. A president who wins broad support on his/her record is regarded to be a greater force for unity – and if necessary, for change.

In many ways indirect or electoral college elections, set up in part to act as a buffer against the whims of the people, presupposes the people to be a problem. This may be either because they lack **the critical thinking that comes from education** – or because they are victims of **manipulated information**.

Other features that safeguard democratic values

Three other features of presidential elections are worth considering in terms of democratic values and a balance of power. They are:

- The length of term
- The possibility of re-election
- The link with other elections.

Length of term

Presidents are typically elected for terms of between four and seven years, five being average. Generally, it is easier for a president to adopt a longer view when free from the burden of re-election.

At four years, the US presidency is increasingly seen as too short, given the extraordinary time demands of re-election in that country. The French presidency at seven years was regarded as too long and was recently reduced to five. This also allows for better timing with an elected assembly legislature.

Restricting re-elections of leaders

The possibility of re-election is another consideration, especially where domination by a personality or single party has become a problem. Some countries reduce the number of terms to two for this reason (Mexico has made it one).

In 2016, fitting an African stereotype, Chad's President Deby was returned for a fifth term after a twenty-six-year rule. The opposition withdrew from the electoral commission the week before, citing doubts the vote would be credible.

There are also problems with re-electable presidents not being directly accountable to the people in the last year(s) of their final term. Presidents in this instance, with no real legislative influence, may resist 'lame duck' labels by becoming instead 'high eagles'. A final term, in this perspective, can give the opportunity to present wider and longer views – or promote needed system reform beyond partisan considerations.

Timing of elections can matter

Timing also matters. If assembly elections are held at the same time as presidential ones, a president is more likely to come from the largest party in the legislature. This **strong alignment** makes passing legislation easier.

Weak alignment is one explanation for difficulties that recent US presidents have faced passing legislation in an opposite-party Congress. In this situation necessary compromises are instead seen more as partisan defeats to be avoided at all costs.

It was out of concern for the problems involved in lack of alignment that France reduced its presidential term down to five years.

PART IV: ELECTIONS IN RESPONSIVE DEMOCRACIES

Elections give mandates to governments – and send messages to them

The message of a campaign (victory or defeat) is constructed after the result. This means there is always an emphasis on the positive attributes or policies of the winning party or parties. Also, on the lessons to be learned from defeats.

Positive interpretations about elections are presented in terms of a **mandate**. This is the word used for the power given to elected officials to carry out the policies they were elected on. It is often also used to sum up the collective judgement delivered up by an election. However, political scientists note many of the claims often made in the name of an election mandate are exaggerated.

Meaning of elections: false logic when interpreting results

In practice, the full meaning of elections is open to interpretations. Often mandates claimed by a victorious party are often broader than policies promised pre-election.

The logic of treating voters as accomplices backing wide-ranging actions is therefore:

- (i) Proposal X was part of our policy platform;
- (ii) You voted us in; therefore
- (iii) We have a mandate to carry out X.

However, just because a candidate belonging to a certain party wins does not necessarily mean s/he won because of everything that party stands for. The false logic here is:

- (i) Y is a conservative;
- (ii) Y wins; therefore
- (iii) Y must have won because he was conservative.

Other elections: referendums, initiatives, and recalls

Along with election of public officials, democracy has three other elections: **referendums**, **initiatives** and **recalls**. These finer (or at least additional) instruments, available in more responsive democracies, act as checks on power or guidance for it.

These types of election act more like a direct democracy than a representative one.

Referendums

Referendums are growing in frequency. They are usually employed for constitutional, policy and moral issues and may be mandatory or optional. That is, they may be binding on government or consultative. If they are consultative they are the like opinion voting.

Referendums give to those in authority an indication of the way people think though governments are not legally bound to act on them. In this way, referendums can educate both the government and voters, a key function in any democracy.

A **plebiscite** is the name given to a ballot to consult public opinion in a non-binding way. Though not binding, plebiscites can be useful to give an indication to leaders about public opinion. (Note: small group **random sampling** applied to the whole population is much cheaper, quicker and accurate to a known 'statistical error.')

Referendums permit the public to make direct decisions about policy. They have a safety-valve or blockage-clearing function, especially in coalition governments when certain decisions are difficult – or beyond the usual compromises.

Disadvantages of referendums

The disadvantages of referendums are:

- they can be easily manipulated (the question may have more complexity than the wording of a single question can contain)
- they be used too often, resulting in low turnouts and therefore dubious mandates
- there is no way to ensure consistency
- it is not always clear if the result of them should be considered decisive
- government can choose issues of more benefit to them
- their results can be ignored
- wealthy companies can wage advertising campaigns on issues in which they stand to gain
- zealous minorities can seek reform in which others are not interested

Initiatives

Initiatives are votes on a policy called by the people. The initiative proposes an issue for a nation-wide vote and its organizers have to collect a certain number of signatures from the public. The government is then obliged to organise a vote.

For example, in Switzerland 100, 000 electors can propose a new law at canton (gobol/region) level, or an amendment to the constitution at federal level.

Referendum initiatives are a legal opportunity in 37 countries, mostly in Europe or Latin America.

Agenda initiatives

Agenda initiatives also require a certain number of signatures but are petitions to the legislature requiring them to discuss a particular topic. These have been found to be useful for minorities wanting to take their concerns to lawmakers to discuss.

After WWI this mechanism was introduced to several countries' constitutions. Examples are Austria and Spain. Since 1989 other states such as Poland and Thailand have also introduced it (IDEA, 2008).⁶⁰ In Britain at least 100, 000 signatures are required – as long as at least one member of parliament will speak in support of it.

⁶⁰ IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) (2008) *Direct Democracy*, <http://www.idea.int>, accessed 17 April, 2009.

Recalls

Recalls are a form of no-confidence vote that removes an elected official during his/her normal tenure. Initiated by a petition signed by a minimum proportion of votes cast for that office (typically about 25 percent), the recall is a political device unlike the legal **impeachment**.

A recall seeks to remove corrupt or incompetent officials before their time is up, for the common good. Available in Venezuela for all officials, even the president, it requires the initiative of 20 percent of the relevant election.⁶¹

Different electoral systems

PLURALITY AND MAJORITY SYSTEMS

Single-member plurality: first-past-the-post system

Procedure The candidate securing most votes (not necessarily a majority) is elected on the first and only ballot within each single-member district
Examples Bangladesh, Canada, India, UK, USA.

Two round system

Procedure If no candidate wins a majority on the first ballot, the leading candidates (usually the top two) face a second, run-off election.
Examples Iran, Mali, Vietnam.

Absolute majority: alternative vote (AV) or preferential voting system

Procedure Voters rank candidates. If no candidate wins a majority of first preferences, the bottom candidate is eliminated and his or her votes are redistributed by second preferences. This process continues until a candidate has a majority of votes.
Examples Australia, Papua New Guinea.

PROPORTIONAL SYSTEMS

List system

Procedure Votes are cast for a party's list of candidates, though in some countries the elector can also express support for individual candidates on the list.
Examples Brazil, Czech Republic, Israel, Netherlands.

Single transferable vote (STV) system

Procedure Voters rank candidates in order of preference. Any successful candidate needs a set number of votes – the quota. All candidates who exceed this quota on first preferences are elected. Their surplus votes are then distributed according to second preferences. When no candidate has reached this quota, the bottom candidate is eliminated and these votes are transferred up the list. This process continues until the quotas are reached and all seats are filled.

⁶¹ If the security and integrity of internet voting could be guaranteed, both the initiative and the recall could be used more frequently in the future for those wanting more responsive, direct democracies.

Examples Ireland, Malta.

Mixed member proportional (MMP)

Procedure Electors usually have two votes. One is for the district election (which typically uses the plurality method), and the other is for a PR contest (usually for a party list). The two tiers are linked so as to deliver a proportional outcome overall. The 'party vote' determines the number of seats to be won by each party. Elected candidates are drawn, first, from the party's winners in the district contests, topped up as required for proportionality by candidates from the party list.

Examples Germany, New Zealand.

PARALLEL SYSTEM

Mixed member majoritarian (MMM)

Procedure As for MMP, except that the two tiers are separate, with no mechanism to achieve a proportional result overall.

Examples Japan, Thailand.

LESSON 8 FURTHER READING:

Part IV is further reading on the meaning of mandates won by governments at elections. Also included are some of the other checks and balances available to citizens in democracies – as well as a chart on the different electoral systems used worldwide.

To keep the lessons user-friendly, it is available here as a hypertext.

[PART IV: Elections in responsive democracies](#)

BACKGROUNDERS

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Representative democracy permits different levels of involvement

A system which pays its Members of Parliament to represent a manageable number of citizens (60, 000 is a typical number but it can be more than 100, 000) can thereby allow all its other citizens to choose their level of involvement in politics.

In other words, a political life is available for those who want it. Meanwhile, those busy with other interests can just vote at elections – and in between times can monitor how well the government is doing.

Therefore representative democracy can be seen also as a valuable division of labour in a specialised world – while still allowing all citizens to accept their responsibilities towards government and each other.

When necessary this may involve joining interest groups, making submissions, taking part in initiatives, recalls, referendums, protests or other forms of political activism.

[Schudson, M. (1988) *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).]

Districting – making electorates as equal as possible

Political context of delimiting (ensuring electorates are equal in numbers)

Single-member districts provide voters with strong electorate (constituency) representation. Voters have a single, easily identifiable district representative to whom they can appeal for electorate service. Voters also have a single district representative whom they can hold accountable for protecting interests of constituents.

Advantages of single-member districts:

The delimitation of single-member districts has several advantages. The three most often cited are:

- **Simplicity**
- **stability**
- **strong links between elected representatives and their constituents.**

Each of these advantages may be important ones, depending on the social and political context in which the districts are adopted.

Also, elections held in single-member districts tend to be quite easy for voters to understand, especially when combined with plurality or majority voting rules. This simplicity may be a significant advantage for countries with high illiteracy rates.

Single-member districts promote stability by facilitating strong, single party government. This is because single-member districts tend to produce election outcomes in which the majority party is over-represented.

This may be an important advantage in countries that have reason to fear or have actually experienced a proliferation of small extremist parties or coalition governments that have frequently fallen.

Efficacy, turnout and legitimacy

This may have a positive effect on voters' feelings of political **efficacy**, which may, in turn, increase voter **turnout**. Political efficacy and turnout are both important ingredients for system **legitimacy**.

For newly emerging democracies the advantage of legitimacy – that is, most voters accepting the right of the winning party to govern – may be important.

Disadvantages of single-member districts especially in divided societies

Single-member districts have one very serious drawback: they tend to over-represent the majority political party at the expense of the other political parties. Countries that delimit single-member districts must be willing and able to accept disproportional election outcomes.

Although it is possible to devise a fair and non-partisan redistricting process, it is not possible to guarantee an unbiased election outcome with single-member districts unless there are provisions for a second, party vote (as is the case with a mixed electoral system).

Disproportional election results may be difficult to accept in a country with many political parties representing widely disparate interests. The results will be virtually impossible to accept if deep cleavages exist in the society.

For example, if there is a relatively large, politically cohesive ethnic, racial, or religious minority group that has consistently been denied what it perceives as fair representation, elections could lead to conflict, possibly even violence and instability.

Historical context to delimiting and development away from it

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, representation in parliament was based on communities, not on the number of individuals or voters.

‘Electoralates’, or constituencies, varied greatly in population. For example, In England, regardless of its size, each county, borough, and university, had two representatives in the House of Commons.

The representatives of the House of Commons, and all legislatures throughout Europe, reflected the view that communities or distinct categories of society should be represented, not individuals or voters. Example of these categories were the clergy and the nobility, also known as the ‘high born’ or aristocracy.

Calls for all section of society to be represented

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, citizens began to demand a broadening of their franchise (those entitled to vote). They wanted those representing them in parliament to be more fairly chosen. That is, they wanted MPs to come from all sections of the community, not just landowners or those privilege by birth.

Single-member districts for the election of legislators were embraced by this movement as a means of achieving greater democracy. These citizens believed not only would single-member districts ensure more equal representation in society but also they would produce a more representative legislature. The urban, working class, and other traditionally under-represented groups, could thereby win seats in parliament.

Single-member districts were also adopted in the eighteenth century in the British colonies that later became the United States. Many European countries gradually followed suit during the nineteenth century,

Having more than one MP per district avoids need for delimiting

Today, the norm in Europe is multimember districts that correspond to administrative divisions and therefore do not require periodic delimitation. Equality of population is achieved by varying the numbers of legislators elected from a district, rather than redrawing district lines or boundaries.

Instead, administrative divisions such as states, provinces, or counties can be used to elect representatives.

How the shift away from single-member electorate happened historically

Historically, the trend towards single-member districts in Europe ebbed with the advent of proportional representation in the late nineteenth century. Between 1899, when Belgium adopted proportional representation, and 1921, when Norway moved to proportional representation, most of the continental European countries adopted one form of proportional representation or another.

European countries that continued to use communities for the election of representatives rather than specially delimited electoral districts were the less progressive countries, such as Portugal or the Balkan states.

Of the more modern European countries, only Switzerland and Belgium used multi-member districts throughout the nineteenth century. Since 1919, the year Switzerland adopted proportional representation, representatives have been elected from multimember districts that correspond to canton boundaries.

In 1850, 49 electoral districts, or constituencies, were created after the 1848 decision to base representation on population. Prior to 1848, each Swiss canton sent a single representative to the federal assembly.

In 1899 Belgium used its nine historic provinces as boundaries for its multimember districts. But it recognised the principle of equal representation by varying the number of representatives assigned to each province. When proportional representation was adopted in Belgium, multimember districts based on provincial boundaries were retained.

In 1849 Denmark adopted single-member districts for elections to its lower chamber. A newly-unified Italy chose single-member districts to elect representatives to the national legislature in 1861 with North German Confederation following in 1867 and imperial Germany, in 1871.

Development of single-member districts

France has used single-member districts intermittently since 1875, Britain since 1885, and the Netherlands began them in 1887. In 1905 Norway became one of the last European countries to adopt single-member districts.

Countries that have adopted proportional representation systems are able to use multi-member districts to make their electorates equal. Therefore they no longer have to periodically redraw district boundaries. Instead, administrative divisions such as states, provinces, or counties can be used to elect representatives.

Equality of population is achieved by varying the numbers of legislators elected from a district, rather than redrawing district lines.

Today, the norm in Europe is multimember districts that correspond to administrative divisions and do not require periodic delimitation.

Social and Political Context

The delimitation of single-member districts has several advantages. The three most often cited are simplicity, stability and strong links between elected representatives and their constituents. Each of these advantages may be important ones, depending on the social and political context in which the districts are adopted.

Elections held in single-member districts tend to be quite easy for voters to understand, especially in conjunction with plurality or majority voting rules. Simplicity may be a significant advantage for countries with high illiteracy rates.

Single-member districts promote stability by facilitating strong, single party government. This is because single-member districts tend to produce election outcomes in which the majority party is over-represented. This may be an important advantage in countries that have reason to fear or have actually experienced a proliferation of small extremist parties or coalition governments that have frequently fallen.

Single-member districts provide voters with strong constituency representation. Voters have a single, easily identifiable district representative to whom they can appeal for constituency service. Voters also have a single district representative whom they can hold accountable for protecting constituency interests.

This may have a positive effect on voters' feelings of political efficacy, which may, in turn, increase voter turnout. Political efficacy and turnout are both important ingredients for system legitimacy, which may be important to newly emerging democracies.

Single-member districts have one very serious drawback: they tend to over-represent the majority political party at the expense of the other political parties. Countries that delimit single-member districts must be willing and able to accept disproportional election outcomes. Although it is possible to devise a fair and non-partisan redistricting process, it is not possible to guarantee an unbiased election outcome with single-member districts unless there are provisions for a second, party vote (as is the case with a mixed electoral system).

Disproportional election results may be difficult to accept in a country with many political parties representing widely disparate interests. The results will be virtually impossible to accept if deep cleavages exist in the society.

For example, if there is a relatively large, politically cohesive ethnic, racial, or religious minority group that has consistently been denied what it perceives as fair representation, elections could lead to conflict, possibly even violence and instability.

Taking the Politics Out of Redistricting – and ‘gerrymandering’

Traditionally, legislatures have been responsible for drawing their own districts. Electoral abuses such as malapportioned districts (districts that vary substantially in population) or “gerrymandered” districts (districts intentionally drawn to advantage one political party or group at the expense of the others) were not uncommon.

These abuses led a number of countries to adopt reforms designed to remove 'politics' from the redistricting process. In these countries, non-partisan commissions draw district boundaries following a set of neutral redistricting criteria.

The public is encouraged to participate through a public inquiry process. And the legislature is permitted only a limited role, if any role at all, in the redistricting process.

Redistricting, in hands of independent assessors, provides public trust

These reforms have been adopted by many Commonwealth countries, where the reforms appear to have been quite successful. Redistricting is rarely viewed as "partisan," even when the outcome of an election clearly favours one party at the expense of the other parties. Despite their success in the countries that have adopted them, reforms of the redistricting process have not been embraced everywhere. For example, legislatures still draw congressional districts in most states in the United States.

Political self-interest cannot be controlled?

In the United States, the political system and political institutions were designed on the premise of competing factions, with special interests and parochial concerns vying for limited resources within the legislature. As a result, Americans tend to assume that "politics" and the pursuit of political self-interest are inevitable.

Reforms of the redistricting process are unlikely to be adopted in the near future because many Americans believe it is as impossible to divorce politics from the redistricting process as it is to divorce politics from the legislative process in general.

Only countries that are less pluralistic, more politically ideological, and more public-regarding accept the proposition that politics can be removed from the redistricting process. Furthermore, strong party organisations and centralised legislative authority are needed to enforce sanctions against legislators who attempt to influence the redistricting process.

While these conditions appear to be met in most Commonwealth countries, they are not present everywhere.

But countries that adopt independent boundary commissions and neutral redistricting criteria can only prevent partisan interests from controlling the process; these countries cannot alleviate disproportional election outcomes.

Outcomes of single-member systems usually fail fairness test

If political fairness is defined by outcome, rather than by process – and specifically by a proportional outcome for political parties and/or minority groups – then single-member systems will fail the fairness test more often than not, no matter who draws the districts.

Countries that value proportionality over all else – perhaps because of the need to ensure equitable representation to deeply divided groups within the society – are wise to choose some form of proportional representation, which may or may not include provisions for single-member districts.

If stability in the form of strong, single party government is more important, however, delimiting single-member districts is a good choice.

Administrative and Cost Considerations

Delimiting electoral districts can be a complex, expensive, and time-consuming process. Countries that choose to delimit electoral districts must be prepared to administer what may be a very complicated procedure and must be willing to spend the necessary funds to complete the process. Administering the process will be complicated. Information from a wide variety of sources must be collected, verified, and synthesised.

Districts must be drawn, and then must be evaluated – procedures that could involve political party and other stakeholders input. And after a final set of districts is adopted, they must be implemented.

This usually requires changes to voter registration lists, and voter notification of new district assignments. In addition, election officials may have to redraw voting areas and relocate polling places. Ultimately, implementation may require a great deal of co-ordination with local and regional governments as well as election officials at the local, regional, and federal levels.

Delimitation is an ongoing process

Of course, the redistricting process in the United States is quite decentralised, and the amount of money each state spends varies considerably: some states spend well over US\$1 million to draw congressional districts, and millions more to defend these districts if challenged in court; other states, however, spend far less.

Regardless of the actual amount spent, countries must recognize that delimitation is rarely a one-time event and must be prepared to devote the time and resources necessary to redraw electoral districts periodically.

This discussion draws heavily from an article written by Michael Steed entitled “The Constituency” which appeared in *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituencies in Western Democracies*, edited by Vernon Bogdanor and published by Gower Publishing in 1985.

Definitions for districting or boundary delimiting terms

Boundary Delimitation - the science of electorate sizing (to ensure all citizens are equally represented and fairly represented)

Glossary:

Boundary Delimitation: (or districting) the process of drawing electoral districts or voting area boundaries.

District Magnitude: the number of legislative seats assigned to a district.

Redistricting: the periodic delimitation of electoral districts or voting areas for representation purposes.

Electoral District: geographic unit that defines legislative representation (conversion of votes) according to type of electoral system being used.

Voting Areas: (also called polling areas, districts or election precincts) administrative units where all voters within the circumscribed geographic territory are assigned to the same polling place.

Gerrymandering: manipulating the electoral boundaries so as to give undue influence to some party or class; districting or redistricting in a discriminatory manner.

Malapportionment: electoral districts that vary greatly in population

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): technology that is used to view and analyze data from a geographic perspective. This data may exist as maps, 3D virtual models, tables, and/or lists.

Community of Interest: generally thought of as a group of individuals united by shared interests or values.

Boundary Authority: specially designated commission or group that divides a country or region into districts for the election of representatives.

Reapportionment: periodic redrawing of geographic boundaries of electoral districts from which legislative representatives are elected; a primary purpose of early census enumeration

<https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/bd/onePage>

FIVE ELECTORAL SYSTEM OPTIONS: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES		
	Advantages	Disadvantages
List Proportional Representation (List PR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportionality • Inclusiveness • Minority Representation • Few Wasted Votes • Easier for Women Representatives to be elected • No (or less) need to draw boundaries • No need to hold by-elections • Facilitates absentee voting • Restricts growth of single party regions • Higher voter turnout likely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak geographical representation • Accountability issues • Weaker legislative support for president more likely in presidential systems • Coalition or minority governments more likely in parliamentary systems • Much power given to political parties • Can lead to inclusion of extreme parties in the legislature • Inability to throw a party out of power
First Past the Post (FPP or FPTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong geographic representation • Makes accountability easier to enforce • Is simple to understand • Offers voters a clear choice • Encourages a coherent opposition • Excludes extremist parties • Allows voters to choose between candidates • Strong legislative support for president more likely in presidential systems • Majority government more likely in parliamentary systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excludes minority parties • Excludes minorities • Excludes women • Many wasted votes • Often need for by-elections • Requires boundary delimitation(s) • May lead to gerrymandering • Difficult to arrange absentee voting
Two Round System (TRS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives voters a second chance to make a choice • Less vote-splitting than many other majority/plurality systems • Simple to understand • Strong geographic representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires boundary delimitation(s) • Requires a costly and often administratively challenging 2nd round • Often need for by-elections • Long time period between election and declaration of results • Disproportionality • May fragment party systems • May be destabilising for deeply divided societies

<p>Parallel System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusiveness • Geographical Representation • Accountability • Few wasted votes • May be easier to agree on than other alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated system • Requires boundary delimitation(s) • Often need for by-elections • Can create two classes of representatives • Strategic voting • More difficult to arrange absentee voting than with List PR • Does not guarantee overall proportionality
<p>Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportionality • Inclusiveness • Geographical representation • Accountability • Few wasted votes • May be easier to agree on than other alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated system • Requires boundary delimitation(s) • Often need for by-elections • Can create two classes of representatives • Strategic voting • More difficult to arrange absentee voting than with List PR

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:

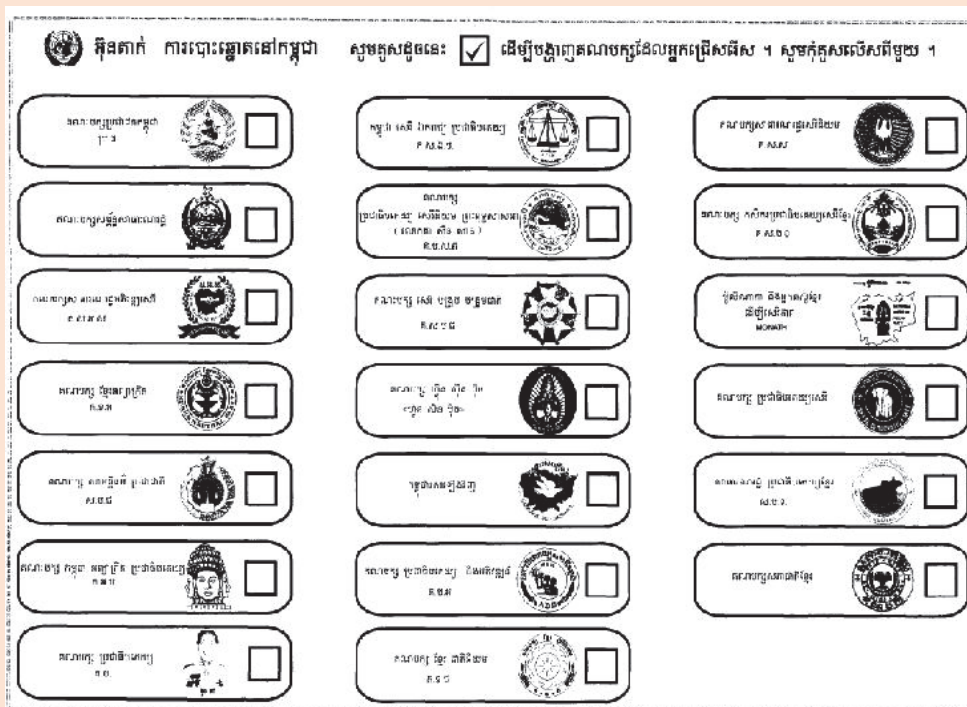
- Coalition governments, which in turn lead to legislative gridlock and consequent inability to carry out coherent policies. There are particularly high risks during an immediate post-conflict transition period, when popular expectations of new governments are high. Quick and coherent decision making 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 Andr  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:

$$\text{Quota} = (\text{votes} / (\text{seats} + 1)) + 1$$

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 per cent (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.

DISTRICT MAGNITUDES

District magnitude is the main decider of an electoral system's ability to translate votes cast into seats won proportionally.

District magnitude is therefore the number of representatives elected from a given district to the same legislative body. For example, a *single-member district* has one representative, while a *multi-member district* has more than one.

Voting systems that seek proportional representation (such as the single transferable vote) inherently require multi-member districts, and the larger the district magnitude the more proportional a system will tend to be (and the greater the number of distinct parties or choices that can be represented.)

Delimiting electorate boundaries also has a big impact on political parties, candidates, and campaigning. An authority independent of government set up to calculate these aspects is obviously an important first step., And if elections are to be accepted as credible and legitimate it is obviously important that such a body be seen to be independent.

There is an established and careful science for the calculation of how many citizens per electorate, usually based on a mix of census figures and geographical area in which people live. Past experience has shown both these have been able to be manipulated so democratic countries set up strict regulations and protocols to ensure electorates⁶² are equivalent.

In countries where is a nomadic population and there are regions or gobollada where citizens belong to the same clan, especially in the rural areas, voting on clan or tribal lines may be a reality at first. But studies show this 'loyalty' shifts over time to loyalty to policies, especially in urban areas and with increased education.

⁶² Or 'constituency' or 'electoral district' – all these words are used for the geographical area involved. The word 'gerrymandering' was coined from direct experience of corrupt boundary-setting in regions where supporters of the ruling party lived so as to give unfair advantage to them. (see [Glossary of districting terms](#)) It has become a negative word for the corrupt lack of independence and objectivity needed for a local candidate.

US DISTRICT MAGNITUDES – or HOW MANY VOTERS PER ELECTORATE IN THE US

On average a state is awarded one electoral vote for every 565,166 people. However, Wyoming has three electoral votes and only 532,668 citizens (as of 2008 estimates). As a result, each of Wyoming's three electoral votes corresponds to 177,556 people.

This means these citizens have 3.18 times as much clout in the Electoral College as an average American, or 318 percent. (That 'clout' or influence is exercised in the two-step system for electing North America's president. Each state has delegates that vote in a convention for their party's nomination for the final run-off or second vote between just two contenders.

The total number of votes needed over all states is 1237 for a republican candidate and 2383 for a democrat.)

2008 National Average of voters per elector 565,166;

2004 National Average of voters per elector; 545,828

*For reconciliation of these differences, see hypertext articles on the formula for calculation and the problems with it using censuses and geographical area only.

Good campaigns: computerised system for better efficiency

The Kenya Election Database

RACE TO KENYA ELECTIONS 2017: OVERVIEW OF THE KENYA ELECTION CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT SYSTEM VER 1.0

On Tuesday, 8 August, 2017 the Kenyan elections will be held. It will be Kenya's eleventh General Election since independence in 1963, and the second under the new constitution.

The Kenya Election Campaign Management System version 1.0, (KECMS) designed and developed by Systex Solutions of Nairobi, is the first and so far only Election Campaign Management software that has been specifically designed to handle Kenya Election campaigns by various aspirants from Presidential to Ward elections (County Assembly Members-MCA).

The software has been integrated with the Kenya Election Database version 2.0, also developed by Systex Solutions and the only Election Data Analysis and Strategic Election Planning software in the Kenya market (visit Kenya Election Database website at www.kenyaelectiondatabase.co.ke).

In Kenya there are usually two types of election campaigns, the "jua kali" type, where the aspirant simply announces he or she intends to stand for a particular seat then goes on to print posters and hold campaign rallies, hoping to win. The other is the Strategic Election Planning (SEP) type, a well-coordinated and polished campaign using demographic data and ground-based social media networks. US President Barack Obama used such a system in both the 2008 and 2012 elections, the latter one pulling a surprise win over the Republican candidate Mitt Romney. The recent Kericho Jubilee Alliance Party senatorial nomination is another example of SEP, where a young, relative unknown candidate pulled a surprise win over veteran politicians.

The KECMCS version 1.0 combines an Election Data Analysis and Strategic Election Planning software and an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software into a single application, the first time this has been done for Kenya Election campaigning. The software will guarantee an aspirant full control over his election campaign from resources to finance, as seen in the modules:-

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

1. Aspirant Details
2. Campaign Events

3. Campaign Trips
4. Facility Booking
5. Campaign Committee
6. Campaign Committee Members
7. Campaign Departments
8. Voter Cells
9. Voter Cell Members
10. Campaign Correspondence
11. Campaign Correspondence-SMS/WhatsApp/Facebook
12. Campaign Advertisement
13. Election Laws (Electoral Act, Regulations & Political Parties Act)
14. 2017 Elections Operation Timelines

CAMPAIGN STAFF

1. Campaign Staff Details
2. Campaign Staff Duty Roster
3. Campaign Staff Attendance
4. Campaign Staff Payroll
5. Election Agents
6. Election Agents Attendance
7. Election Agents Allowance
8. Campaign Volunteers
9. Campaign Volunteer Allowance

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

1. Campaign Bank Accounts
2. Campaign Budget

3. Campaign Budget Item Details
4. Campaign Budget Item Control
5. Cash Book Transactions
6. Campaign Donors
7. Campaign Donations

CAMPAIGN LOGISTICS

A – CAMPAIGN TRANSPORT

1. Campaign Vehicles
2. Campaign Transport Request
3. Campaign Vehicle Movement
4. Campaign Vehicle Service
5. Transport Hire Booking

B – CAMPAIGN SUPPLIES

1. Supplier Details
2. Store Items
3. Store Category
4. Store Purchase Order
5. Store Requisition
6. Store Item Issues

C – CAMPAIGN SECRETARIAT

1. Campaign Office
2. Campaign Office Rent
3. Campaign Office Rent Payments
4. Campaign Asset Type
5. Campaign Asset Type Data

6. Campaign Asset Inventory

7. Campaign Asset Details

8. Campaign Asset Maintenance Details

9. Campaign Asset Maintenance History

The **KECMS** has 232 reports including correspondence with the aspirant's letterhead and photo hence no need to use MS-Word or print letterheads. Letters and memos can be sent via E-mail and SMS/WhatsApp and also Facebook postings can be sent to staff, Election agents, volunteers and voter cell members from the software.

The **KECMS** is integrated with *Kenya Election Database*, which is a record of the ten General Elections and two Referendums held since independence in 1963 representing an aggregate of 107 million registered voters and 142 million valid votes cast in national elections and 15 million in the Referendums. The Database is a collection of well researched and detailed analysis of all parliamentary elections since 1969, presidential elections since 1992, by-elections since 1993 and results of both 2005 and 2010 Referendums. It also has full results of the 2013 General Elections in respect of Presidential, Parliamentary, Senatorial, Gubernatorial and Women Representative elections. It is updated with results of all national by-elections since the 2013 General Elections. The Database has full results of 4,300 constituency and county elections covering 22,000 candidate results and is the only single source of full General Election results available in the market (Even the IEBC does not have historic election data).

The Database also includes details of all 210 old constituencies and the 290 new constituencies, created in 2012, including history, administrative area covered, population, land area, maps etc; details of the 1,450 county assembly wards; details of 180 political parties including the 60 officially registered parties, and their symbols; 2009 population census for all 8 old provinces, 47 counties, 158 districts, 635 divisions, 2,724 locations, 7,150 sub-locations; and 215 urban centers. The Database has the results of both the 1999 and 2009 Census, hence can also be used for social, marketing and consumer research. It also has 2015 and 2017 population projection for each Region (Province), County, Sub-County (District), Division, Location and Sub-location and also for each Constituency and Ward. The Database has details of registered voters from 1969 to December, 2012 and analysis of population vis-à-vis registered voters. The user can update latest voter registration figures by Polling Station, Ward, Constituency, County and Regions as the IEBC embarks on voter registration from February, 2016.

The Database has details of all candidates who have ever stood in any General Election since 1969, including gender and status, i.e. incumbent, former winner, previous candidate or newcomer. The Database has over 650 reports some of which are unique to this Database, e.g. Constituency notes, Political party notes,

Kenya election history, women candidates, etc. The database is the most comprehensive analysis of Kenya General Elections and contains more reports (650) than the IEBC website.

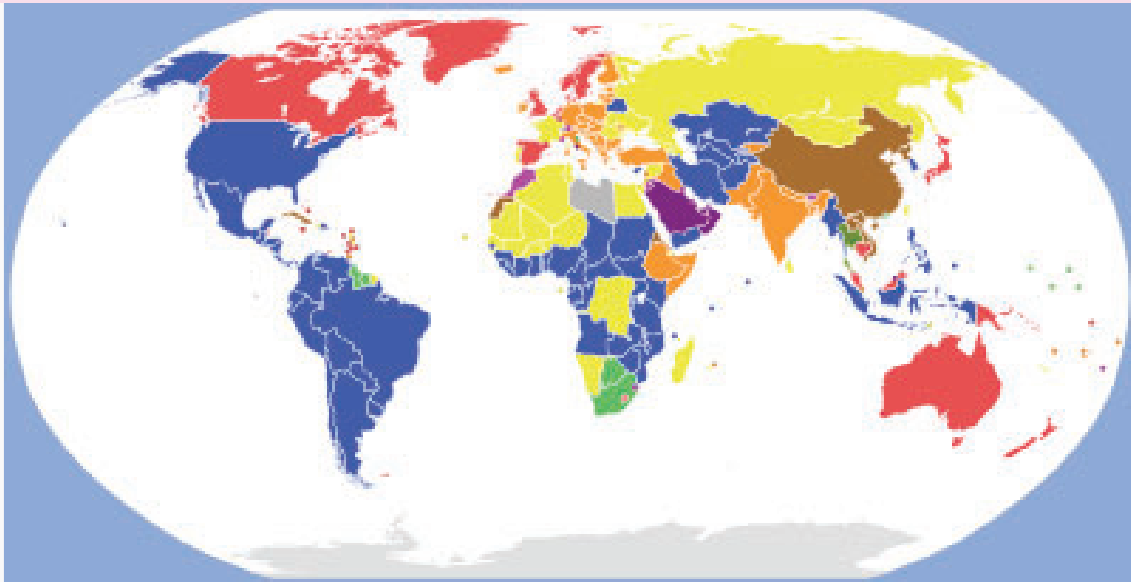
If you are an aspirant, campaign manager, political party official, etc then this software will give you a head start on other aspirants. You will also receive an e-booklet on “Strategic Election Planning” (SEP) which is only available to those who purchase this software. Professional Campaign Managers can use the software to run several campaigns at the same time and for different elective posts and also use it for subsequent By-Elections.

The **KECMS** runs on Microsoft Access platform and can be downloaded from a Dropbox link after purchase. It is a fully menu-driven, point and click software and is user friendly and uses the DIU (Download, Install and Use) concept. No user license is required and a User Manual is provided. A demo version can also be downloaded that shows how a fictitious aspirant uses the software. Your PC or Laptop must have MS Access version 2002 or later versions already installed. It comes zipped hence must be unzipped and installed on your hard-drive. It is about 900 MB in size. The software costs only Kshs 14,700/= but if you wish to purchase the Kenya Election Database separately then it costs only Kshs 2,000/=.

<http://kenyaelectiondatabase.co.ke/>

Types of presidential systems

Differences between presidential & semi-presidential systems



- Presidential republics with a full presidential system.
- Presidential republics with a **semi-presidential system**.
- Parliamentary republics with an executive president chosen by the parliament
- Parliamentary republics with a ceremonial president, where the prime minister is the executive.
- Constitutional monarchies where executive power is vested in a prime minister.
- Constitutional monarchies, which have a separate head of government but where royalty hold political power.
- Absolute monarchies
- Military dictatorships
- One-party states

A **semi-presidential system** is a system of government in which a president exists along with a prime minister and a cabinet, with the latter two being responsible to the legislature of a state.

A semi-presidential system (Tunisia, Syria, France, Djibouti, Namibia) differs from a parliamentary republic (Somalia, South Africa, Pakistan, Italy, Ethiopia) in that it has a popularly elected head of state, who is more than a purely ceremonial figurehead, and from the presidential system in that the cabinet, although named by the president, is responsible to the legislature, which may force the cabinet to resign through a motion of no confidence.

While the German Weimar Republic (1919–1933) exemplified an early semi-presidential system, the term "semi-presidential" originated in a 1978 work by political scientist Maurice Duverger to describe the French Fifth Republic (established in 1958), which Duverger dubbed a *régime semi-présidentiel*.^[1]

Subtypes

There are two separate subtypes of semi-presidentialism: premier-presidentialism and president-parliamentarism.

Under the **premier-presidential** system, the prime minister and cabinet are exclusively accountable to parliament. The president chooses the prime minister and cabinet, but only the parliament may remove them from office with a *vote of no confidence*. The president does *not* have the right to dismiss the prime minister or the cabinet. However, in some cases, the president can circumvent this limitation by exercising the discretionary power of dissolving the assembly, which forces the prime minister and cabinet to step down. This subtype is used in [Burkina Faso](#), [Georgia](#) (since 2013), [France](#),^[2] [Lithuania](#), [Madagascar](#), [Mali](#), [Mongolia](#), [Niger](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Romania](#), [Senegal](#) and [Ukraine](#) (since 2014; previously, between 2006 and 2010).^{[3][4]}

Under the **president-parliamentary** system, the prime minister and cabinet are dually accountable to the president and the assembly majority. The president chooses the prime minister and the cabinet but must have the support of the parliament majority for his choice. In order to remove a prime minister or the whole cabinet from power, the president can dismiss them or the assembly can remove them by a *vote of no confidence*. This form of semi-presidentialism is much closer to pure presidentialism and is used in [Armenia](#), [Georgia](#) between 2004 and 2013, [Mozambique](#), [Namibia](#), [Russia](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Taiwan](#) and [Ukraine](#) between 1996 and 2005, and again from 2010 to 2014. It was used in [Germany](#) during the *Weimarer Republik* ([Weimar Republic](#)), as the constitutional regime between 1919 and 1933 is called unofficially.^{[3][4]}

Division of powers

The powers that are divided between president and prime minister can vary greatly between countries.

In [France](#), for example, in case of [cohabitation](#) when the president and the prime minister come from opposing parties, the president takes care of [foreign policy](#) and [defence policy](#) (these are generally called *les prérogatives présidentielles* (the presidential prerogatives)) and the prime minister of [domestic policy](#) and [economic policy](#).^[5] In this case, the division of responsibilities between the [prime minister](#) and the [president](#) is not explicitly stated in the constitution, but has evolved as a [political convention](#) based on the constitutional principle that the prime minister is appointed (with the subsequent approval of a parliament majority) and dismissed by the president.^[2] On the other hand, whenever the president is from the same party as the prime minister who leads the *conseil de gouvernement* (cabinet), he often (if not usually) exercises *de facto* control over **all** fields of policy via the prime minister. It is up to the president to decide, how much "autonomy" he leaves to "his" prime minister to act on his own.

In [Finland](#), by contrast, the assignment of responsibility for foreign policy was explicitly stated in the pre-2000 [constitution](#): "foreign policy is led by the president in cooperation with the cabinet".

Cohabitation

Semi-presidential systems may sometimes experience periods in which the President and the Prime Minister are from differing political parties. This is called "[cohabitation](#)", a term which originated in France when the situation first arose in the 1980s. Cohabitation can create an effective system of [checks and balances](#) or a period of bitter and tense stonewalling, depending on the attitudes of the two [leaders](#), the ideologies of their parties, or the demands of their constituencies.

In most cases, cohabitation results from a system in which the two executives are not elected at the same time or for the same term. For example, in 1981, France elected both a [Socialist](#) president and

legislature, which yielded a Socialist premier. But whereas the president's term of office was for seven years, the [National Assembly](#) only served for five. When, in the 1986 legislative election, the French people elected a right-centre Assembly, Socialist President [Mitterrand](#) was forced into cohabitation with rightist premier [Jacques Chirac](#).

However, in 2000, amendments to the French Constitution reduced the length of the French President's term from seven to five years. This has significantly lowered the chances of cohabitation occurring, as parliamentary and presidential elections may now be conducted within a shorter span of each other.

Republics with a semi-presidential system of government

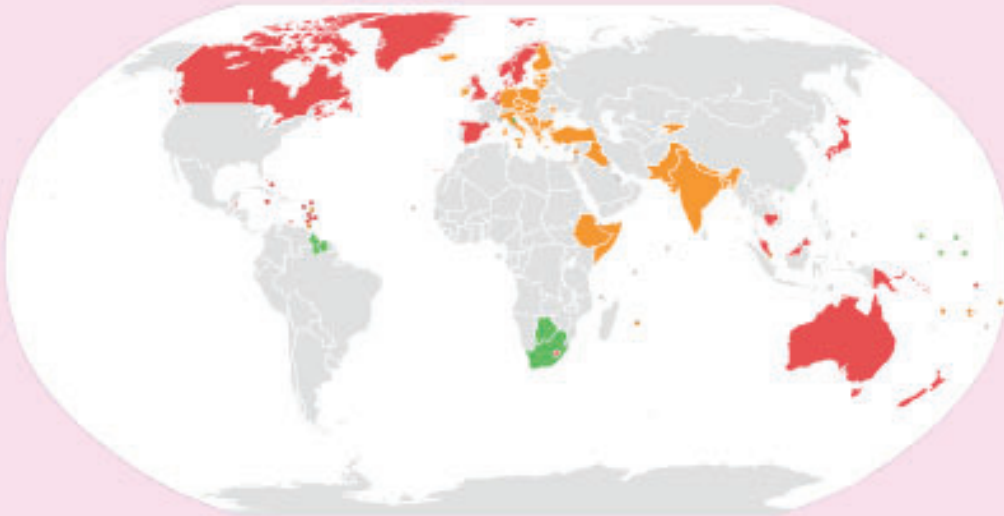
-  [Algeria](#)
-  [Armenia](#)
-  [Azerbaijan](#)^[6]
-  [Burkina Faso](#)
-  [Cape Verde](#) (Cabo Verde)^[2]
-  [Côte d'Ivoire](#)
-  [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) (Congo-Kinshasa)
-  [Djibouti](#)
-  [East Timor](#) (Timor-Leste)^[2]
-  [Egypt](#)
-  [France](#)
-  [Georgia](#)
-  [Guinea-Bissau](#)
-  [Haiti](#)
-  [Madagascar](#)
-  [Mali](#)
-  [Mauritania](#)
-  [Mongolia](#)
-  [Namibia](#)^[8]
-  [Niger](#)
-  [Portugal](#)
-  [Romania](#)
-  [Russia](#)
-  [São Tomé and Príncipe](#)^[7]
-  [Senegal](#)
-  [Sri Lanka](#)
-  [Syria](#)
-  [Republic of China \(Taiwan\)](#)
-  [Tunisia](#)
-  [Ukraine](#)

See also

- [List of countries by system of government](#)
- [Parliamentary system](#)
- [Presidential system](#)

HYPertext – 8A Parliamentary republics – different types

Parliamentary republics



Map of different governmental systems

Constitutional monarchies in which authority is vested in a parliament.

Parliamentary republics where parliaments are effectively supreme over a separate head of state.

Parliamentary republics with an executive presidency chosen by parliament.

A **parliamentary republic** (or **parliamentary constitutional republic**) is a type of republic that operates under a parliamentary system of government where the executive branch (the government) derives its legitimacy from and is accountable to the legislature (the parliament).

There are a number of variations of parliamentary republics. Most have a clear differentiation between the head of government and the head of state, with the head of government holding real power, much like constitutional monarchies. Some have fused the roles of head of state and head of government, much like presidential systems, but with a dependency upon parliamentary power.

For the first case mentioned above, in particular, the form of executive-branch arrangement is distinct from most other parliamentary and semi-presidential republics that separate the head of state (usually designated as the "president") from the head of government (usually designated as "prime minister", "premier" or "chancellor") and subject the latter to the confidence of parliament and a flexible

tenure in office while the head of state lacks either dependency, and investing either office with the majority of executive power.

Powers

[Mary McAleese](#), [President of Ireland](#) (1997–2011) and [Aleksander Kwaśniewski](#), [President of Poland](#) (1995–2005). Both were [heads of state](#) of [parliamentary republics](#).



In contrast to republics operating under either the [presidential system](#) or the [semi-presidential system](#), the [head of state](#) usually does not have broad executive powers as an [executive president](#) would, because many of those powers have been granted to a [head of government](#) (usually called a [prime minister](#)).

However, in a parliamentary republic with a head of state whose tenure is dependent on parliament, the head of government and head of state may form one office (as in [Botswana](#), the [Marshall Islands](#), [Nauru](#), [South Africa](#) and [Suriname](#)), but the president is still selected in much the same way as the prime minister is in most [Westminster systems](#). This usually means that they are the leader of the largest party or coalition of parties in parliament.

In some instances, the president may legally have executive powers granted to them to undertake the day-to-day running of government (as in Austria) but by convention they either do not use these powers or they use them only to give effect to the advice of the parliament or head of government. Some parliamentary republics could therefore be seen as following the semi-presidential system but operating under a parliamentary system.

Historical development

Typically, parliamentary republics are states that were previously [constitutional monarchies](#) with a parliamentary system, with the position of head of state hitherto a monarch.^[1]

Following the defeat of [Napoleon III](#) in the [Franco-Prussian War](#), France once again became a republic – the [French Third Republic](#) – in 1870. The President of the Third Republic had significantly less executive powers than the those of the previous two republics had. The Third Republic lasted until the [invasion of France by Nazi Germany](#) in 1940. Following the end of the war, the [French Fourth Republic](#) was constituted along similar lines in 1946. The Fourth Republic saw an era of great economic growth in France and the rebuilding of the nation's social institutions and industry after the war, and played an important part in the development of the

process of European integration, which changed the continent permanently. Some attempts were made to strengthen the executive branch of government to prevent the unstable situation that had existed before the war, but the instability remained and the Fourth Republic saw frequent changes in government - there were 20 governments in ten years. Additionally, the government proved unable to make effective decisions regarding decolonization. As a result, the Fourth Republic collapsed and what some critics considered to be a de facto coup d'état, subsequently legitimized by a referendum on 5 October 1958, led to the establishment of the [French Fifth Republic](#) in 1959.

[Chile](#) became the first parliamentary republic in [South America](#) following a civil war in 1891. However, following a coup in 1925 this system was replaced by a [Presidential one](#).^[*original research?*]

Commonwealth of Nations








Since the [London Declaration](#) of 29 April 1949 (just weeks after [Ireland](#) declared itself a republic, and excluded itself from the Commonwealth) republics have been admitted as members of the Commonwealth of Nations. A number of these republics kept the [Westminster](#) Parliamentary system inherited during their British colonial rule.







In the case of many [republics in the Commonwealth of Nations](#), it was common for the Sovereign, formerly represented by a [Governor-General](#), to be replaced by an elected non-executive head of state. This was the case in with [South Africa](#) (which left the Commonwealth soon after becoming a republic), [Malta](#), [Trinidad and Tobago](#), [India](#) and [Vanuatu](#). In many of these examples, the last Governor-General became the first president. Such was the case with [Sri Lanka](#) and [Pakistan](#). Others became parliamentary republics upon gaining independence.








List of modern parliamentary republics










Main article: [List of countries by system of government § Parliamentary republics](#)









Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Albania	One-party state	1991	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral









Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Austria	One-party state (as part of Nazi Germany , see Anschluss)	1945	Directly, by second-round system	Bicameral
 Bangladesh	Presidential republic	1991 ^{[note 1]}	Parliament	Unicameral
 Bosnia and Herzegovina	One-party state (Part of Yugoslavia)	1991	Directly, by second-round system	Bicameral
 Botswana	British protectorate (Bechuanaland Protectorate)	1966	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Bulgaria	One-party state	1989	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Croatia	Semi-presidential republic	2000	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Czech Republic	One-party state (Part of Czechoslovakia)	1993	Directly, by second-round system (since 2013; previously Parliament	Bicameral





Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
			, by majority)	
 Dominica	Associated state of the United Kingdom	1978	Parliament , by majority	Unicameral
 Estonia	One-party state (Part of Soviet Union)	1991 ^{[note 2]}	Parliament , by two-thirds majority	Unicameral
 Ethiopia	One-party state	1991	Parliament , by two-thirds majority	Bicameral
 Fiji	Military junta	2014	Parliament , by majority	Unicameral
 Finland	Semi-presidential republic	2000 ^{[note 3]}	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Germany	One-party state	1949 ^{[note 4]}	Federal assembly (Parliament and state delegates) , by absolute majority	Bicameral

Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Greece	Military junta; Constitutional monarchy	1975	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Guyana	Constitutional monarchy (Commonwealth realm)	1970 ^[note 5]	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Hungary	One-party state	1990	Parliament, by absolute majority	Unicameral
 Iceland	Formerly part of Denmark; Constitutional monarchy	1944	Directly, by majority vote	Unicameral
 India	Constitutional monarchy (British Dominion)	1950	Parliament and state legislators, by single transferable vote	Bicameral
 Iraq	One-party state	2005	Parliament, by two-thirds majority	Unicameral ^[2]
 Ireland	Constitutional monarchy (British Dominion)	1949 ^[note 6]	Directly, by single transferable vote	Bicameral



Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Israel	Protectorate (Part of British Mandate of Palestine)	1948	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Italy	Constitutional monarchy	1946	Parliament, by two-thirds majority	Bicameral
 Kiribati	Protectorate	1979	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Kyrgyzstan	Presidential republic	2010	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Latvia	One-party state (Part of Soviet Union)	1991 ^[note 7]	Parliament	Unicameral
 Lebanon	Protectorate (French mandate of Lebanon)	1941	Parliament	Unicameral
 Macedonia	One-party state (Part of the Yugoslavia)	1991	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Malta	Constitutional monarchy (Commonwealth realm)	1974	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Marshall Islands	UN Trust Territory (Part of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands)	1979	Parliament	Bicameral










Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Mauritius	Constitutional monarchy (Commonwealth realm)	1992	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Federated States of Micronesia	UN Trust Territory (Part of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands)	1986	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Moldova	Semi-presidential republic	2001	Parliament, by three-fifths majority	Unicameral
 Montenegro	One-party state (Part of Yugoslavia , and after Serbia and Montenegro)	1992	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Nauru	Australian Trust Territory	1968	Parliament	Unicameral
 Nepal	Constitutional monarchy	2015 ^[note 8]	Parliament and state legislators	Unicameral
 Pakistan	Presidential and semi-presidential republic	2010 ^{[3][4]}	Parliament and state legislators, by single transferable vote	Bicameral
 Poland	One-party state	1990	Directly, by second-round system	Bicameral







Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Samoa	Constitutional monarchy	2007	Parliament	Unicameral
 San Marino	Roman Empire	301	Parliament	Unicameral
 Serbia	One-party state (Part of Yugoslavia)	1991	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Singapore	Constitutional monarchy (Part of Malaysia)	1965	Directly	Unicameral
 Slovakia	One-party state (Part of Czechoslovakia)	1993	Parliament (before 1999) Directly, by second-round system (since 1999)	Unicameral
 Slovenia	One-party state (Part of Yugoslavia)	1991	Directly, by second-round system	Bicameral
 Somalia	One-party state	2012 ^{[note 9]}	Parliament	Bicameral
 South Africa	Constitutional monarchy (Commonwealth realm)	1961	Parliament, by majority	Bicameral









Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Suriname	Military Dictatorship	1987	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Trinidad and Tobago	Constitutional monarchy (Commonwealth realm)	1976	Parliament	Bicameral
 Turkey	One-party state	1946	Directly (since 2007, previously by parliament)	Unicameral
 Vanuatu	British-French condominium (New Hebrides)	1980	Parliament and regional council presidents, by majority	Unicameral

List of former parliamentary republics

Country	Year became a parliamentary republic	Year status changed	Changed to	Status changed due to
 Brazil	1961	1963	Presidential system	Referendum
 Burma	1948	1962	Military Junta	1962 Burmese coup d'état

Country	Year became a parliamentary republic	Year status changed	Changed to	Status changed due to
 Chile ^[original research?]	1891	1925	Presidential system	Referendum
 French Third Republic	1870	1940	Presidential system	World War II German Occupation
 French Fourth Republic	1946	1958	Semi-presidential system	Political instability
 Hungary	1946	1949	One-party state	Creation of the People's Republic of Hungary
 Indonesia	1945	1959	Presidential system	Constitutional amendment
 Second Republic of South Korea	1960	1961	Presidential system	May 16 coup
 Lithuanian First Republic	1920	1926	One-party state	1926 Lithuanian coup d'état ^[note 10]
 Nigeria	1963	1979	Presidential system	Constitutional amendment
 Pakistan	1956	1958	Military Dictatorship	1958 Pakistani coup d'état
	1973	1978		1977 Pakistani coup d'état

Country	Year became a parliamentary republic	Year status changed	Changed to	Status changed due to
	1988	1999		1999 Pakistani coup d'état
 Second Polish Republic	1918	1939	One-party state	Invasion of Poland
 Portuguese First Republic	1911	1926	Military Dictatorship (which led in 1933 to the <i>Estado Novo</i> One-party state)	May 28 coup
 First Philippine Republic (Malolos Republic)	1899	1901	Military Dictatorship (De facto USA Colony)	Capture and Surrender of Emilio Aguinaldo to the American forces
 Fourth Philippine Republic	1978	1987	Presidential system	Ratification of the 1987 Constitution
 Republic of the Congo	1960	1965	Military Dictatorship (De facto One-party state)	1965 Congolese coup d'état
 Russia	1991 ^[note 11]	1993	Semi-presidential system	Referendum ^[note 12]

Country	Year became a parliamentary republic	Year status changed	Changed to	Status changed due to
 Rhodesia	1970	1979	Parliamentary system	Creation of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia
 Spanish Republic	1931	1939	Fascist Dictatorship	Loss of Spanish Civil War
 Sri Lanka	1972	1978	Semi-presidential system	Constitutional amendment
 Syrian Republic	1930	1958	One-party state	Creation of the United Arab Republic
 Syrian Arab Republic	1961	1963	One-party state	1963 Syrian coup d'état
 Uganda	1963	1966	One-party state	Suspension of the constitution
 Zimbabwe Rhodesia	1979	1979	Parliamentary system	Creation of Southern Rhodesia
 Zimbabwe	1980	1987	Presidential system	Constitutional amendment

See also

- [Parliamentary system](#)
- [Constitutional republic](#)
- [Republicanism](#)
- [List of countries by system of government](#)

Notes

1. Was previously a parliamentary republic between 1971 and 1975.
2. Estonia was previously a parliamentary republic between 1919 and 1934 when the government was overthrown by a *coup d'état*. In 1938 Estonia adopted a presidential system and in June 1940 was occupied and annexed by the [Soviet Union](#).
3. Formerly a semi-presidential republic, it is now a parliamentary republic according to David Arter, First Chair of Politics at Aberdeen University. In his "Scandinavian Politics Today" (Manchester University Press, revised 2008), he quotes Jaakko Nousiainen in "From semi-presidentialism to parliamentary government" (Scandinavian Political Studies 24 (2) pp. 95–109) as follows: "There are hardly any grounds for the epithet 'semi-presidential'." Arter's own conclusions are only slightly more nuanced: "The adoption of a new constitution on 1 March 2000 meant that Finland was no longer a case of semi-presidential government other than in the minimalist sense of a situation where a popularly elected fixed-term president exists alongside a prime minister and cabinet who are responsible to parliament (Elgie 2004: 317)". According to the Finnish Constitution, the president has no possibility to rule the government without the ministerial approval, and does not have the power to dissolve the parliament under his or her own desire. Finland is actually represented by its prime minister, and not by its president, in the Council of the Heads of State and Government of the European Union. The 2012 constitution reduced the powers of the president even further.
4. In the case of the former [West German](#) states, including former [West Berlin](#), the previous one-party state is [Nazi Germany](#), but in the case of the [New Länder](#) and former [East Berlin](#) it is [East Germany](#). Please note that [German reunification](#) took place on 3 October 1990, when the five re-established states of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) joined the Federal Republic of Germany, and Berlin was united into a single city-state. Therefore, this date applies to today's Federal Republic of Germany as a whole, although the area of former East Germany was no part of that parliamentary republic until 1990.
5. In 1980, it changed from a ceremonial to an executive head of state, who is also the combined head of government.
6. [Irish head of state from 1936 to 1949](#).

7. Latvia was previously a parliamentary republic between 1921 and 1934 when the then prime minister Kārlis Ulmanis took power in a *coup d'état*. In June 1940 Latvia was occupied and annexed by the [Soviet Union](#).
8. Had a transitional government between 2008 and 2015.
9. Had a transitional government between 1991 and 2012.
10. In June 1940, Lithuania was occupied and annexed by the [Soviet Union](#).
11. Post of [President of Russia](#) is created, and development of [separation of powers](#) is started, some of [Supreme Soviet's](#) executive powers is transferred to new post. Before that, Russia was a [Soviet republic](#).
12. Preceded by [crisis and armed dissolving](#) of the [Supreme Soviet of Russia](#), then-parliament of the Russian Federation.

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LESSON 9 – NEWS MEDIA & THEIR PLACE IN A WORKING DEMOCRACY

PART I: Introduction and overview

Democracies that work well rely on the free flow of information and freely made choices.

The ways of gathering, organising and sending information to help political choices are called the news media. Or simply 'the media'.

When citizens know enough about politicians' policies and how they will make policies happen, they can make informed choices about them.

[An independent news media is therefore essential in a working democracy.](#) For such a media can shine a light on what actions and laws are planned – and on the ways they are carried out. See Bckgrndr 9-1.

Free news media as the 'fourth estate'

An essential skill in a democratic society, therefore, is the ability to explain what citizens need and want for their lives, what is involved in policies and laws, and how citizens can influence them.

According to UNESCO research findings, a free media always has a positive influence on the economy and on governance. A free news media:

- increases participation in political decision making beyond a small inner circle
- [holds governments accountable](#) (See Bckgrndr 9-2).
- makes transparent all government actions.

One of the older names for news media is **the fourth estate**.⁶³ How news media can be an organised source of power or 'estate' requires an understanding of how democracies' checks and balances on power work.

When the power of public opinion is expressed at election time, leaders are rewarded by being voted into political power. And if these leaders are responsible in government, the people they serve are rewarded by effective politicians.

⁶³ Originally there were three **estates**: the first **estate** was the clergy, the second **estate** the nobility, and the third **estate** the commoners. The **fourth estate** is the mainstream press, and was coined in 1837, reflecting their increasing prominence and power. William Dutton argues that the Fifth Estate is the blogging community, as well as all 'networked individuals' enabled by the Internet in ways that can hold the other estates accountable. Dutton, W. H. (2009), 'The Fifth Estate Emerging through the Network of Networks', Prometheus, Vol. 27, No. 1, March: pp. 1-15.

However, when information is missing, is biased or is merely propaganda, a leader may be chosen not on merit but by manipulation. This manipulation may be of the minds of voters' or of the voting process, or both.

Today's 'fifth estate'

Today there are many sources of information and ways of accessing it. To ensure it is reliable, balanced, and easily accessible to citizens, news organisations have arisen to gather and spread it.

In the last 20 years, however, computer technology and access to the Internet have made educated citizens into amateur journalists with [blogs and social media](#) sometimes referred to as **the fifth estate**.⁶⁴ (See Bckgrndr 9-3)

Mass media reach masses of citizens

Since high-speed printing presses and electronic media able to reach masses of people, news services have also been called the mass media.

Today, the dominant medium is still television but other forms are print media (mainly newspapers), radio and the internet, with the later now rivalling TV.

Radio and mobiles in low income countries

In low-income countries, newspapers are often a much smaller influence – or are absent. However radio and smart phones are popular means to send out and receive information.

There are governments, including democracies, in which rulers control, block or suppress information.⁶⁵ These are called **authoritarian governments** or states. Or if they allow some freedoms, they are called **competitive authoritarian** or **hybrid governments**.

Although not a necessary feature of low-income countries, it is a fact that authoritarian states are most often found in these countries.

Information can be controlled, restricted or manipulated

There are many ways governments can control or limit the flow of information needed for good decision-making.

⁶⁴ Dutton, W. H. (2009), 'The Fifth Estate Emerging through the Network of Networks', *Prometheus*, Vol. 27, No. 1, March: pp. 1-15.

⁶⁵ The word 'liberal' is now used before democracy to describe governments that do have this 'free flow of info'.

Before reforms of the 1990s [most sub-Saharan countries controlled information](#) (See Bckgrndr 9-4) by one or more of these methods⁶⁶:

- declaring lengthy states of emergency which formally limited media freedom
- passing broad libel laws that can be selectively applied
- threatening the withdrawal of government advertising
- selectively restricting access to newsprint
- requiring journalists and publications to be licensed
- taxing printing equipment at a high rate
- requiring a bond to be deposited with the government before new publications can launch.

Reasons for the vulnerability of low-income countries

The reasons low-income countries are particularly vulnerable to information blockage and censorship include:

- limited resources limits professionalism – either through inadequate training and/or salaries
- restricted means (for organisations or individuals) means reduced initiative and vulnerability to pressure
- the increased likelihood of impoverished journalists to publish favourable stories – or not write critical ones (**self-censorship**)
- ‘Big Man-Little Boy’ **clientelism** reduces the felt freedom to report anything seen to undermine traditional ways or values.

In **Islamic-majority states** or post-communist ones in central Asia there may be quite different ideas about the role of the press, or of the media in general. Approaches to media here are closer to models where ‘social stability’ is defined by governments and limits are imposed accordingly.

In these states the media may be expected to play the role of upholding social or religious values, or both.

Free flow of information seen as a threat

⁶⁶ Bourgault (1995) Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press; p. 180).

In such countries the free flow of information is often seen as a threat to state stability or personal morality – or both – and is controlled by:

- Blocking social media (The ‘Great Firewall of China’, for example, can still block any information on the Tiananmen Square massacre, or on Tibet)
- use of tax laws which put financial pressure on media organisations
- compulsory registration of media
- use of laws forbidding insults to those in high places⁶⁷. For instance, Russia has more than 100 laws governing media conduct) or bringing the country or authorities within it into disrepute (North Korea, UAE, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia)
- placing supreme value on unchallengeable social goods such as ‘nation building’, ‘economic development’ and ‘social stability.’⁶⁸
- emphasising that a free press gives licence for disharmony or disunity
- the domination of broadcast coverage by leading political forces
- social values that favour populist or ‘strong’ leaders (dominant media coverage encourages poor and illiterate people to seek political salvation through ‘their leader’)
- intimidating journalists with strict use of libel laws and jail sentences (Egypt)
- giving privileged access to television in particular
- the dominance of TV as a medium
- internal censorship

PART II: Media reflects changing values

Free media – within a cultural context

The role of the media can in many ways be decided by a political culture – or lack of it. For example, scholars suggest Russia’s authoritarian culture traditionally centres on security and order. Thus it has only limited support for democratic principles.

⁶⁷ Laws forbidding insults to those in high places – often referred to as *lese-majeste* (insulting royalty) or *desacato* (contempt of authority/public officials) – are used globally to protect reputation, dignity, and authority of government officials, monarchs, and state institutions. While sometimes justified as maintaining public order, these laws are frequently criticized by human rights organizations as tools to stifle dissent, shield leaders from legitimate scrutiny, and violate freedom of expression.

⁶⁸ Egypt’s government pre-2013 expected the press to ‘uphold the security of the country, promote economic development, support approved social norms’ – Lesch (2004, p. 610)

In non-democratic Islamic cultures a free media can be presented as an alien 'Western' idea that leads to licence and the pursuit of self-interest rather than social harmony.⁶⁹ In some cases, so-called authoritarian rule is seen more as an expression of a home-grown cultural tradition inherently opposed to Western liberalism or permissiveness. (See Bckgrndr 9-5).

Limits to freedom reflects history of type of governance

An opposing view puts the actual situation as happening the other way around: culture reflects rather than promotes the basic nature of a regime. Using Russia as an example, this view sees lack of political trust as "reflecting the country's non-democratic history – as well as the corrupt nature of its contemporary governance."

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That is, rather than Russian government reflecting the longer term political culture, the political culture in Russia reflects the long-term history of top-down governance there.⁷¹

Politics and the development of ways of communicating are closely connected. The development of newspapers and the broadcast media of radio and television in the 19th and 20th centuries have had the biggest impact.

Political technology neutralises free expression

As in other competitive authoritarian regimes, Russia's dark arts of neutralising potential threats in the media, and in business, have over time become recognised by citizens. Aware ordinary Russians sometimes call these 'arts' **political technology**.

This produces the necessary silence by removing from office a few media opponents. Such technology⁷² only happens where there are weaknesses in the rule of law, the market economy and civil society generally. But it contributes to a winning electoral strategy.

For it can cripple independence within media ranks well before votes are actually cast. If these technologists have done their jobs, the result of the election is over by

⁶⁹ The Prime Minister of Malaysia Mahathir Mohamad (1981-2003) condemned so called Western democracies (Australia, Malaysia's south eastern neighbour, is one such example) where "political leaders are afraid to do what is right, where the people live in fear of the free media which they so loudly proclaim as inviolable".

⁷⁰ "The authoritarian traditions of Russia mean that people are not used to democratic behaviours and values, such as welcoming pluralism in thinking and behaving, tolerating dissent and supporting seemingly less efficient methods of democratic decision-making. They do not easily see the advantages of debate, discussion and non-conformity, and not deferring to a class of superiors." Gitelman, Z. (2005) 'The Democratization of Russia in Comparative Perspective', in *Developments in Russian Politics 6*, ed. S. White, Z. Gitelman and R. Sakwa (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan) pp 241-56.

⁷¹ Gitelman (2005)

⁷² McFaul, M. (2005) 'The Electoral System', in *Developments in Russian Politics 6*, ed. S. White, Z. Gitelman and R. Sakwa (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan)

election day. Accompanied by media dominance typical of such regimes, these are also outside the usual terms of reference of 'free and fair' election monitoring.⁷³

Social media as a catalyst for change

Clever, devious and sometimes ruthless ways of blocking information are used. However, increasingly aware citizens – especially urban ones – are beginning to use new social media to protest and push for change.

Even when authoritarian governments win elections in these ways, this awareness often leads to widespread loss of legitimacy. And group awareness of this can be a catalyst for future change.⁷⁴

In low-income and divided countries, modern forms of communication are having a revolutionary effect. However the continuing effect of television, because it is a widespread and largely free medium, cannot be underestimated.

Authoritarian regimes dominate the major broadcasting channels. This can not only crowd out communication from potential challengers but also shut out all dissent.

⁷³ McFaul (2005) pp. 61- 79: "At the same time the state's larger role gave incumbents enormous advantages, be it national television coverage, massive administrative support from regional executives or enormous financial resources from companies like Gazprom." (McFaul, 2005, p. 77)

⁷⁴ Hague, R., Harrop, M. (2013). *Comparative government and politics: An introduction*. 9th edn, Basingstoke: Macmillan. [Now in 12th edition]

Communications revolutions in low-income countries

In low income countries, both radio and TV have two major advantages over print media:

- they are accessible on simple devices without need for any paper distribution
- they do not require literacy.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION MEDIA IN 20 th AND 21 st CENTURIES	
Later 19 th to early 20 th century	Popular newspapers emerge, often with mass circulation. New railway networks allow national distribution.
1930s	Radios golden age, For the first time, politicians broadcast directly into electors' homes.
1950s–1960s	Television becomes the most popular, & usually the most trusted, medium in Western countries. By regulation or state ownership, politicians secure access to the medium. Entertainment programmes from the USA are widely exported, diffusing American values
1970s–1980s	The television audience begins to fragment, with an increase in the number of channels, distribution by cable and satellite, and widespread use of video.
1990s	Internet access reaches more affluent and educated groups in Western democracies, representing a further expansion of international communication. Mobile telephony emerges.
2000s	Mobile telephone access becomes standard, bringing telephony to many low-income countries for the first time. The Internet reaches the mass population in Western societies. Sharp decline in readership of printed newspapers.
2010s	Continued expansion of digital social media, further extending horizontal communication among citizens, In 2012, Facebook claims a billion users per month. Internet is increasingly accessed via smartphones.

Villagers can gather round a shared radio set to hear the local news or tune in on their phones.

Many low-income countries developed broadcasting networks (TV and radio) without passing through the stage of mass circulation newspapers. And have widespread microwave networks which do not require fixed wired infrastructure. (See Bckgrndr 9-6).

It is now possible for politicians in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America countries to reach rural, and even nomadic populations, via mobile telephony and TV.

In higher income countries: greater choice – and ‘fragmentation’

In higher income countries the 21st century has, on the contrary, led to greater fragmentation. This means citizens can choose their own political programming. Or none. (See Bckgrndr 9-7).

National audiences reached by leaders’ televised ‘fireside chats’ are no longer possible. More channels and on-demand choice has meant the world is more a global village.

But it has also led to the decline of public broadcasting and traditional forms of participation in politics.

A connected global village – accessing different media

Newer cable, satellite, internet and mobile broadcasting services have meant there is now a more splintered or fragmented audience.

Single national broadcasters are rarer and the viewer has become less a citizen and more a ‘consumer’. Younger people now rely less on television as they can access a range of media.⁷⁵ Political programmes are still available for the interested. But are no longer the only choice for those who are not.

As the timeline above shows, the global dominance of transnational broadcasting networks owned by ‘media moguls’ grew out of the ‘newspaper barons’ whose influence held such sway over nations in the nineteenth century.

PART III: Facts, impacts, and context

⁷⁵ Young Americans are more likely now to use the Internet rather than TV: Murrie, M. (2006) ‘Broadcasters Getting Online, Staying On Air’, *ejournal USA* (11), <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0306/ijge/ijge0306.htm>, accessed 28 April 2006.

Knowledge of media impacts reveals importance of context

These four types of media impacts are a reminder that information always comes with a context.

Probes into inconvenient truths frequently trigger **pushback** from the guilty and implicated innocent alike⁷⁶. Both can feel that their perspective has been mis- or under-represented.

The prime responsibility of the media in liberal democracies is to the **public interest** in, and need for, trustworthy information. However, any information can be misused or misinterpreted.⁷⁷ Although libel and defamation laws apply, there is always a tension between these and freedom of speech laws.⁷⁸

The priming impact of television

A common response to the impact of television is that it primes voters to base decisions more on personalities than policies. Research has certainly shown that party leaders are increasingly important in the visual media-based campaigns that feature strongly in countries where television or devices are in most homes.

Despite this, there is little evidence that images of leaders, or their personalities, are the key influence on winning elections.

However, if the broadcasting studio is now the main site of the battle for the mind and hearts of voters⁷⁹, television does confirm status and recognition on candidates. Also, where the primacy of television has been established, dominance of the media is a major factor in return of incumbent leaders.

Significantly, in countries where there have been limited TV channels, the resulting balanced treatment of politics by aware programmers has contributed to a weakening of party loyalties.

⁷⁶ 'Incrimination by insinuation' is an expression for statements that destroy reputations ('oft got without merit and lost without deserving': *Iago*) by smearing by association. These can be used by irresponsible politicians, commentators or even journalists. Often it is a form of 'blame-sharing' through unproved (and/or unprovable) accusations designed to deflect heat from the guilty, retaliate for stinging truths or even provide smokescreen cover, consciously or unconsciously, for exposed ignorance.

⁷⁷ 'Ambiguity, like humility, is endless.' – Nelson Mandela

⁷⁸ Defamation laws may come into tension with [freedom of speech](#), leading to censorship or [chilling effects](#) where publishers fear lawsuits. Cultural differences exist in definitions of both offence and actions bringing others 'into disrepute.' The power of the internet to disseminate comment, which may include malicious comment, has brought a new focus to the issue. Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights permits restrictions on freedom of speech when necessary to protect the reputation or rights of others. Jurisdictions resolve this tension in different ways, in particular in determining where the burden of proof lies when unfounded allegations are made.

⁷⁹ 'The empires of the future will be the empires of the mind.' Winston Churchill (1943)

This **partisan de-alignment** is stronger if there are few channel choices. This effect was demonstrated in 1950s Europe when it was discovered that television provided a new common ground for Dutch citizens.⁸⁰

Newspapers still better for context?

While visual media can tell viewers what happened, newspapers (print or electronic text in 'online papers') are still better able to put events in context. For this reason even low circulation newspapers can be influential.

Responsible politicians monitor quality newspapers both for a survey of current events and for background on topical issues. 'Doing the papers' gives feedback from the articulate and socially motivated. This includes critique of policies and performance by way of editorials, articles by columnists and opinion pages. Letters to the editor function not just as a safety valve for disaffection and concerns, but also as a channel for any citizen's suggestions or ideas.⁸¹

Internet AND newspapers

Amongst younger people in particular there has been a widespread shift to the internet. News is available from newspapers own sites, from news agencies, or globally from sites dedicated to news from many sources.

Paywalls restricting news to paid subscribers has happened only with quality newspapers. Even here there is a mix of paid and free articles as only the best papers can afford the risk of readers shifting to free sites.

LESSON 9 FURTHER READING:

Parts IV and V are readings on the impacts of technology changes on the media and democratic practices. To keep lessons user-friendly they are here as hypertexts.

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

⁸⁰ Catholics saw that Socialists were not the dangerous atheists they had been warned about. And Liberals found orthodox Protestants were not the bigots they were supposed to be. Wigbold (1979) *Television and Political Life*, ed. A. Smith; London: Macmillan) p. 201.

⁸¹ Some newspapers have a 'Rants and Raves' column that allows citizen-readers a few sentences to vent displeasure or express gratitude or appreciation for something done well ('Bricks and Bouquets' is older language for this in English.)

Ways to measure press independence in Africa & globally

A free press always has a positive influence on the economy and on governance, according to findings in a UNESCO report.⁸² It expands participation in political decision making beyond a small inner circle, holds government accountable, and makes their actions transparent.

The Global Expression Report 2025 monitored 178 nations and revealed that over the last decade 5.6 billion people have experienced a decline in their freedom of expression. Scores have sunk in 77 countries, and only 35 are now ranked as 'Open'. Of these 77, 18 were significant (score drops of at least 20 points). The largest declines took place in Burkina Faso, El Salvador, and Hong Kong (China), at 49-point drops each. Of 15 improved scores, four were significant: Gambia at 64 points experienced the greatest, Sri Lanka 32 and Fiji 24. Somalia, according to this index, at 134 is above such nations as China, India, Ethiopia, Uganda, Yemen and the UAE, while the US at 56 lies between Sierra Leone and Gambia.

Improvement can be made through legal reform, government accountability, international pressure, civil society engagement, and ensuring the physical safety and independence of journalists. Some countries like Namibia, Ghana and Cabo Verde are making consistent progress, although others remain stagnant or are regressing. Eritrea, for example, maintains tight control over all media and often imprisons journalists without trial.

A decade ago the 2015 World Press Freedom Index, produced by [Reporters Without Borders](#), ranked the performance of 180 countries according to media independence, respect for the safety and freedom of journalists, pluralism, and the legislative, institutional and infrastructural environment in which the media operate.

If 2025 was a big decline for freedom of information with deterioration of press freedom worldwide, the previous two decades saw a gradual decline. A decade ago the 2015 World Press Freedom Index, produced by [Reporters Without Borders](#), ranked the performance of 180 countries according to media independence, respect for the safety and freedom of journalists, pluralism, and the legislative, institutional and infrastructural environment in which the media operate.

⁸² <http://www.theafricareport.com/Columns/what-is-the-link-between-press-freedom-and-development.html>

Influences such as censorship, armed conflict, surveillance and national security were taken into account. Some of the findings by Reporters Without Borders:

- More countries are using prohibitions on blasphemy and sacrilege to censor political criticism.
- 2014 saw increased violence against news providers covering protests.
- Governments most often cite security as the grounds for trampling on fundamental freedoms and gagging the media.
- Many governments and non-state players used control and manipulation of media coverage as a weapon of war in 2014.
- Journalists faced violent threats from non-state groups in 2014. The world's most repressive countries found ways to reinforce and improve methods of censorship and repression.

Finland had ranked No. 1 on the index out of 180 countries for five years in a row, followed by Norway and Denmark. At the other end of the scale, Turkmenistan, North Korea and Eritrea performed worst.

In 2015, France ranked No. 38 (moving up one place), while the U S ranked 49th (down three places). Russia went down four places to No. 152. China, at 176th place, went down one place. Japan ranked 61st (down two places), Brazil ranked 99th (up 12 places), and Iran, at 173rd place, remained unchanged.

In the Americas, the US was down three places reflecting a decline continuing to the present day. Contributing to this decline in 2014 was the Obama administration's war on information in Wikileaks, and New York Times journalist James Risen coming under government pressure to reveal his sources, according to Reporters Without Borders.

Wars, violence during demonstrations, economic crises, the growing threat from non-state operatives — all resulted in media freedom then declining on all five continents. Reliable free press indicators a decade ago show that two thirds of the 180 countries surveyed for the 2015 World Press Freedom Index performed worse in 2014 than in 2013. Violations of freedom of information in 180 countries increased 8 percent in 2014 to 3,719 violations, and almost 10 percent compared with 2013, according to the annual global indicator.

In 2025 there are few nations unaffected by the continuing influence of giant social media platforms, distortion of information due to the rise of state as well as non-state actors (along with authoritarian governments), and to impacts of the collapse

of newspapers' financial model in this wake. If Ghana's measures to ensure information security were a positive, the US's are not.

TOP 15 AFRICAN Best Press Freedom in 2025



	COUNTRIES	SCORE	WORLD RANK
1	 SOUTH AFRICA	75.71	27
2	 NAMIBIA	75.35	28
3	 CABO VERDE	74.98	30
4	 GABON	70.65	41
5	 SEYCHELLES	68.56	45
6	 MAURITANIA	67.52	50
7	 MAURITIUS	67.31	51
8	 GHANA	67.13	52
9	 LIBERIA	66.61	54
10	 SIERRA LEONE	66.36	56
11	 THE GAMBIA	65.49	58
12	 IVORY COAST	63.69	64
13	 CONGO REP	60.58	71
14	 C. AFRICA REP	60.15	72
15	 SENEGAL	59.43	74

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<https://geofactbook.com/fact/press-freedom-index-score/2025>

Press freedom & development in sub-Saharan Africa

Welfare economist and Nobel prize Amartya Sen has observed that there not been a famine in a democratic society.

What then is the link between a free and the world's poorest region? The Press Freedom and Development UNESCO report concludes "all the findings confirm the importance of freedom for development".



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Role of free press in ridding Africa of poverty

African nations are usually placed at the bottom of any list measuring economic activity and human development. But a free press has been shown always to have a positive influence on poverty and on governance. For it holds government accountable, makes their actions transparent and expands participation in political decision making beyond a small inner circle.

Lack of democracy and rampant corruption are still major obstacles to progress. It is not by chance that the continent, except very few exceptions, is still ruled by **authoritarian** and **hybrid regimes** that place serious restrictions on information available to their citizens and the free operation of the press. And despite a lack of basic social services, military forces are often well financed.

Poverty is man-made and some people bear responsibility for this human tragedy that continues to ravage lives in the 21st century. In this region, a big percentage of the population cannot safeguard even the most basic human needs. As James K Boyce and Léonce Ndikumana put it: "In most financial scams, the victims simply lose their money. In Africa, some lose their lives".

However, a free press can promote democratisation and economic development on the African continent. It can be a crucial instrument for socio-economic development in the same way that investment, infrastructure and education are.

Freedom of expression is basic

Philosopher Emmanuel Kant concluded that an enlightened and developed society of free and independent individuals cannot be created unless all its members have their freedom of expression.

Specific findings from UNESCO's 2008 report note that no country in the world has a free press and a high percentage of its population living below the poverty line. And that the weaker the constraints on the press the more developed the country will be.

It goes on to say no country has a low GDP or High Inequalities and a free press. Free press has a positive influence on the provisions of social services for the public.

'No country has a free press and a very high percentage of people with no access to safe water or a high percentage suffering from malnutrition. Improvement in press freedom is associated with a drop in infant mortality and an increase in life expectancy at birth as well as general increase on the health status of the population. By allowing debate and different opinions to be heard the country becomes more stable, less violent and more democratic.'

Flawed democracies serving mostly elites

The African continent has been undergoing the process of democratisation for about 30 years now. This process has been imposed from abroad and it is not sound. It has resulted in electoral democracies, whereby authoritarian regimes hold fake elections and create political parties that only serve the interest of the dictator.

External debt versus capital flight

In most financial scams, the victims simply lose their money. In Africa, some lose their lives. It is high time more emphasis is placed on the links between extreme poverty, authoritarianism and corruption on the continent. The local media should emphasise who is gaining and who is losing from the effects of globalisation and liberalisation on the continent.

Although Africa has witnessed some growth in the last few years, the economic growth was not being distributed along all segments of the population. Very high rates of unemployment and inflation make everyday life extremely difficult for slum dwellers in big cities and lack of investment on infrastructure, irrigation and agriculture makes survival a dodgy business in many rural remote areas.

Some people gain, especially the ones close to ruling regimes, at the expense of others. Whilst much has been written for the huge unpayable debt of African nations, there has been little discussion in local newspapers about capital flight out of Africa.

Need for justice, not charity

In 2012 sub Saharan Africa experienced an exodus of more than \$ 760 billion in capital flight since the 1970's, a sum that surpasses the region's external debt of \$ 175 billion. More should be done to identify looters and accomplices and to

repatriate stolen funds. The region needs justice and not charity. Money sent to the continent as aid is misused by leaders who spend it on weapons, enrich themselves or invest on few prestigious projects in the capital city.

Little is being spent on social services such as education, health care and pensions. The region remains among the top for on-going conflicts, and a vast percentage of the population dies yearly from preventable, most of the time water-borne, diseases.

Blame it on something

Despite all the malfunctions of several African governments the press has remained silent. I have worked in three different countries in Sub Saharan Africa, where I tried to follow the news as much as possible via local newspapers and the radio, as a teacher. But I found it sad that most journalists preferred to play the government's game and blame outsiders.

Sometimes these outside factors included past events like colonialism, which is being blamed for most misfortunes on the continent. I am the last person not to agree that colonialism was wrong and brutal but that does not explain the current situation on the continent. Lebanon, Greece, Vietnam, India, Libya, Philippines, Bolivia and Argentina, as well as many other countries in Asia and Latin America, have being colonised in the past and are doing relatively well.

Another popular blame among journalists is climate change. In recent times, the list is being enlarged by including China and 'global terrorism.

Lack of analysis of policies means no force for change

Sometimes, it is a cruel bad war leader such as Kony, Bemba, Shankow or Taylor. In some cases it is a foreign or neighbouring government. I remember long discussions on Sierra Leonean radio about the negative influence played by the Liberian government and Nigerian troops during the local civil war. There was no analysis of the Sierra Leonean government's policies since the 70's, and there was no serious criticism about the lack of democracy in West Africa.

It is not by chance that the poorest region of the world is also the most authoritarian region. The government has an interest in remaining strict and brutal since it can only remain in power by so doing.

Press freedom in Africa is blocked as a result of a general lack of democracy. The 2010 "Press Freedom in Africa" report published by the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ) focused on the control of the African media by the state. It concludes that for the year 2010 "12 journalist have been assassinated, five killed

accidentally, 34 jailed and hundreds continued to be threatened, intimidated, attacked, wounded, and forced to into exile".

Free communication of thoughts and opinions is among the most precious of the rights of man. It is essential to examine closer what exactly happens to those who criticised their government for the misfortunes of their societies and were not comfortable in blaming colonialism, the Chinese or Islamists.

Journalists require popular support even more than courage

In Somalia three journalists lost their lives in criminal conditions and Eritrea remains, globally, the biggest prison for journalists. Currently the Eritrean state holds more than 20 journalists in prison, some of them having been in jail for close to 10 years. In Rwanda, Jean Leonard Rugambage was shot as he was preparing to publish a critical article on the government.

In Angola Alberto Cravus Chakussanga was shot down by unidentified individuals. Chakussanga's radio had been very critical of the regime. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where a journalist is killed every year, Patient Vhebey Bankome was brutally murdered by assassins in military uniform.

In Nigeria three journalists were murdered in cold blood and in Burundi one journalist faces life imprisonment for expressing his views about the dangers of Al-Shabaab to Burundi, after the deadly terrorist attacks in Kampala, Uganda. Both Uganda and Burundi sent troops to Somalia in support of the transitional government, which Al-Shabaab has been fighting tooth and nail to overthrow.

Only popular movement can overcome climate of fear

Most local newspapers and radio stations on the continent have failed to report on corruption and abuses perpetrated by the government because they are afraid for their lives.

I don't think that the ills of the continent will be overcome without a strong indigenous movement that will demand democracy on the continent With current upheavals in the Arab Countries, southern Europe and in some areas of the United States, it is time for Sub Saharan Africa to demand more.

Parents, bosses and children: growing up means speaking out

Currently, however, democratic values are not so strong among African populations. A research conducted by Afrobarometer in 2009 that tried to find if democrats were emerging in Africa. It found that "a solid majority (60 percent) see their government more like a parent and their own role as children rather than bosses" and less than half believe that citizens should be held responsible their governments.

Afrobarometer's report concludes that the development of democratic citizenship among Africans is still relatively weak. Nonetheless, it should not be taken in its pessimistic approach that nothing can be changed in the region, although, after living for so long under authoritarian states, most people have become apathetic and afraid of politics.

Additionally political knowledge is not widespread among the population. And for their survival many rural residents depend more on family members, or on International non-governmental organisations – which tend to depoliticise their poverty and precarious situations – rather than on their own governments.

A free press can re-politicise poverty: know what they do with your money

With more people having access to one kind of a media or another, the press can play an active role in re-politicising poverty among locals. Instead of searching for white heroes in NGOs, and for demons of the past, the press should spread political knowledge. The press should be active in the struggle against corruption, nepotism, tribalism and it should promote democratic values in any way it can. It should report human rights abuses perpetrated by the state against civilians, corruption, misuse of aid and criminal links between governments and international multinationals that are grabbing anything they can from the continent.

The press should report on how well the political and economic elite live in the capital city at the expense of the majority. It should highlight where the elite send their children for studies and how they spend their weekends. By so doing Africans will understand the injustices and the cruelty of the elite. More access to information is more likely to make them want to change the political situation rather than hoping for more charity. Freedom of the press and access to information is a human right. Article II of the Universal Declaration of Human and Citizens right stipulates that "the free communication of thoughts and opinions is among the most precious of the rights of man, every citizen, may speak write and print freely".

Freedom of the press is linked with all aspects of development in a positive way. A free press is related to higher GDP; higher human development measured by the Human Development Index (HDI) and a more equal and fair society.

Brave African journalists need support

International conferences and donor–recipient meetings should pay more attention to the precarious situations brave African journalists face. Any progressive human being who understands poverty to be a human crime should emphasize, with all his or her strength, the need for more freedom of press in Sub Saharan Africa. This will eventually lead to a more democratic and more economically prosperous region.

Blogs and social media as a Fifth Estate

Blogs have potential and real influence on contemporary policymaking, especially in the context of elections, reporting from conflict zones, and raising dissent over corporate or congressional policies.

Based on these observations, Al-Rodhan suggests moving beyond traditional thinking that limits the “estates of the realm” to governmental action and proposes a broader perspective in which civilians or anyone with access to a computer and the Internet can contribute to the global political change and security.

Of all the blogs on the Internet, continues Al-Rodhan, only a few have a real power to influence the [policy-making process](#), specifically political and current affairs blogs with large and involved audiences. These blogs can help organize the public to take a stance on an issue, be used in political campaigns, help cultivate [grassroots movements](#), and assist in fundraising.

Furthermore, blogs have several unique features that give them potential influence in policymaking: a lack of editorial supervision, low barriers to entry, difficulty for governments to censor or control content, and the ease of responding to events in real time.

Blogs can affect policy-making by providing insider information, facilitating [communication](#) between experts, promoting grassroots efforts, discrediting political figures, and setting policy agendas.

Blogs as “*the fifth estate*” can also negatively influence [global security](#). They can contribute to [terrorist](#) plots by facilitating cross-border communication and by connecting people whose ideas are outside of the mainstream, by propagating hateful or violent messages, or by encouraging [organized crime](#).

Advocates for social justice, like the [Code Pink](#) movement argue that this is an unfair characterisation, since the [Executive Branch](#) wages current existing war at a significant cost of loss to society – and routinely without being charged with the same accusation.

Despite of evidence of multiple war fronts appearing to support this claim in the early 21st century, Al-Rodhan concludes, governments must increase surveillance of blogs and develop legal, administrative, and technological tools to dissuade bloggers from posting potentially harmful information. Such as calls to incite terrorism. On a more positive note, blogs have also the potential to prevent governments from adopting hasty and misjudged decisions.

Building on this work, Wallsten empirically assessed the impact of political bloggers as a "fifth estate" during the [2004 presidential campaign](#). Specifically, he used [time-series analysis](#) to determine the extent to which political bloggers followed the mainstream media's agenda or set the mainstream media's agenda.

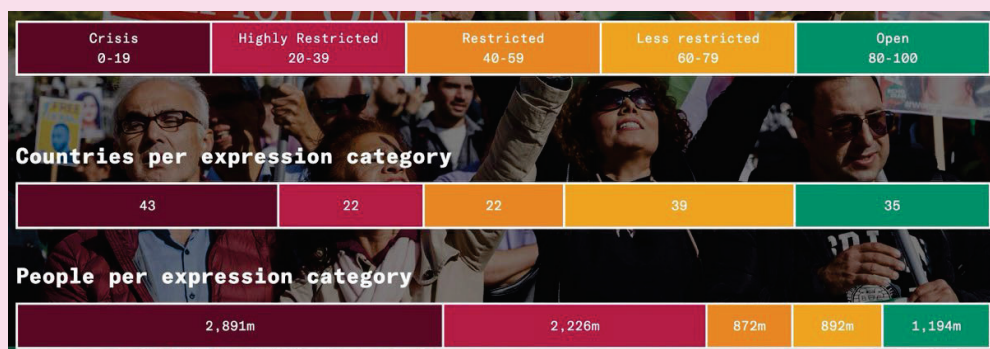
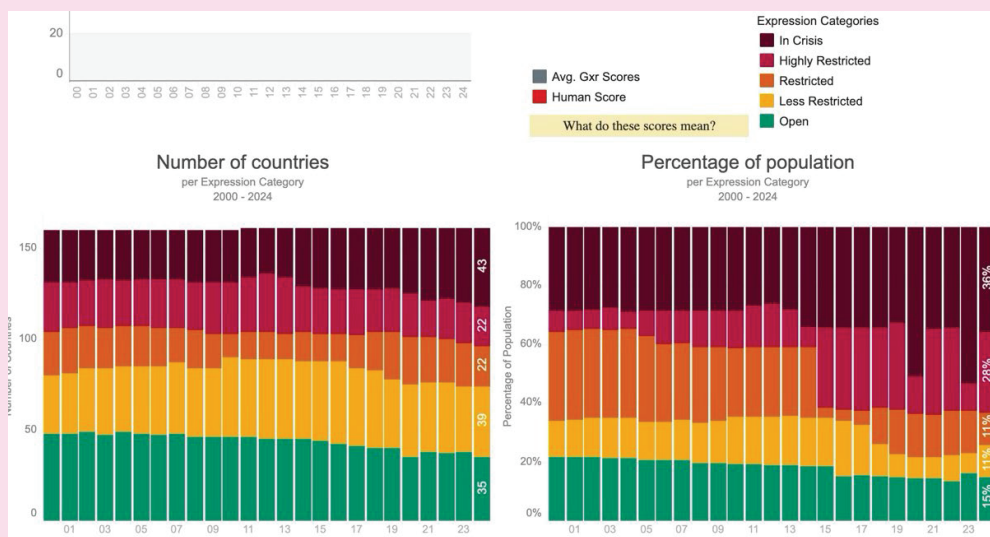
Wallsten found that there was a complex, bidirectional relationship between mainstream media coverage and blog discussion rather than a unidirectional media or blog [agenda setting](#) effect.

Al-Rodhan, Nayef R.F., *The Emergence of Blogs as a Fifth Estate and Their Security Implications*, Geneva, [Slatkine](#), 2007

Wallsten, Kevin (2007):

[Agenda setting and the blogosphere: An analysis of the relationship between mainstream media and political blogs](#), [Review of Policy Research](#).

HYPertext - P3 Press freedom: global, Africa



source: [2025 World Press Freedom Index](#), [AllAfricaReport](#)

RSF World Press Freedom Index 2025

<https://rsf.org/en/rsf-world-press-freedom-index-2025-economic-fragility-leading-threat-press-freedom>

Economic fragility a leading threat to press freedom

Report: Although physical attacks against journalists are the most visible violations of press freedom, economic pressure is also a major, more insidious problem. The economic indicator on the RSF⁸³ World Press Freedom Index now stands at an unprecedented, critical low as its decline continued in 2025. As a result, the global

⁸³ Reporters Without Borders/Reporters Sans Frontières), founded in 1985 (non-profit from 1995) is an international non-governmental organisation headquartered in Paris.

state of press freedom is now classified as a “difficult situation” for the first time in the history of the Index.

At a time when press freedom is experiencing a worrying decline in many parts of the world, a major — yet often underestimated — factor is seriously weakening the media: economic pressure. Much of this is due to ownership concentration, pressure from advertisers and financial backers, and public aid that is restricted, absent or allocated in an opaque manner. The data measured by the RSF Index’s economic indicator clearly shows that today’s news media are caught between preserving their editorial independence and ensuring their economic survival.

“Guaranteeing freedom, independence and plurality in today’s media landscape requires stable and transparent financial conditions. Without economic independence, there can be no free press. When news media are financially strained, they are drawn into a race to attract audiences at the expense of quality reporting, and can fall prey to the oligarchs and public authorities who seek to exploit them.

When journalists are impoverished, they no longer have the means to resist the enemies of the press — those who champion disinformation and propaganda. The media economy must urgently be restored to a state that is conducive to journalism and ensures the production of reliable information, which is inherently costly.

Solutions exist and must be deployed on a large scale. The media’s financial independence is a necessary condition for ensuring free, trustworthy information that serves the public interest.”

– Anne Bocandé, RSF Editorial Director

US case study – role of media: security restraints or censorship?

Case Study: Tension between responsibility to publish & emphasis on ‘prior restraints’ on grounds of security or obscenity

Generally, the First Amendment in the United States of America prohibits ‘prior restraint’ - that is, restraint on a publication before it is published.

For instance, in a landmark decision in *Near v. Minnesota* (1931), the Court held that the government could not prohibit the publication of a newspaper for carrying stories that were scandalous or scurrilous. However, the Court identified three types of publications against which a prior restraint might be valid:

- **those that pose a threat to national security**
- **those that contain obscene materials**
- **those that advocate violence or the overthrow of the government.**

The government argued that publication of certain material posed a threat to national security in the so-called *Pentagon Papers* case, *New York Times co. v. United States* (1971).

There, the government sought an injunction against newspapers that were planning to publish classified material concerning US policy in Vietnam.

The Court found that the government had not proved an overriding government interest, or an extreme danger to national security if the material were to be published. The justices reiterated their position that a request for a prior restraint must overcome a heavy presumption of unconstitutionality.

Why are ‘prior restraints’ regarded as most serious infringement on US constitutional freedoms

The short answer is because of the importance put on justice for all. The Court holds that prior restraints are among the most serious infringements on First Amendment freedoms and that attempts to impose them must be strictly scrutinized.

In *Nebraska Press Ass'n v. Stuart* (1976), the Court overturned a state court's attempt to ban the press from a criminal trial. The Court held that gag orders, although not per se invalid, are allowable only when there is a clear and present danger to the administration of justice.

Powers and responsibilities of the Press

Freedom of the press, like freedom of speech, is not absolute however. Notwithstanding the limitations placed on it, the press exercises enormous power and influence, and therefore has commensurate responsibility.

Because journalists generally have access to more information than the average individual, they serve as the eyes, ears, and voice of the public. Some legal scholars even argue that the press is one of the most important forces in the democratic system of checks and balances.

Government pressure on media in name of patriotism and national security

In the wake of the September 11th attacks in 2001, the White House placed pressure on the five major television networks not to broadcast videotaped statements by terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden and his associates. The networks had shown a videotape of bin Laden, and this angered the White House. In early October 2001, the networks agreed not to show such statements again without reviewing them first.

This decision came after a conference call among US national security adviser Condoleezza Rice and the heads of the networks. The White House feared that broadcasts from suspected terrorists could contain anything from incitement to coded messages.

This agreement aroused concerns that the press was forfeiting its responsibility to report all of the news. Commentators noted that the rest of the world would see the bin Laden tapes via television and the internet, and that the security concerns raised by the US government thus would have little impact.

Balance between restraint and responsibility

The balance between restraint and responsibility continued to be tested during the 'war against terrorism' and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In contrast to the 1991 Gulf War, where the press was kept away from the battlefield, the war in Iraq featured "embedded" journalists, who travelled and reported in real time among the US forces. However, the press was restricted to disclosing only certain types of information due to "security concerns". Also close contact with their own forces contributed to reporters' self-censorship – either through empathy or lack of objectivity.

2015 – 2025 Update

US press freedom in the 2020s is marked by a decline in rankings, increasing government pressure, potential self-censorship, and legal challenges, despite First Amendment protections. Concerns include White House restricting access, threats to

journalists, lack of federal shield laws and moves to limit access to public spaces, creating a chilling impact that hinders investigative reporting and accountability, with partisans viewing the situation differently depending on the administration.

Recent US administrations have been criticised for demonizing reporters, creating lists of media “offenders”, banning these from media conference, eroding trust and creating a fearful environment. Journalists themselves report hesitation to speak out, fearing repercussions while sources become more reluctant to talk, impacting the flow of information.

Note: Israel banned unembedded journalists in its two-year-long beseiging of Gaza from October 2023, on grounds of their own security and Israel’s. Reporters without Borders recorded that more than 230 journalists were killed in Gaza since October 7, 2023, 67 in 2025. It called on governments to be more courageous in protecting working journalists.

Ukraine, Mexico and Sudan are also dangerous with nine, three and four respectively killed in 2025. RSF also records numbers of journalists jailed for their work. China is the leading offender with 121 jailed. Russia 48 and Myanmar 47, are the next most repressive countries. As of December 1, 2025, 503 journalists were being detained in 47 countries.

<https://freedom.press/>

<https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-press>

<http://www.wifp.org/>

Case study: Use of internet in Somalia

The “state of digital” in Somalia in 2026

Here are [DataReportal](#)'s essential headlines for the adoption and use of connected devices and services in Somalia in 2026:

- A total of **11.5 million** cellular mobile connections were active in Somalia in late 2025, with this figure equivalent to **58.1 percent** of the total population. However, note that some of these connections may only include services such as voice and SMS, and some may *not* include access to the internet.
- There were **5.47 million** individuals using the internet in Somalia at the end of 2025, when online penetration stood at **27.6 percent**.
- Somalia was home to **3.51 million** social media user identities in October 2025, equating to **17.7 percent** of the total population.

These headline stats offer a great overview of the “state of digital” in Somalia for 2026, but in order to make sense of how digital trends and behaviours have been *evolving*, we need to dig deeper into the data.

<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-somalia>

HYPertext - P7A Social media & their influence on political discussions

Facebook's 'echo chamber' really can make you narrow minded



People can use sites to seek out opinions that confirm what they already believe

- **Facebook users commonly create 'echo chambers' across social media**
- **In this effect, like-minded networks will spread common ideas and sources**
- **World Economic Forum listed 'digital misinformation' as a threat to society**

By Cheyenne Macdonald

When a big news story breaks, social networks are often awash with misleading information as people either inadvertently, or deliberately, share the story.

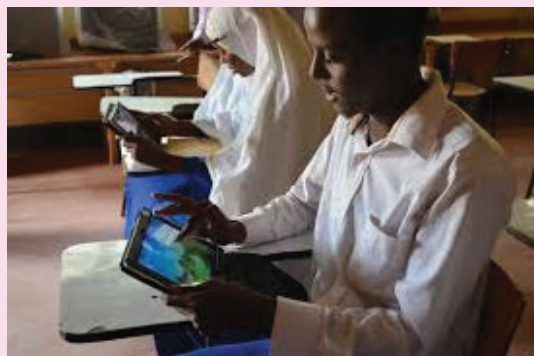
This creates what is known as an '**echo chamber**'.⁸⁴

Researchers from Italy and the US found that people have the tendency to look for news that confirms what they already believe. And this in turn creates a network of like-minded people who will spread these common sources and accept them as truth.

Researchers from Italy and the US found that people have the tendency to look for news on Facebook that confirms what they already believe. This in turn creates a network of like-minded people who will spread these common sources and accept them as truth and what's known as an 'echo chamber'

Facebook users were found to gather news selectively, limiting exposure to information that goes against their ways of thought.

Consumers of both scientific and **conspiracy information** engage in type of behaviour, but the spread of



this

⁸⁴ Or sometimes information 'silos'.

unproven rumours can lead to naïve social responses.

Once an idea has been accepted as truth by an individual, it will spread rapidly throughout the 'community of interest'.

The research, published in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#), analysed publicly available data from Facebook's Graph interface between 2010 and 2014.

Information was categorized into three distinct groups: science news, conspiracy rumours, and **trolling**.

Facebook users were found to gather their news selectively, limiting exposure to information that goes against their ways of thought.

Consumers of both scientific and conspiracy information engage in this type of behaviour, but the spread of unproven rumours can lead to naïve social responses, the authors write.

'Massive **digital misinformation** is becoming pervasive in online social media to the extent that it has been listed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) as one of the main threats to our society,' the paper says.

'Whether a news item, either substantiated or not, is accepted as true by a user may be strongly affected by social norms or by how much it coheres with the user's system of beliefs.'

In the paper, they point out that the main distinction between scientific news and conspiracy is the ability to verify of the content.

Scientific information can often be traced, with data and methods readily available, while the origins of conspiracy theories, like the belief that vaccines cause autism, are difficult to identify.

In the 'echo chamber effect' Facebook users were found to gather their news selectively, limiting exposure to information that goes against their ways of thought

But, once an idea has been accepted as truth by an individual, it will spread rapidly throughout the 'community of interest.'

'Our findings show that users mostly tend to select and share content related to a specific narrative and to ignore the rest,' the paper says.

The researchers write that this effect may explain how certain phenomena become widespread, like the rejection of global warming evidence, or the Jade Helm 15

conspiracy, in which alarmists spread panic about a false impending civil war in the US.

In these like-minded communities, the researchers write that common ideas are shared and reinforced, fostering confirmation bias.

'This comes at the expense of the quality of the information and leads to proliferation of biased narratives fomented by unsubstantiated rumours, mistrust, and paranoia,' the authors write.

This behaviour can create **diverging communities**, as people across social media surround themselves with information that confirms their preconceptions on a subject, while rejecting other viewpoints.

To break an echo chamber, the research suggests it would be more useful to project to a larger audience, in lieu of infiltrating small subgroups with truthful information <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3386052/Facebook-really-DOES-make-narrow-minded-Researchers-warn-echo-chamber-effect.html#ixzz47ShT2apq>

Retrieved 10 January 2016

LESSON 10 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE IN POWER

PART I: Serving the people with honesty

Corruption as a disease

Corruption has been called a disease. It is said to be the cancer of nations, of governments and of the business world alike.

Others have called it a dragon or a bush fire (that can still break out in places unexpectedly and uncontrollably). Politicians, those with economic power and all citizens, have a responsibility to understand its various names – and disguises – and to make their various dealings transparent so all can see.

Whatever image is used to describe it, most countries in the world suffer from its effects to some degree or other, in one form or another. It is deadly to the life of a nation because of its drain on resources and the difficulty of stamping it out. Also, because of what it takes away from the healthy growth of countries and the honest dealings that make for justice.

Impacts of corruption

We now know a lot about the effects of corruption, and can calculate the costs of it in terms of lost opportunities. Or more correctly, stolen opportunities.

Organisations have been formed to measure its effects on the wealth and productivity of nations. Transparency international has used worldwide data and to come up with ways of measuring both its extent and its losses. It has not only calculated such losses to present and future GDP, but it has also devised measures to judge how corruption itself is perceived in a culture. Many of these organisations are now also in Africa. See Bckgrndr 10-1.

Corruption as a culture

In a world of good governance, it is essential to have responsive leaders. Also, to have both responsible and responsive citizens. This means leaders aware and honest enough to declare any vested interests and conflicts of interest and not exploit them.

For once corruption has become embedded in a culture it is difficult to get rid of. And a large part of the problem involves awareness of the language used to justify it, a large part of the solution involves changing an accepted culture.

It is useful to view **corruption as a culture** because it emphasises the worn language and established practices that often make it difficult for those within such a culture to see it. Or, at least, to see it for the problem that it becomes. See Bckgrndr 10-2.

Ethics and virtue are necessary but not enough

Modern studies have shown that teaching leaders and citizens about ethics is vital. Ethics gives reasons for good behaviour. But codes on how to behave correctly, and why they are important, are not sufficient to prevent corruption.

This is because those who practice corruption mostly justify it in other terms. The reasons these terms⁸⁵ become part of practices passed on from one to another – and from one generation to another – are often complex. Therefore it can be helpful to view corruption not only as a **cultural practice** but also as one that is often normalised – and if not necessary, then at least excusable.

It may even be seen as a twisted into a virtue. Or be a sign of cleverness allowing whole generations and classes of people to exonerate themselves in the name of ‘commissions’, *gbagba, furbo*, ‘oil for the machinery’. A deserved ‘lick of the honey pot’ for those whose hands are in the hive.

Awareness of how sickness breaks out and can spread

Declaring ‘war’ on a health epidemic helps to summon all the resources of the state. Healthy people surrounded by disease can themselves catch it, and in a plague or epidemic are most likely to. How, then, to treat this disease and what inoculations can be given against it?

Disease analogies can help. Unless we know how corruption is spread we won’t be able to do anything to stop it. As with pandemics, knowledge of transmission mechanisms means cures can be found.

Countless studies and conferences have uncovered the mechanisms of corruption, calculated its costs, come up with programmes to combat it. Viewing corruption as a disease as well as a personal and social vice means that cures will involve both ethics and group therapy preventative practices! See Bckgrndr 10-3.

With better understanding of how corruption is justified and takes hold, See Bckgrndr 10-4. international organisations have devised programmes to eradicate it – the most successful involving social education and ways to raise poverty and inequality levels that drive it.

African initiatives

What has worked? Which countries have been successful in reducing corruption – and how can we judge this? When Transparency International

⁸⁵ Commission, *gbagca, furbo* (Italian for clever) or ‘oil for the machinery’ ... many anti-corruption campaigners are reaching into their indigenous languages to try to educate a new generation on what these term excuse or cover up.

that are insufficient to meet daily needs, corruption may not be called corruption at all. It may not be seen as clever or even as “trickery”, (*Gbagba*) but simply necessary. Surveys, however, regularly show resentment of corrupt practices at more than 80 percent.

Progress can be measured

Regularly ranking countries in terms of criteria such as transparency, trust and the perceived “cost of doing business” is one way of measuring progress. From year to year this index enables countries to compare themselves against internationally agreed standards.

Importantly also, such ranking monitors nations’ progress not only in combatting corruption but also in the ability of their economic systems to deliver living wages and fair allocation of resources. Primarily, it measures a society’s ability to inform all within it who exactly gets what of their country’s resources.

High income countries have corruption too

High-income countries with high transparency, with regulations to guarantee it, and with strong judiciaries to enforce it can still suffer from corruption.

One example in even established democracies is the use of bribes by lobbyists . By getting “the right message over to the right people, in the right form, at the right time, on the right issue”, the lobbying of those in power has developed because it can enhance the efficiency of governance. However, it can also give unfair advantage to the wealthy, especially corporations.

Business interests with deep pockets can also pay lobbyists to gather support to ensure a bill not in their profit interests is not passed or a regulation is delayed.

Lobbying as a form of bribery

To ensure lobbying does not become bribery by another name but helps ordinary petitioners and less wealthy companies have equal access, an increasing number of democracies have passed laws about lobbying.

Legal requirements typically include:

- A public list of registered lobbyists
- Full disclosure about amounts spent on lobbying

- Audits on spending on lobbyists by a public agency
- Stand-down periods before former politicians can become lobbyist

Some governments encourage corruption – if only by selection or neglect

Aside from low-wage or subsistence economies, what political conditions make it easier to giving or taking bribes or ‘surcharges?’

Any top-down system with little separation between public and private sectors is open to corruption. Or ones in which patron-client relationships encourage those receiving favours to be grateful enough to do whatever is asked. Or subtly expected ... In short, wherever government services are on a personal rather than on a strong institutional basis, corruption will flourish.

Weak interest groups and personal government become corrupt

In competitive authoritarian governments leaders allow the expression of some interests but there is little ability for interest groups – including business or trade ones – to have any real influence.

Countries like modern Russia and China allow promotional groups to operate only at local level – and then only under state supervision. This mix of an assertive state and a weak society produces a ‘state-led civil society’⁸⁶(Frolic, 1997) where there are no alternative to state power – only those that go along with it. US corporate culture and the two-party system are not immune. Increasingly US politics have become ‘transactional’ with less checks on party or business elites from over-influencing executive arms of government. Reform movements of US dysfunctional politics are well articulated but so far latent.⁸⁷

Where politics anywhere are personal rather than institutional, they also allow individual companies to pull the strings of their puppets in government.

Patron-client alliances, weak institutions

Authoritarian regimes use unofficial patronage networks to keep their political position. They control jobs, natural resources and access to money making by

⁸⁶ Frolic, M. & Brook, T (Eds) *Civil Society in China*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997

⁸⁷ Nichols, J & McChesney, R W (2013). *Dollarocracy: How the money and media election complex is destroying America*. Nation. Also, Hedges, C. (2010). *Death of the liberal class*. Nation. Hedges, C. (2018). *America: The farewell tour*. Simon & Schuster; Hedges, C. (2009). *Empire of illusion: The end of literacy and the triumph of spectacle*. Nation. Sachs, J. D. (2018). *A new foreign policy: Beyond American exceptionalism*. Columbia University Press. Mearsheimer, J J (2018) *The Great Delusion: liberal dreams and international realities*. Yale University Press.

incorporating all other major holders of power – who show their gratitude by then distributing these to their own supporters.

These patron-client pyramids extend throughout society. Crucially, these networks prevent other institutions from being independent of them – and individuals from complaining. If clients remain politically sound (following *their* politics, at least), these patron governments will blind-eye any shady behaviour.

Patron-client ‘personal favours corruption’ becomes corrosive

The high political price paid for these informal alliances is a corrosion of public support which over time increases potential instability.

The misallocation of large sums of capital – the result of private allocation of jobs, contracts and investment – leads to ‘a weak banking sector, reduced foreign investment, and a sharp distinction between insiders and outsiders.’⁸⁸

Authoritarian regimes can produce high growth – in the short term

It is true that by limiting demands by citizens for other services some regimes can initially outpace some democracies in growth, especially early stage development. China dramatically outgrew democratic India between 1978 and 2009.

However, long term these non-democratic regimes do not flourish.⁸⁹ Although China offers a model of development without democratization, informed commentators regard Chinese communism as an authoritarian regime in which corruption, cronyism and cynicism are features.

Controlled by elite factions, the party has exploited nationalism – ensuring China is great again - to achieve their success.⁹⁰

PART III: The true cost of corruption is opportunity

The casualty of corruption is growth

⁸⁸ King, S. (2007) Sustaining Authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa’, *Political Science Quarterly* (122) 433-60. This politics of fear and vulnerability results in a “*repertoire of control mechanisms in which politics come before economics and obedience before initiative. Communication is opaque, trust is lacking, government spending is misused, corruption is endemic, laws are ignored, and foreign investors are cautious ... the outcome is a static society, an underperforming economy and a cynical population*” - Hague, R & Harrop, M *Comparative Government and Politics* (2013) p. 62

⁸⁹ Long-term can be very long term, however, when there is suppression and police states: communist regimes in Eastern Europe lasted 70 years

⁹⁰ The ‘exceptionalism’ of a superpower like the US is prone to this as well, but news media exist to present other views – and expose its cost. And if corporate or mainstream media fail to hold power to account, they still have feedback mechanisms, charters, regulatory frameworks, and increasingly independent alternatives.

[Anti-corruption success story Nigeria](#) in the 2000s had its development set back decades by the mismanagement of military dictators' 'lootocrats.'

The casualty of this form of corruption is growth. Democracies has been found to make more productive use of their inputs. The form of growth in these democratic systems can in principle continue for the long term – and provide social security safety nets for those sections of the population that have to cope with necessary labour transitions.

Regarded as an inherently inefficient, China's corrupt system has managed to deliver partial industrialisation in a highly politicised economy in which 'not only party members, but also local bureaucrats and army officers seek to advance themselves alongside more conventional entrepreneurs.'⁹¹

Business people have to create ties to officials as well as opportunities. China's, growth, positively, has uplifted millions into a middle-class income. It has come at a cost democracies are committed to avoid.

Analysts say simplistic accounts of China's rise omit a string of suppression-managed difficulties including:

- Increasing inequality between regions and between individuals
- Inefficient allocation of capital
- Bad loans by banks
- Urban unemployment
- Environmental degradation
- Water shortages in parts of the country
- Massive population movements from the countryside
- An unruly peasantry
- An ageing population
- Prior social services (eg medical care) leading to excess savings
- Pervasive corruption
- Popular cynicism about the party

⁹¹ Hague, R. & Harrop, M. *Comparative Government and Politics* (2013)

- Hostility of ethnic minorities (Tibetan, Uighurs) to Chinese rule
- Sustaining censorship in the internet era.

Hope in and for low-income economies

Corruption is a pandemic – a worldwide disease – but for reasons that are now better understood it has affected African countries unequally. Even ones that are oil and minerals rich.

[The role of developed countries in permitting politicians to hide mammoth sums in tax havens is only now being exposed.](#) There is hope in the many initiatives and education programmes that are springing up in various parts of the world by [leaders who have taken up the challenge to gather the political will required.](#)

To do so leaders have had to name the varieties of the disease in their midst – as well as ‘keep their own house in order’. To resist disease this may take incentives for many smaller changes in personal thinking and behaviour as well as disincentives for offenders. Plus systemic programmes with outputs, expected outcomes, and key indicators of achievement. This includes, on a personal level, a pride in the humble virtue of ‘cutting your coat to suit your cloth’ – rather than using proverbs to justify self-interest such as ‘one who takes honey out of the beehive licks his hand.’⁹²

The realisation of the cost – and of the international forces that have made them victims of the deficits Big Man corruption produces in whatever continent – has made an increasingly number of countries sign up to initiatives.

The moral corrosion in cultures in which all are guilty if only by neglect has been stopped by leaders and individuals who see what has to be done and challenged their fellow citizens to change. See Bckgrndr 10-7.

Holding offenders to account while acknowledging the forces at work on the desperate, has meant compassion can be shown, justice practised and cultural practices remedied. A multi-cause approach enables the blind-eyed to turn and see.

To confront the many types of corruption is to confront not just the kick-back and backhanders but also the many social causes of desperation and disengagement.

⁹² Poudyal, m, (1984). *Public administration and nation-building in Nepal*. Delhi, India : NBO Publishers' Distributors.

10 ways to combat corruption: See Bckgrndr 10-8.

1. Corruption is not only about bribes: People especially the poor get hurt when resources are wasted. That's why it is so important to understand the different kinds of corruption to develop smart responses.

2. Power of the people: Create pathways that give citizens relevant tools to engage and participate in their governments – that is, [identify priorities, describe problems and find solutions.](#)

3. Cut the red tape: Bring together formal and informal processes (this means working with the government as well as non-governmental groups) to change behavior and monitor progress.

4. It's not 1999: Use the power of technology to build dynamic and continuous exchanges between key stakeholders: government, citizens, business, civil society groups, media, academia etc.

5. Deliver the goods: Invest in institutions and policy – sustainable improvement in how a government delivers services is only possible if the people in these institutions endorse sensible rules and practices that allow for change while making the best use of tested traditions and legacies – imported models often do not work.

6. Get incentives right: Align anti-corruption measures with market, behavioral, and social forces. Adopting integrity standards is a smart business decision, especially for companies interested in doing business with the World Bank Group and other development partners.

7. Sanctions matter: Punishing corruption is a vital component of any effective anti-corruption effort.

8. Act globally and locally: Keep citizens engaged on corruption at local, national, international and global levels – in line with the scale and scope of corruption. Make use of the architecture that has been developed and the platforms that exist for engagement.

9. Build capacity for those who need it most: Countries that suffer from chronic fragility, conflict and violence– are often the ones that have the fewest internal resources to combat corruption. Identify ways to leverage international resources to support and sustain good governance.

10. Learn by doing: Any good strategy must be continually monitored and evaluated

to make sure it can be easily adapted as situations on the ground change.
<http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/here-are-10-ways-fight-corruption>

LESSON 10 FURTHER READING:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/this-is-the-essay-on-corruption-that-david-ferguson-didnt-want-you-to-read-a7026496.html>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-declaration-against-corruption/global-declaration-against-corruption#corruption-should-be-exposed----ensuring-there-is-nowhere-to-hide>

BCKGRNDR 10-1.

African & global anti-corruption monitors & initiatives

There are a number of key anti-corruption initiatives relevant to anti-corruption measures in Africa some of which BAAC works in partnership with in the various countries of operation.

AfriMAP

Africa Governance and Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP)

The Africa Governance, Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP) aims to monitor and promote compliance by African states with the requirements of good governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law

www.afriMAP.org



African Development Bank Group

The African Development Bank Group is a development bank established in 1964 with the intention of promoting economic and social development in Africa. The group comprises the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Development Fund (ADF), and the Nigeria Trust Fund (NTF). AfDB provides loans and grants to African governments and private companies investing in the regional member countries in Africa. It is owned and funded by member governments, and has a public-interest mandate to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

www.afdb.org



African Parliamentary Network Against Corruption (APNAC)

The African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption (APNAC) is Africa's leading network of parliamentarians working to strengthen parliamentary capacity to fight corruption and promote good governance.

www.apnacafrika.org



African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a system introduced by the African Union to help countries improve their governance. It is a way of looking forward while taking account of where we are today.

www.aprm.org.za



Basel Committee on Banking Supervision

The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision provides a forum for regular cooperation on banking supervisory matters. Its objective is to enhance understanding of key supervisory issues and improve the quality of banking supervision worldwide.

www.bis.org



Business Ethics Network Africa (BEN-Africa)

BEN-Africa strengthens the commitment and competence of Africans to do business with moral integrity by facilitating interaction between academics and practitioners who share an interest in business ethics.

www.benafrika.org



Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Federation of Accountants (ECSAFA)

The mission of the organisation is to build and promote the accountancy profession in the Eastern, Central and Southern regions of Africa in order that it is, and is perceived by accountants, businesses, financiers and governments, to be an important factor in the economic development of the region.

www.ecsa.org



Eastern and Southern African Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG)

www.iss.co.za/pgcontent.php?UID=2884



The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)

The EITI sets a global standard for transparency in oil, gas and mining.

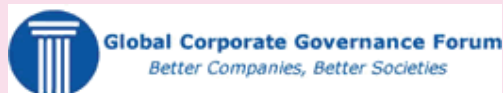
www.eiti.org



Global Compact

The UN Global Compact asks companies to embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption:

www.unglobalcompact.org



Global Corporate Governance Forum

The Global Corporate Governance Forum supports regional and local initiatives to improve corporate governance in middle- and low-income countries in the context of broader national or regional economic reform programs.

www.gcgf.org



Global Integrity

Global Integrity is an independent, non-profit organization tracking governance and corruption trends around the world. Global Integrity works with local teams of researchers and journalists to monitor openness and accountability.

www.globalintegrity.org



Information portal on corruption and governance in Africa (IPOC)

IPOC is an online resource portal that can act as a primary reference point for those interested in combating corruption and promoting democratic governance in Africa.

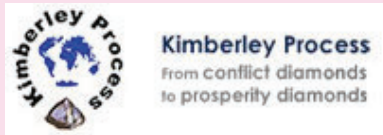
www.ipocafrika.org



Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body whose purpose is the development and promotion of national and international policies to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

www.fatf-gafi.org



Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS)

The Kimberley Process (KP) is a joint governments, industry and civil society initiative to stem the flow of conflict diamonds – rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance wars against legitimate governments.

www.kimberleyprocess.com



New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) primary objectives are to eradicate poverty, place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development. NEPAD also aims to halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy while accelerating the empowerment of women.

www.nepad.org



Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The Organisation provides a setting where governments compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and coordinate domestic and international policies.

www.oecd.org

Pan African Consultative Forum on Corporate Governance (PACFCG)



Publish What You Pay

Publish What You Pay (PWYP) is a global civil society coalition that helps citizens of resource-rich developing countries hold their governments accountable for the management of revenues from the oil, gas and mining industries.

www.publishwhatyoupay.org

Southern African Forum Against Corruption (SAFAC)

www.lesotho.gov.ls/articles/Speech-%20LAW-SAFAC.htm



Transparency International (TI)

Transparency International, the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption, brings people together in a powerful worldwide coalition to end the devastating impact of corruption on men, women and children around the world. TI's mission is to create change towards a world free of corruption.

www.transparency.org



UK Anti-Corruption Forum

The Forum's objective is to help create a business environment that is free from corruption.

www.anticorruptionforum.org.uk



Wolfsberg Anti-Money Laundering Principles

The Wolfsberg Group is an association of eleven global banks, which aims to develop financial services industry standards, and related products, for Know Your Customer, Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorist Financing policies.

www.wolfsberg-principles.com



World Health Organisation (WHO) Good Governance for Medicines Project

WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

www.who.int

HYPERTEXT P1A - Decoding the culture of corruption

Corruption Watch, *Kavisha Pillay*

South Africa has always been a melting pot of many cultures. Its ethnic diversity has contributed to the colourful rainbow nation, and has led to tolerance of difference. Culture is part of our daily lives: it contributes to our behaviour patterns, the food we eat, the clothes we wear.

But one culture that has become increasingly present in the day-to-day lives of South Africans is corruption. Bribing police officers has become a norm for many and greasing the palms of public officials is regarded by some as standard business practice.



The question is to what extent does a country's culture influence corruption among its population? Listen to this being discussed on Talk Radio 702 [here](#).

The rotten apple

American National Bureau of Economic Research economists Ray Fisman and Edward Miguel, from Columbia University and the University of California, Berkeley, respectively, have developed an analogy that illustrates the influence of a country's culture on corrupt inhabitants.

Culture can be defined as the collectively shared beliefs about right and wrong and what is permitted and what is not.

Given this, corruption is not purely a case of rotten apples. Rather, the barrel or orchard is contaminated. Corruption can be ingrained in an environment, so that everyone is infected. As humidity influences the extent of rot in apples, the air quality in an organisation – the organisational culture – influences the extent of corruption among employees who are continuously breathing it.

Gift-giving versus bribery

Alwyn Moerdyk, a Rhodes University psychology lecturer, says that culture is often used to explain or excuse acts of corruption. Some societies claim that gift-giving is "part of our culture" and outsiders should not confuse it with bribery.

Olusegan Obasanjo, the past president of Nigeria, makes a distinction between gifts and bribes. In the African concept of appreciation and hospitality, he explains, the gift is usually a token. It is not demanded.

The value is usually in the spirit rather than in the material worth. It is usually done in the open, and never in secret. Where it is excessive, it becomes an embarrassment and it is returned.

Moerdyk notes that the act of giving is a natural process for humans and is an expression of gratitude for a benefit received or to cement a relationship. But the size of the gift, or the context in which it was given, may make that gift a bribe. Gifts have the purpose of cementing existing relationships, whereas bribes are designed to create new relationships.

Expert opinion

South African Finance Minister [Pravin Gordhan](#) told reporters that corruption was becoming a social phenomenon:

There is no point in pointing fingers. [Corruption] is becoming a cultural problem in South Africa. We need to fight the culture of corruption. A culture of easy money making and not having to think hard, work hard, be clever and find an innovative way of making money.

Public protector [Thuli Madonsela](#) noted that a **culture of corruption** had been allowed to grow in the public sector as a result of a **“competency deficit in supply chain management, lack of respect for rules and authority, and a lack of consequences for wrong doing”**.

Criminologist Dr Elisabeth Grobler strongly believes that a culture of corruption has developed in South Africa primarily because of the “ease with which it is committed due to **the lack of sanction and lack of adequate institutions to deal with the investigation and conviction of this phenomenon**”. She said:

All the effective institutions that did deal effectively with corruption were shut down – such as the Scorpions and the SAPS Anti-Corruption Unit. One only has to read the newspaper regularly to be alerted to yet another corruption scandal that probably will have no negative consequences for those involved. Just the fact that public sector corruption costs the country billions of rand every year is testament to the government’s complete lack of will and ability to deal with it.

It is evident that corruption in South Africa has become a culture among some political leaders, business people and the population. Although the environment in

which we live to some extent breeds the rot, we know that there are many people who have not been consumed by the decay of ethical values.

We salute those individuals and institutions that choose to break away from the culture of corruption and rather promote a culture of whistleblowing, transparency and accountability.

Personality traits associated with corrupt behaviour

There are identifiable personality traits and triggers *associated* with corrupt behaviour. These are useful to identify for parents to counter them by training and for individuals to work on them in their own personalities or recognise them in others. Political leaders are not immune and may reflect widespread traits.

It is a well-known flaw in thinking to make association equal to causes. Just because an eclipse of the moon happens at the same time as a flood does not mean one caused the other. In corruption, however, associations may help in resisting causes.

Where ethics, will and virtue come into play is in the ability to overcome weaknesses by recognising their **triggers** and **establishing strategies** to prevent them. For instance, education which stresses only social conformity rather than **individual responsibility** may not prepare an individual to speak out or be a whistle-blower.

And if you are educated to have only a sense of entitlement rather than responsibility, you may have not be strong enough to resist ‘a lick of the honeypot.’ According to clinical psychologists there are many motivations that push people down this treacherous road. Here are some of the triggers they have identified:

It’s your personality ... (characteristics associated with corruption)

It is difficult to put people in boxes with neat little labels to explain their behaviour, but some personality traits make the slide into corrupt behaviour easier. According to studies, these characteristics include :

- Impaired empathy – individuals struggle to put themselves in the shoes of another or understand how their actions may affect the wellbeing of someone else;
- Self-centeredness – individuals prioritise their own needs over those of others;
- Manipulation – individuals deceptively influence systems or other people’s perceptions;
- Entitlement – individuals believe that they deserve to succeed or have their needs met more than others and that they deserve special treatment;
- Tendency to project blame on to others – individuals avoid taking responsibility for their actions.

Other characteristics associated with corruption involve:

- thrill-seeking behaviour
- social conformity
- the need for instant gratification
- risk-taking behaviour
- a strong need for power.

BCKGRNDR 10-4.

The psychology of corruption

It is said that everyone has their price, but what makes a policeman accept a bribe, a procurement officer give a tender to his friend, or a school governing body cook the institution's books?



Clinical psychologist Dr Giada Del Fabbro, criminologist Dr Elisabeth Grobler, and Rhodes University organisational psychology lecturer Alwyn Moerdyk examine the motivations that push people down this treacherous road. The triggers are many, it seems.

Greed versus need: monitoring is necessary given human nature

In her dissertation on public sector corruption, Grobler notes that human beings are by nature greedy. Some people can contain the urge for self-enrichment and instant gratification; others cannot. Those who constantly feel the need to accumulate wealth may take any opportunity to do so.

When it comes to corrupt public officials, if there is a prospect for self-gratification, they are likely to grab it with both hands unless they are monitored closely. Grobler believes that there is a lack of monitoring and accountability in governments, opening up the potential for corruption.

Yet she also points out that corruption is often committed to supplement an inadequate income, especially among lower paid public servants. The dichotomy is money-for-greed versus money-for-need.

Sharing is caring

Think corrupt individual, and labels like self-centred and financial motivation spring to mind. But security specialist Bruce Schneier, who's written on [the psychology of fraud](#), has a different view. He says some experts believe that people commit acts of corruption and fraud because humans like each other. Because we are fond of one another, especially of people with whom we can identify, goes the reasoning, we do not see our actions in this relationship as unethical. For example, a municipal procurement officer awards a tender to his friend – the officer and his friend like each other, they relate to one another, and on the basis of this friendship and loyalty, they do not see their actions as corrupt.

It may seem a bit touchy-feely, but it explains the existence of webs of corrupt individuals bound together. It is never a lone person who benefits; there are always groups of people who gain. Moerdyk states that certain cultural values, such as the “need for sharing and caring”, may lead to pressure to behave corruptly. “The propensity of corruption may lie in the need of certain people to share and care (or perhaps more accurately, to be seen to share and care), as much as it may be traced to greed, a sense of entitlement and the need to be seen as successful,” he says.

Blame the parents, social attitudes?

Del Fabbro notes that an individual’s morality and ethics are based on the process of socialisation as well as on modelling and education from parents or caregivers – in essence, we learn behaviour at the knee of our parents and teachers. The sentiment is echoed by the former chief psychologist in India’s public service commission, Dr N P Upadhyay. Corruption, Upadhyay says, is an anti-social activity learned through poor parenting.

“Everyone’s personality is a creation of his or her family. Family provides a framework within which human beings may find roots, continuity and a sense of belonging. Parents serve as the first socialising agents. Especially, sound family environment always persists disciplines, moral and obedience lessons. Mainly, such diversified effective lessons impart good manners, corruption free minds, and an acquired integrated personality,” Upadhyay points out.

But he and Del Fabbro agree that a person’s moral and ethical development can be disturbed by dire social and economic circumstances in which personal survival is prioritised above everything else.

And what of the attitudes of the public that allow corruption? The culture of corruption has had devastating effects on South Africa’s economy and has rattled public confidence in key institutions, but the worst effect will be on future generations who will grow up to believe that paying a bribe to a police officer is acceptable or that buying their driving licence is okay. – *Kavisha Pillay*

<https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/corruption-tears-apart-the-fabric-of-ordinary-lives/>

BCKGRNDR 10-5.

HYPERTEXT P3 - Monitors & watchdogs assisting anti-corruption campaigns

Reporters Without Borders (RWB), or *Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF)*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reporters_Without_Borders is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes and defends freedom of information and freedom of the press. The organization, with a head office in Paris, France, has consultant status at the United Nations.

Reporters Without Borders has two primary spheres of activity: one is focused on Internet Censorship and the New Media, and the other on providing material, financial and psychological assistance to journalists assigned to dangerous areas.^[3] Its missions are to:

- continuously monitor attacks on freedom of information worldwide;
- denounce any such attacks in the media;
- act in cooperation with governments to fight censorship and laws aimed at restricting freedom of information;
- morally and financially assist persecuted journalists, as well as their families; and offer material assistance to war correspondents in order to enhance their safety.

Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/> is a U.S.-based nonpartisan 501(c)(3) U.S. Government funded non-governmental organisation (NGO) that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom, and human rights.^[4]

Freedom House was founded in October 1941. Wendell Willkie and Eleanor Roosevelt served as its first honorary chairpersons. It describes as a "clear voice for democracy and freedom around the world".



itself

The organisation's annual Freedom in the World report, which assesses each country's degree of political freedoms and civil liberties, is frequently cited by political scientists, journalists, and policy-makers. Freedom of the Press and Freedom of the Net,^[5] which monitor censorship, intimidation and violence against journalists, and public access to information, are among its other signature reports.

Transparency International (TI) www.transparency.org is an international non-governmental organization which is based in Berlin, Germany, and was founded in 1993. Its nonprofit purpose is to take action to combat corruption and prevent criminal activities arising from corruption. It publishes for example the Global Corruption Barometer and the Corruption Perceptions Index. Transparency International has the legal status of a German registered voluntary association (*Eingetragener Verein*) and serves as an umbrella organization. Its members are besides a few individuals more than 100 national chapters which engage in fighting corruption in their home countries.

BCKGRNDR 10-6.

Some practical solutions to combat corruption from bloggers

Submitted by ngubia

To address corruptions we need a bottom up approach

1. Disband Anti-corruption agency - this agency serves the master.
2. Set up a Whistleblowing agency whose sole mandate is educate the citizenry on corruption
3. Make corruption a subject/ topic in basic education.
4. Personalize corruption; carry out national wide HIV like campaign and sensationalize and sensitive citizens on evils/benefits of corruption.
5. Set an alternative form of Social justice dedicated to corruption like the Rwanda's Gecaca system.

Submitted by kashif yousaf badar

The Pakistani Youth perception to overcome the great curse of corruption and empowering the accountability process are:

1. Reduce the discretionary powers of the government officials and political leaders for the usage of public funds.
2. Equal social justice system for all the public according to rule of Islam.
3. Rule of law will be on the top priority in the country.
4. Introduction of Toll Free hot line for Whistle Blowers on the national level, the youth should stand united against the corruption in the society , government and in the country
5. Judicial Reforms i.e. appointment of more judges and creation of new courts on emergency basis in the country to speed up the judicial process and creation of monitoring and inspection department in the judiciary to monitor and eliminate the ever increasing corruption.
6. The role of public accounts committee (PAC), anti corruption unit and Nab should be more strengthen and try for less involvement of Govt officials and other political pressures.
7. The Land record system must be immediately computerized in whole of the country to reduce the chances of corruption and changing in the record of land.
8. At least one consumer court and price control committee should be established at the Tehsil level to deal with the issues relating to consumer crimes, over pricing etc.
9. Islamic system based on democracy will be implemented.
10. Poverty and unemployment should be minimized and equal status should be given to every citizen of the country apart from its gender, race, religion, wealth or status.

BCKGRNDR 10-7.

Combatting corruption – YouTubes on causes, effects, cures

- For an animation on causes and cures:
<http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/category/tags/anti-bribery>
- ‘There is nothing uniquely African about corruption’ Fight *Gbagba* – | Robtel Neajai Pailey | TEDxEuston (Or when defining corruption as “the misuse of entrusted power for private gain” is not enough ... the virus of non-implementation combatted by ‘A bloodless ethical revolution from below’)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Stjk_Dx-C9Y
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2XxuOY6zp0> Nigeria’s success story: Nuhu Ribadu “When you fight corruption, it fights back.” [Anti-corruption heroism - & its cost]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4Dj0qdWLnk> [Fighting corruption - & its deeper global causes]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9CQZmN1Mhs> [How London fuels corruption in poorer countries - 2014]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIYpMGI6iNQ> [How to get young people to vote - 2014]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJy8vTu66tE> [Our democracy no longer represents the people - Oct 2015]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsZDIBU36n0> [Why nations fail – technology included – Oct 2014]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eORwAozITwI> [Why democracies fail – and why that’s OK – Jan 2015]

BCKGRNDR 10-8.

Ways to combat corruption - summary

10 Ways to Fight Corruption

[For the animation go to <http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/category/tags/anti-bribery>]

1. Corruption is not only about bribes: Understand the different kinds of corruption to develop smart responses. This is important because wastage of resources affects all people, especially the poor.

2. Power of the people: Create pathways that give citizens relevant tools to engage and participate in their governments – identify priorities, problems and find solutions.

3. Cut the red tape: Bring together formal and informal processes (this means working with the government as well as non-governmental groups) to change behavior and monitor progress.

4. It's not 1999: Use the power of technology to build dynamic and continuous exchanges between key stakeholders: government, citizens, business, civil society groups, media, academia etc.

5. Deliver the goods: Invest in institutions and policy – sustainable improvement in how a government delivers services is only possible if the people in these institutions endorse sensible rules and practices that allow for change while making the best use of tested traditions and legacies – imported models often do not work.

6. Get incentives right: Align anti-corruption measures with market, behavioural, and social forces. Adopting integrity standards is a smart business decision, especially for companies interested in doing business with the World Bank Group and other development partners.

7. Sanctions matter: Punishing corruption is a vital component of any effective anti-corruption effort.

8. Act globally and locally: Keep citizens engaged on corruption at local, national, international and global levels – in line with the scale and scope of corruption. Make use of the architecture that has been developed and the platforms that exist for engagement.

9. Build capacity for those who need it most: Identify ways to attract and use

international resources to support and sustain good governance. Countries that suffer from chronic fragility, conflict and violence– are often the ones that have the fewest internal resources to combat corruption.

10. Learn by doing: Any good strategy must be continually monitored and evaluated to make sure it can be easily adapted as situations on the ground change.

- [For an animation go to:
<http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/category/tags/anti-bribery>]
- Fight *Gbagba* – ‘there is nothing uniquely African about corruption’ | Robtel Neajai Pailey | TEDxEuston (Or when defining corruption as “the misuse of entrusted power for private gain” is not enough ... the virus of non-implementation combatted by ‘A bloodless ethical revolution from below’)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Stjk_Dx-C9Y
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2XxuOY6zp0>

Nuhu Ribadu “When you fight corruption, it fights back.” [Anti-corruption heroism - & its cost]

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4Dj0qdWLnk> [Fighting corruption - & its deeper causes]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9CQZmN1Mhs> [How London fuels corruption in poorer countries - 2014]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLYpMGI6iNQ> [How to get young people to vote - 2014]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJy8vTu66tE> [Our democracy no longer represents the people - Oct 2015]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsZDIBU36n0> [Why nations fail – technology included – Oct 2014]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eORwAozITwI> [Why democracies fail – and why that’s OK – Jan 2015]

Six Strategies to Fight Corruption

Corruption damages the social and institutional fabric of a [country](#) but reform options open to governments to reduce corruption and mitigate its effects. A sensible combination of reward and punishment is the driving force of reforms. Rose-Ackerman ([1998](#)) recommends a two-pronged strategy: 1) increase the benefits of being honest and 2) increase the costs of being corrupt.



Here are six complementary approaches.

1. *Paying civil servants well*

If public sector wages are too low, employees may find themselves under pressure to supplement their incomes in “unofficial” ways. Van Rijckeghem and Weder ([2001](#)) did some empirical work showing that in a sample of less developed countries, there is an inverse relationship between the level of public sector wages and the incidence of corruption.

2. *Creating transparency and openness in government spending*

Politicians control subsidies, tax exemptions, public buying of goods and services, soft credits, and extra-budgetary funds. These are all elements in governments management of public resources.

New Zealand, which consistently tops countries in Transparency International’s [Corruption Perceptions Index](#), is a pioneer in creating transparent budget processes. In 1994 its government approved the Fiscal Responsibility Act, providing a legal framework for transparent management of public resources. The more open and transparent the process, the less opportunity it will provide for abuse.

Governments collect taxes, tap the capital markets to raise money, receive foreign aid and develop mechanisms to allocate these resources to satisfy many needs. Collier ([2007](#)) provides evidence on the negative impact of ineffective systems of budget control.

An active civil society, with a culture of participation is an important part of support for strategies that reduce corruption. To make this possible requires press freedoms and literacy. Where citizens are able to scrutinize government activities and debate the merits of various public policies, accountability is raised in countries.

3. *Cutting red tape*

The high correlation between the incidence of corruption and the extent of bureaucratic red tape, as captured by the [Doing Business](#) indicators, outlines the

need to eliminate needless regulations while safeguarding the essential regulatory functions of the state.

The sorts of regulations in many countries—to open up a new business, to register property, to engage in international trade, to gain other certifications and licenses—can be extremely burdensome. Governments need to re-examine the need for these. Rose-Ackerman ([1998](#)) suggests “the most obvious approach is simply to eliminate laws and programs that breed corruption.”

4. *Replacing regressive and distorting subsidies with targeted cash transfers*

Subsidies distort incentives and create opportunities for corruption. They often lead to smuggling, to shortages, and to the emergence of black markets. Putting aside the issue of the opportunity costs (many schools could be built with the cost of one year’s energy subsidy), and the environmental implications of artificially low prices, subsidies often put the government at the centre of corruption-generating schemes.

Removing subsidies could result in a significant reduction in CO2 emissions and have other positive effects. Much better to replace expensive, regressive subsidies with targeted cash transfers: 60 percent of total benefits accrue to the richest 20 percent of households, in the case of gasoline.

5. *Establishing international conventions*

In a globalized economy corruption increasingly has a cross-border dimension. An international legal framework for corruption control is a key to government’s internal control. This framework has improved significantly over the past decade. In 2005 the UN Convention Against Corruption ([UNCAC](#)) was added to the OECD’s Anti-Bribery Convention. By 2013 it had been ratified by the vast majority of its 140 signatories.

The UNCAC is a promising instrument as it involves developed and developing nations and involves measures including domestic and foreign corruption, extortion, preventive measures, anti-money laundering provisions, conflict of interest laws, means to recover illicit funds deposited by officials in offshore banks.

Since the UN has no enforcement powers, the effectiveness of the Convention as a tool to deter corruption very much depends on the establishment of adequate national monitoring mechanisms to assess government compliance.

Governments will need to be more pro-active in cracking down on OECD companies that continue to bribe foreign officials. ([Heinemann and Heimann \(2006\)](#)) argue a more workable approach in the fight against corruption consists of more robust implementation of the anticorruption laws in the 40 states that have signed the OECD’s AntiBribery Convention.

Trade promotion should not be seen to trump corruption control. Governments continue to be afflicted by double standards, criminalizing bribery at home but often looking the other way when bribery involves foreign officials in non-OECD countries.

In efforts to protect commercial interests of national companies, governments have at times shielded companies from the need to comply with anticorruption laws. They do this in a misguided attempt not to undermine their position vis-à-vis competitors in other countries.

6. Deploying smart technology

Just as government-induced distortions provide many opportunities for corruption, frequent, direct contact between government officials and citizens can also open the way for illicit transactions.

To encourage more of an arms-length relationship between officials and civil society readily available technologies could be used. ([Andersen et al., 2011](#) have shown how Internet can be an effective tool to reduce corruption.

One of the worst sources of corruption globally is in the area of the state's purchasing activities. State purchases of goods and services are in most countries between 5-10 percent of GDP. In some countries online platforms have been successful in facilitating government interactions with civil society and the business community – especially in the areas of tax collection, public procurement, and red tape.

Because the awarding of contracts can involve a measure of bureaucratic discretion, and because most countries have long histories of graft, kickbacks, and collusion in public procurement, more countries are opting for procedures that guarantee openness, competition, a level playing field for suppliers, and clear bidding procedures.

Chile now uses the latest technologies to create transparent public procurement. Launched in 2003 ChileCompra is a public electronic system for purchasing and hiring based on an Internet platform. Worldwide it is renowned for excellence, transparency and efficiency. It serves companies, public organizations as well as individual citizens, and is by far the largest business-to-business site in the country, involving 850 purchasing organizations.

In 2012 users completed 2.1 million purchases with it, making it also a catalyst for Internet use throughout the country.

While many of the measures discussed above aim at combating corruption, the underlying philosophy is one of eliminating the opportunity for corruption by changing incentives, closing loopholes and eliminating misconceived rules that encourage corrupt behaviour. However, an approach focusing solely on changing the

rules and incentives, accompanied by appropriately harsh punishment for violation of the rules, will be far more effective – if supported by efforts to str the moral and ethical foundation of human behaviour.

Comments for: 10 Ways to Fight Corruption

Why do we always tackle

Submitted by Etienne Nkoa on Tue, 12/08/2015 - 11:00

Why do we always tackle corruption through its consequences? Corruption is simply a symptom showing that things somewhere are going in the wrong direction, and one of the conséquences of this is corruption.

To my view the issue is on the correct application of rules and regulations and the sanction against those who do not comply to these rules. If people firstly concentrate on the respect of rules and régulations that govern the entity (family, enterprise, government, Council, country) and systematically apply sanctions against those (whoever they could be regardless of their rank, grade or cast) who depart from thèse rules, corruption will disappear without any other additional remedy. We need to change the paradigm.

This is a very interesting

Submitted by [Joel Turkewitz](#) on Wed, 12/09/2015 - 12:53

This is a very interesting comment – the exact type of thought-provoking message that is appropriate for Anti-Corruption Day. Your comment drives home the importance of individual choices in enabling or resisting corruption. All successful corruption efforts ultimately change how individuals behave around rules and laws – and it is critical to hold on to that core and simple truth. The approaches that are listed in the blog primarily reflect the emphasis on changing behavior and the knowledge that applying sanctions for corrupt activities in a fair and systematic fashion is often a very difficult undertaking. In many places, corruption distorts every phase of the sanctioning process. The problem becomes even more complex when the rules themselves are seen to be the outcome of corrupt processes, and are seen to benefit a particular group. Perhaps the challenge is ensuring that in responding to a complex problem, we maintain our appreciation that the ultimate objectives are relatively simple – that people entrusted with public authority act in accordance with law and for the public good.

Yes you have spoken well,

Submitted by abdullahi mohammed on Thu, 03/31/2016 - 05:20

Yes you have spoken well, Because human beings are guided by LAW, so whosoever disobey the rule of law of his country, he will behave like animal. so we should please respect the rule of law.

Public funds have responsible

Submitted by Dr. Abubakar Muhammad Moki on Wed, 12/09/2015 - 23:43

Public funds have responsible officers whose function includes ensuring that public funds are protected from abuse and misuse. However, when abuse and misuse of public funds is detected nothing is done to those who were expected to guard against that. This is the mother of all loopholes in fighting corruption. To deal with the menace, such public officers should be given the first harsh sanctions in failing to perform their duties resulting into the abuse and misuse of public funds, otherwise without that, they are the key initiators of syndicate corruption and do it with impunity.

Corruption is a social evil.

Submitted by Samir Kumar Das on Thu, 12/10/2015 - 03:06

Corruption is a social evil. It germinates the good cause of the society and especially destroys the backbone of the society. We the member of IMAECSED vehemently opposing this social dragon. We are fighting since 1995 to make a clear and transparent country.

Stressing how much of a

Submitted by Demba - Community Engineering Programme on Sat, 12/12/2015 - 23:39

Stressing how much of a damage corruption does to the vast majority can help better addressing in across board. Better outreach and communication messages should draw on pertinent cultural and religious rhetoric.

The above 10 points are

Submitted by Kedar Khadka - GoGo Foundation from Nepal on Sun, 12/20/2015 - 01:06

The above 10 points are interesting. However, the points are very general and more inclined towards theoretic so translating into action is difficult.

Sometimes rules and

Submitted by tngbacang on Wed, 12/23/2015 - 18:19

Sometimes rules and regulations only be applied in the civilized countries only but they are hardly enforcing in the socialist and dictatorship's world because at these governments systems civilians are hardly participating in governments controls and orders. However, the rule of law and methods of combat with corruption in a socialist and dictatorship regimes only work when all the people in that regime pull the "plug" altogether.

Surely transparency and

Submitted by Helen Sutch on Wed, 02/03/2016 - 18:31

Surely transparency and accountability at all levels should form part of the response? If the citizenry and the media can't tell what's happening, how are they to target the sources of corruption? Rules and laws are an essential framework, but only if they work. Building strong, credible, transparent, accountable institutions that citizens can trust is surely crucial, and trust is the foundation of legitimacy.

Comments for Six Strategies to Fight Corruption

I agree. It is very important

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 05/19/2014 *I agree. It is very important for governments to ensure that "campaign contributions" are not used as a mechanism to gain access to politicians and to policymaking. To safeguard democracy and democratic institutions, governments have to ensure that money does not pervert the political process. Hence the importance of transparency and accountability.*

In India, most importantly,

Submitted by Kamlesh Kumar on Sat, 05/24/2014 *In India, most importantly, there is urgent need of judicial reforms and justice delivery system. A time bound disposal of the cases and disputes of all categories is the most important requirement. People die contesting cases, they are forced to offer bribes and spend their valuable time in pursuing the cases, causing great losses to economy.*

No amount of increase of salaries of public servant will encourage them to not indulging in corruption. They will do it if they can. Implementation of a citizen charter with accountability and time bound actions will limit corruption to some extent. Of course, use of IT will be of great help.

Limiting powers of the Government in terms of bribing voters through ill conceived social schemes such as MNREGA and unnecessary subsidies will also be of help in preventing mass bribing and improving Government fiscal conditions.

Reducing and rationalizing taxes, introduction of GST are other important measures to lower incidences of corruption.

I think in addition to this,

Submitted by Khwezi on Wed, 05/14/2014 *I think in addition to this, a country needs to develop a sense of moral character in citizens, starting with the family, and all other institutions in society. An upright moral character will even deter the hungry from stealing.*

I would suggest

Submitted by Jimmy on Wed, 05/20/2015 *I would suggest implementation of technology where all transactions are monitored closely, advanced ways to authorize transactions are implemented by 3 authorized people so all can be held accountable. The citizens should get a clear report of revenue available and expenditures and all money wired out of the country should be monitored. Better pay for civil service should be implemented. The element of fear should be instilled by implementing irreversible laws where if its proven beyond doubt that a public servant is corrupt, he can refund the money and exit public office or face execution.*

FURTHER READINGS.

LESSON ONE FURTHER READING:

Parts 3, 4 & 5 are further readings on the ways governments can be categorised, the various types of democracies, and the ways both of these have developed. Or have not developed.

They also outline the ways in which power is achieved – and how it can be checked and balanced out in *responsive democracies*. That is, those with key institutions which do this.

[PART 3: Learning by making comparisons \[htxt P6\]](#)

[PART 4: Why democracy – and which type? \[htxt P6\]](#)

[Part 5: How some governments can self-correct while others self-protect \[htxt P6\]](#)

Part 3: Learning by making comparisons

Categories of government

Any study of modern governments still uses the findings of research into exactly 158 city-states carried out 2,400 years 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 those 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 *ekklesia*, 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 study⁹³. Modern classifications of all governments usually divide governments into:

- 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

⁹³ Bryce, J (1921) *Modern Democracies*, Vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan).

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-communist⁹⁴ countries. These include Russia and much of Latin America. And although research has shown the higher the income, the more likely a country is to become a democracy, important exceptions point to other significant factors.⁹⁵ [htxtP8]

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.]

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2015/discarding-democracy-return-iron-fist>

Liberal democracies – responsive government for responsible citizens

‘Liberal democracies’ (*liber* simply means free) are ones where nearly all citizens are free to vote. This term ‘liberal democracy’ is now used widely to describe a **representative democracy** that also enjoys rights and freedoms. This is not true for all. (Note: some people distrust the word ‘liberal,’ taking it means permissive or weak. It is

⁹⁴ From Latin for ‘after’, *post* anything means what comes after it in time eg events, thought, developments.

⁹⁵ Lipset, S., (1959): ‘Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy.’ *American Political Science Review*.53: 75. Also: Lipset, S.M. and Lakin, J.M. (2004). A 2004 update of this relationship suggests that capitalist free-market economies many more and diverse centres of wealth and power. The authors suggest his reduces the economic control of the state. It also establishes the basis for opposition organizations. These then become the economic foundation for an active civil society. See Lipset, M. & Lakin, J. M. (2004) *The Democratic Century*. Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press. Chapter 5.

The relationship between wealth and democracy is not a causal one, however. It seems economic development is neither necessary nor sufficient for democratization. Many of the indicators involved reveal many important exceptions. Benin, Ghana, Costa Rica, Nepal, Hungary, and Turkey are poor countries which are democracies while India is such an exception it is regarded as a classic case. And wealthy countries such as Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait are autocracies with high per capita GDP.

Attempts to hold competitive elections in poor and divided nations do not always strengthen democracy – as well as in regions such as the Middle East which are dominated by autocracy. Benin and Togo, among many African societies, are examples of this during an earlier wave of institution building. And in the post 1960s era of decolonization, European-style parliaments soon collapsed as militaries usurped their powers.

used here to distinguish democracies that do not limit freedoms but still insist on responsibility.)

Representative democracies, then, are systems where there is a mix of expert skill and ordinary **people power**. This is because representatives are chosen on behalf of electors or tribespeople in their area (**electorate**). It is also because these leaders have shown they have the listening and speaking skills to represent many thousands of citizens who rely on these skills. These leaders are called **Members of Parliament (MPs)** or members of the House of Representatives (or **Congressmen/women** or **Senators**).

Election or selection – or both?

This choice is usually done through free, fair and regular elections. When restarting a democracy, however, these MPs may be selected from candidates chosen from tribes or nominated by a President's and his council. Around the world, a science has now been built up to make sure elections are run fairly. And, importantly for openness, are seen to be done fairly.

In a democracy, competition works by citizens joining or forming political **parties** (See Topic 7). These are formed to bring change and preserve values. They do this by deciding on proposals for action. These are called **policies**. Parties are usually a sign of a higher level of political involvement and development. The competing ideas and actions of the party system usually produce a better range of more suitable policies for citizens to choose from in elections.

However, too many parties can weaken focus. Therefore, sensible limits are now put on the formation of parties and on the votes, **threshold** needed for parties to enter parliament. These limits include the deposit of money needed to register a party and especially the percentage of voter support parties receive. This threshold is usually set around five percent to prevent extreme or small minority views being able to prevent progress in parliament.

Part 4: Why democracy – and which type?

Democracies promote both stability and progress

While 125 of the world's 196 countries had become democracies by 2015, a decade later many had declined or 'backslid' into autocracies. Democracies typically produce national parliaments of either one debating chamber or two, with the second designed to offer considered wisdom on the laws passed by the first.

The trend to democracy happened most dramatically in the last decades of last century. From 1975 to 2000 the number of democracies doubled to more than 80. Despite this increase, many still deny democracies are better for achieving stability and progress – especially for rapid economic progress.

In historically divided societies, however, democracy has been proven to bring stability. This is because opposing groups know they can achieve a share of power through elections.

Expert guardianship versus democracy

But decision-making using democracy is increasingly competing with the idea of **expert guardianship**. This decision-making by experts, it is argued, offers greater predictability and stability in the longer term.

This is because expert guardianship model has no popular elections. This means it does not have to delay difficult decisions before an election, as democracy usually does to give all parties in power better re-election chances.

Competitive autocracies can also avoid the uncertain outcome election results often create for potential investors. Many companies will not invest if they think a party in power is incompetent – or that a government change will create instability for nervous investors.

Despite some declines in democratic freedoms, law courts can still intervene

If democracy is the preferred choice of most countries, why has the last nine years seen an overall decline in democracy indicators in some influential countries? (See *Freedom House* report, 2015: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2015/discarding-democracy-return-iron-fist>)

It is true that since the 1970s and global trading there has been a quiet reduction in the authority of elected government within many Western countries. This has led to **independent judiciaries** having to step in to define or check their various roles.⁹⁶

‘Which democracy, when?’

It is also true that the influence of **guardian institutions**, such as central and transnational banks, has in some ways thinned democracy. This has led to a new balance between technical and political authority, and questions about loss of sovereignty to outsiders.⁹⁷

In many countries there is a trend for **public agencies** to gain greater freedom from elected rulers. Two examples of this are:

- 1) the privatisation of industry and
- 2) monetary policy transferred to central banks.

Therefore, when using the term ‘democracy’ we may have to avoid generalisations and instead ask: ‘which democracy, when?’

The rise of the unelected?

⁹⁶ Judiciaries are designed to do this in democracies but intrusions of transnational companies with profits bigger than some nation’s budgets are a concern, especially in a globalised economy.

⁹⁷ Brooks, T. (2008) ‘Is Plato’s Political Philosophy Anti-Democratic?’ in *Anti-Democratic Thought*, ed. E. Kofmel (Exeter: Imprint Academic) pp. 17-33.

This trend to a ‘democracy without choice’ or rise of the unelected⁹⁸ can mean the **elected rulers** of whole countries increasingly share authority with **unelected bodies**. These organisations may lie outside the country but have the power to restrict choices or impose influential policies. Elected governments usually put their voters first but sovereignty issues can be complex. International diplomacy thus becomes more important for just solutions.

Freedom and progress

The question for these countries becomes not just: ‘which democracy, when’, but also: ‘what should democracies decide?’ Both freedom and progress are also possible in low-income countries [htxtP11] – and achievable without force – as evidenced by growth rates in modern democracies.⁹⁹ Citizens often ‘vote with their feet’ – or in boats – as dramatic proof of the attraction of such systems.

Party politics: winning popular support by force of ideas

Within democracies, the organisations that can still achieve more in less time are political parties. As organised groups, they collectively decide to support a limited number of issues. When parties do this, they can draw on a range of ideas and focus voters’ minds on achievable goals.

Political parties devise **policies** to solve issues, to achieve some desired social change or to introduce new rules to live by. A number of key policies is called a policy **platform**.

Parties promote change by informing and persuading voters. They select informed **candidates** with public speaking skills, trustworthiness, and the ability to communicate complex ideas to ordinary people.

Election campaigns

An election **campaign** is a pre-set time period during which potential members of parliament try to persuade all citizens in their electorate (typically between 60 – 80, 000) to vote them into the national debating chamber as elected members of it.

There are different systems of voting, and different measures of ‘winning a seat.’ Most of these involve winning the highest number of most votes counted but there are other methods [see in glossary: **proportional representation – multi member proportional systems (MMP) versus First Past the Post ones (FPP), preferential Voting and Transferable Vote Systems.**]

Conflicts of interest and/or corruption

⁹⁸ Vibert, F. (2007) *The Rise of the Unelected: Democracy and the New Separation of Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

⁹⁹ <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/ Acrobat/Driving%20Democracy/Chapter%204.pdf>

In open systems of government, politicians are also expected to draw clear lines between public and private business interests. Any 'conflicts of interest' must be declared and/or resolved. Laws that deal with this make governments in office **accountable** to the people. And rely on public support. Such laws forbid any personal gain to be had from exploiting positions of power and **insider knowledge**.

Once this kind of **corruption** is accepted as the 'price of doing business', all are compromised and contaminated. Countries which lack this kind of costly corruption, pay their politicians sufficiently. And punish any breaking of the rules by public exposure, dismissal, shaming and, if necessary, jail time. Plus the seizing of **assets**.

This generally ensures a virtuous circle of greater trust leading to more outside investment at cheaper costs, which in turn leads to no 'hidden costs' passed on to customers, citizens or investors. For low-corruption, transparent nations this becomes a selling point – and point of pride.

Part 5 How some governments can self-correct – while others self-protect

Constitutions, new media, and public opinion

In democracies, independent **news media** – radio, TV, newspapers, online news services – play a vital part. Journalists, trained to be unbiased and dispassionate, report on party conferences, public meetings and political rallies. They then summarise the goals or **policy platforms**, the political promises, methods and costings for the general public.

Experienced journalists also offer political and value categories which allow citizens to make judgements about the best policies and candidates.

By reporting on policies in ways electors can understand, news media make possible an '**enlightened understanding**'¹⁰⁰ of key **issues** before and during **election campaigns**. The news media and education are therefore important in avoiding a '**tyranny of the majority**.' This is where majority ignorance can rule. It is always possible if voters are uninformed, prejudiced or disengaged. In Aristotle's time it was surely not the poverty of 'the self-interested poor' that were the problem for democracy, but the not being able to afford education to allow for clear thinking and knowledge of its responsibilities.

Role of a constitution

In democracy, freedoms are guaranteed by limiting the power of government. This is done by a constitution. This is a set of written principles, values, rights and aims which is preserved by independent judges from executive dissolution – or self-interested rewriting. These judges are constantly called on to interpret the constitution and all codified 'rule of law' in the light of modern events, inventions and controversial experience.

These wise men – the **judiciary** – are educated in the country's law and its applications. They are expected to remain apart from all political parties so as to guarantee individual

¹⁰⁰ Dahl, R. (1970) *After the Revolution? Authority in a Good Society* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press).

rights. In a democracy these rights guarantee basic freedoms including: freedom of assembly, of religion and of speech, and the right to private property

Constitutions as ‘guardians of the guardians,’ within a system of political competition

With the guarantee of these rights, many different views can be freely exchanged. Ideas opposed to the government can also be freely expressed. Such a system encourages the understanding and tolerance of differences. And it relies on the democratic art of ‘agreeing to disagree.’

In this way, a tightly worded Constitution provides a framework for political competition. It is also a shield for defending citizens against possible government excess.

Competitive Authoritarian Regimes

After the collapse of communist and military dictatorships in the 1990s, 33 of these regimes had come to power by 1995.¹⁰¹ In this system of government, constitutions are not protected by a strong judiciary. Also, governments do not create conditions for free expression.

In these regimes, election counts are usually not interfered with. But results are controlled in other ways. To keep potential opponents weak, rulers interfere with the media, with the market, and with the rule of law.

To prevent a level playing field, or equal opportunity or individual rights, rulers such as Russia’s Vladimir Putin dominate media access and abuse state resources by rewarding friends and punishing enemies. Varying degrees of harassment or violence have been used, as reported later by Freedom House. (<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2015/discarding-democracy-return-iron-fist>)

Authoritarian regimes

Authoritarian regimes are neither liberal nor democratic. Their citizens lack effective and regular means of controlling their rulers. In military regimes, elections may not take place at all. Or, if they do, they present choices which are in reality no choice at all – or are greatly restricted. An extreme example is: ‘vote for us or go to jail.’

However, whole sections of the population may be excluded from voting in more subtle ways. For instance, women are excluded in several kingdoms in the region that is still referred to in relation to Europe: the Middle East.

Biased news media: self-censorship, agents of propaganda, puppets

In these regimes, rulers are not accountable to the people and are effectively ‘above the law.’ All political participation is discouraged and/or manipulated.

News media in authoritarian regimes are controlled. Or will often censor themselves out of fear of losing government-declared ‘licences.’ Or they may self-censor in the hope they retain some access to information provided selectively by officials. In which case they often

¹⁰¹ Levitsky, S., Way, L. (2010) *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

become propaganda agents for government in a 'if-you're-not-with-us-you're-against-us' political environment in which loyalty not truth-saying becomes the highest virtue.

Authoritarian regimes achieve their 'stability' through alliances or deals

A limiting factor on authoritarian rulers' power is the need for alliances or deals. Such alliances – with power-holders such as landowners, 'captains of industry,' military and religious leaders – allow these governments to achieve stability at all costs.

This usually means keeping tight control over citizens and the denial of some human rights. Examples of such regimes are: North Korea, and Iran after the Islamic Revolution.

LESSON 7 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, see below.

[PART IV: Ways of making parties more responsive and representative](#)

[PART V: Learning from past and present systems](#)

PART IV Making parties more representative and responsive

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.¹⁰² 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 '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

¹⁰² 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.

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.¹⁰³ 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.

¹⁰³ 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).

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.¹⁰⁴ 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 figures¹⁰⁵]

¹⁰⁴ Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

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

¹⁰⁵ http://www.idea.int/publications/direct_democracy/index.cfm

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.¹⁰⁶ In an open

¹⁰⁶ 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

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.¹⁰⁷ 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 previous poor treatment and lack of effective representation often makes them intent on subverting it.

PART V: Learning from past and present systems

Types of parties

Three types of parties evolved: **Cadre** or **elite** or **caucus parties**.¹⁰⁸ 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.¹⁰⁹ 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.

a variety of reasons, some in response to 'pushes' away from the pastoral economy, others to the 'pulls' of urban or agricultural life.

¹⁰⁷ 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.
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/arw.2006.0062> (About [Digital Object Identifier - DOI](#)), Published online: 23 May 2014)

¹⁰⁸ A 'caucus' is the word for the closed meeting of a party's members of parliament.

¹⁰⁹ Electorates were later regions divided into equal numbers of voters. Typically 60 – 100, 000.

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).¹¹⁰

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.¹¹¹ 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 learn how to improve these systems by first categorising them, and then examining the reasons for their success or decline

In democracies party systems can be 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.

¹¹⁰ 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 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press) pp. 177-200]. The purpose of so-called catch-all parties, therefore, is to govern rather than represent.

¹¹¹ 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.

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.¹¹² 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

¹¹² 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.

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 FFTP 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 become 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 reinstated – 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-based parties.

LESSON 8 FURTHER READING:

Part IV is further reading on the meaning of mandates won by governments at elections. Also included are some of the other checks and balances available to citizens in democracies – as well as a chart on the different electoral systems used worldwide.

To keep the lessons user-friendly, it is available here as a hypertext.

[PART IV: Elections in responsive democracies](#)

PART IV: ELECTIONS IN RESPONSIVE DEMOCRACIES

Elections give mandates to governments – and send messages to them

The message of a campaign (victory or defeat) is constructed after the result. This means there is always an emphasis on the positive attributes or policies of the winning party or parties. Also, on the lessons to be learned from defeats.

Positive interpretations about elections are presented in terms of a **mandate**. This is the word used for the power given to elected officials to carry out the policies they were elected on. It is often also used to sum up the collective judgement delivered up by an election. However, political scientists note many of the claims often made in the name of an election mandate are exaggerated.

Meaning of elections: false logic when interpreting results

In practice, the full meaning of elections is open to interpretations. Often mandates claimed by a victorious party are often broader than policies promised pre-election.

The logic of treating voters as accomplices backing wide-ranging actions is therefore:

- (i) Proposal X was part of our policy platform;
- (ii) You voted us in; therefore
- (iii) We have a mandate to carry out X.

However, just because a candidate belonging to a certain party wins does not necessarily mean s/he won because of everything that party stands for. The false logic here is:

- (i) Y is a conservative;

- (ii) Y wins; therefore
- (iii) Y must have won because he was conservative.

Other elections: referendums, initiatives, and recalls

Along with election of public officials, democracy has three other elections: **referendums, initiatives** and **recalls**. These finer (or at least additional) instruments, available in more responsive democracies, act as checks on power or guidance for it.

These types of election act more like a direct democracy than a representative one.

Referendums

Referendums are growing in frequency. They are usually employed for constitutional, policy and moral issues and may be mandatory or optional. That is, they may be binding on government or consultative. If they are consultative they are the like opinion voting.

Referendums give to those in authority an indication of the way people think though governments are not legally bound to act on them. In this way, referendums can educate both the government and voters, a key function in any democracy.

A **plebiscite** is the name given to a ballot to consult public opinion in a non-binding way. Though not binding, plebiscites can be useful to give an indication to leaders about public opinion. (Note: small group **random sampling** applied to the whole population is much cheaper, quicker and accurate to a known 'statistical error.')

Referendums permit the public to make direct decisions about policy. They have a safety-valve or blockage-clearing function, especially in coalition governments when certain decisions are difficult – or beyond the usual compromises.

Disadvantages of referendums

The disadvantages of referendums are:

- they can be easily manipulated (the question may have more complexity than the wording of a single question can contain)
- they be used too often, resulting in low turnouts and therefore dubious mandates
- there is no way to ensure consistency
- it is not always clear if the result of them should be considered decisive

- government can choose issues of more benefit to them
- their results can be ignored
- wealthy companies can wage advertising campaigns on issues in which they stand to gain
- zealous minorities can seek reform in which others are not interested

Initiatives

Initiatives are votes on a policy called by the people. The initiative proposes an issue for a nation-wide vote and its organizers have to collect a certain number of signatures from the public. The government is then obliged to organise a vote.

For example, in Switzerland 100, 000 electors can propose a new law at canton (gobol/region) level, or an amendment to the constitution at federal level.

Referendum initiatives are a legal opportunity in 37 countries, mostly in Europe or Latin America.

Agenda initiatives

Agenda initiatives also require a certain number of signatures but are petitions to the legislature requiring them to discuss a particular topic. These have been found to be useful for minorities wanting to take their concerns to lawmakers to discuss.

After WWI this mechanism was introduced to several countries' constitutions. Examples are Austria and Spain. Since 1989 other states such as Poland and Thailand have also introduced it (IDEA, 2008).¹¹³ In Britain at least 100, 000 signatures are required – as long as at least one member of parliament will speak in support of it.

Recalls

Recalls are a form of no-confidence vote that removes an elected official during his/her normal tenure. Initiated by a petition signed by a minimum proportion of votes cast for that office (typically about 25 percent), the recall is a political device unlike the legal **impeachment**.

¹¹³ IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) (2008) *Direct Democracy*, <http://www.idea.int>, accessed 17 April, 2009.

A recall seeks to remove corrupt or incompetent officials before their time is up, for the common good. Available in Venezuela for all officials, even the president, it requires the initiative of 20 percent of the relevant election.¹¹⁴

Different electoral systems

PLURALITY AND MAJORITY SYSTEMS

Single-member plurality: first-past-the-post system

Procedure The candidate securing most votes (not necessarily a majority) is elected on the first and only ballot within each single-member district

Examples Bangladesh, Canada, India, UK, USA.

Two round system

Procedure If no candidate wins a majority on the first ballot, the leading candidates (usually the top two) face a second, run-off election.

Examples Iran, Mali, Vietnam.

Absolute majority: alternative vote (AV) or preferential voting system

Procedure Voters rank candidates. If no candidate wins a majority of first preferences, the bottom candidate is eliminated and his or her votes are redistributed by second preferences.

This process continues until a candidate has a majority of votes.

Examples Australia, Papua New Guinea.

PROPORTIONAL SYSTEMS

List system

Procedure Votes are cast for a party's list of candidates, though in some countries the elector can also express support for individual candidates on the list.

Examples Brazil, Czech Republic, Israel, Netherlands.

Single transferable vote (STV) system

¹¹⁴ If the security and integrity of internet voting could be guaranteed, both the initiative and the recall could be used more frequently in the future for those wanting more responsive, direct democracies.

Procedure Voters rank candidates in order of preference. Any successful candidate needs a set number of votes – the quota.

All candidates who exceed this quota on first preferences are elected. Their surplus votes are then distributed according to second preferences. When no candidate has reached this quota, the bottom candidate is eliminated and these votes are transferred up the list.

This process continues until the quotas are reached and all seats are filled.

Examples Ireland, Malta.

Mixed member proportional (MMP)

Procedure Electors usually have two votes. One is for the district election (which typically uses the plurality method), and the other is for a PR contest (usually for a party list). The two tiers are linked so as to deliver a proportional outcome overall. The 'party vote' determines the number of seats to be won by each party. Elected candidates are drawn, first, from the party's winners in the district contests, topped up as required for proportionality by candidates from the party list.

Examples Germany, New Zealand.

PARALLEL SYSTEM

Mixed member majoritarian (MMM)

Procedure As for MMP, except that the two tiers are separate, with no mechanism to achieve a proportional result overall.

Examples Japan, Thailand.

LESSON 9 FURTHER READING:

Parts IV and V are readings on the impacts of technology changes on the media and democratic practices. To keep lessons user-friendly they are here as hypertexts.

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

PART IV: In politics the internet is a game changer too

As Hague and Harrop say in their classic text comparing political systems “in the global village the world has been compressed into a television screen.”¹¹⁵ This is no comfort for isolated citizens whose job or life is necessarily nomadic, or for those not linked by mobile phone tower or satellite.

Yet in the space of one century the speed of news transmission has gone from weeks to days to split seconds. This makes it harder for governments to block information though electronic walls can still be erected.¹¹⁶

Hearing each other talk

Successful political life, especially policy formation, relies on discussion with up-to-date information and research. Political meetings, even of highly engaged voters, often deny attendees the opportunity to put their concerns, to hear each other talk.

Radio phone-ins, however, can allow discussion without mediation by politicians. Internet blogs have the same function in electronic space. Also modern social media and message systems allow groups – as well as millions of people who may be linked up – to talk about issues among themselves.

Rapid responses now possible

One consequence of these new forms of media, or online platforms, is that peer-to-peer communication does make possible speedy consensus of opinion. And speedy organisation of political action.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Hague R, Harrop M. (2013). *Comparative government and politics: An introduction*. 9th edn, Basingstoke: Macmillan. [1st ed:1982; now in 12th edition, 2022: McCormick J, Hague R, & Harrop M]. Arguably it has been compressed even further since: into phone screens.

¹¹⁶ China is the prime example of a government that effectively blocks its search engines and shuts down social media sites that share or promote ‘anti-government propaganda’. Cite XYX

¹¹⁷ Follow-up may be less successful because such ‘horizontal organisation’ makes sustained leadership less effective than flexible hierarchies. And while governments can no longer easily censor information many still can and do control free speech that criticises policy or its view of the past.

The explosion of internet users in the Middle East and North Africa in the first decade of this century had explosive political effects.¹¹⁸ Egypt and Tunisia are case-studies of how online communication enabled mass citizen mobilisations by rapidly spreading news about protest venues.

A new kind of public sphere enables a more active citizenry

It is impossible to understand the dramatic overthrows of government in Tunisia and Egypt without examining the role of social media.¹¹⁹ When people can express dissent online, as well as swap ideas about how to solve their mutual problems and better their lives, a democratic space is possible even in repressive dictatorships.

The freedom space or forum created by these new media tools defies the censorship technology by authoritarian regimes of the past. During the 70 years of communism in Eastern Europe a police state was sustained by suppression of broadcast information, paid informers and the consequent climate of fear.

Social media enables a new politics

One of the transformative changes brought about by social media is its effect on communication from politicians to voters.

Interactive media that allow peer-to-peer or ordinary citizens' horizontal communication is weakening typical top-down forms of communication in many authoritarian regimes.

Exchanges of ideas and ways of tackling social problems made possible by interactive media have given rise to a new kind of public sphere or space. These are challenging top-down only systems, wherever they are.

Changes in higher income countries have lessons too

In high-income states the four major trends in political communication are:

- commercialisation
- fragmentation
- globalisation
- interaction.

¹¹⁸ During the 'Arab Spring' Iran's *Blogistan* was an example of how alienated urban youth found a way not only to express their frustrations and anger but also to channel it into political action. (Srebeny and Khiabany, 2010)

¹¹⁹ 'The word on the tweet proved harder to censor than the word on the street.' (Hague and Harrop, 2013)

Commercialisation, while providing a basis for useful competition, can also shrink the public space in which political issues are discussed.

Different media, different politics: softer news, harder sell

Media which made shared country-wide experiences possible have given way to global and 'on-demand' media. And the latter have contributed to the decline of traditional ways of participating in formal politics.

Increased commercialisation and greater choice have meant less formal opportunities to participate in political debate. Public media previously catered for an informed citizenry who consequently turned out in high numbers. Now less time is devoted to serious politics and more to soft news.¹²⁰

Because all media content can be accessed on demand through a range of media, there is much less reliance on traditional media and their set programming.

Television networks in Europe and the US have had audience drops of around 25 to 30 percent while newspapers have declined by around 15 percent.

Profit ... plus an informed, high-turnout public?

Profit-seeking media, therefore, have little incentive to supply the traditional public goods of an informed citizenry plus high electoral turnout. At least there is no necessary incentive to offer opportunities for collective debate.

The argument put by these media owners is serious news and specialist political programmes can still be aimed at 'political junkies' but commercial broadcasting caters for the majority.

Where responsibilities to shareholders dominate, the argument is that providing soft news – 'news you can use' – reaches a mass audience which needs a more stimulating and popular approach.

Greater choice = less income for providers = less quality?

In higher income countries, as well as others with access to technology, the political market is fragmented. If there is distribution by cable, satellite, the Internet and mobile devices, citizens can now receive a greater range of content: national, local and international.

Revenues are fragmenting also. Since the last decades of last century newspapers have closed as circulations dropped by up to twenty percent – or gave way to usually less political, free newspapers.

¹²⁰ McChesney, R. (1999) *Rich Media, Poor Democracies* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press).

Television revenues too dropped – by a third or more. Advertising revenues therefore have had to be shared with more channels, including online provision.

From a party logic to a media logic

These changes in user preferences and habits have meant politicians are increasingly using higher-rated talk shows to try to appeal to more citizens. They also use Facebook and Twitter to invite feedback, promote ideas, and give themselves a greater profile.

The media industry has moved from public service to private profit. Significantly for politicians keen to gather support for their policies, the balance of power between parties and media has changed from a 'party logic' to a 'media logic'.¹²¹

Changes in technology have made it easier to organise secret opposition to oppressive regimes. Although these same changes have enabled countries to suppress information, committed individuals with internet access can still alert the world to political abuses. Also to good ideas.

New vocabulary: whistle-blowers, echo-chambers, electronic ghettos

Iran and Saudi Arabia have been exposed, by both amateur and professional journalists, but countries can still suppress information and discredit whistle-blowers.

Reaching mass audiences is more difficult in today's user-driven Internet world. Groups who can support each other in all sorts of political and extremist views are encouraged in 'the echo chamber' effect of the internet.

[These electronic ghettos operate where Facebook users gather their news selectively](#),^[htxt7&FR4] limiting exposure to information that goes against their way of thought. This creates networks of like-minded people in communities of interest who spread common sources all come to regard as truth.

This fosters confirmation bias as members of these social media networks "surround themselves with information that confirms their preconceptions on a subject."¹²²

Researchers suggest that to break an echo chamber, politicians should project to larger audiences.

Close connection between development of states and the media

¹²¹ Mazzoleni, G (1987) 'Media Logic and Party Logic in Campaign Coverage: The Italian General Election of 1983', *European Journal of Communication* (2) 81-103.

¹²² <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3386052/Facebook-really-DOES-make-narrow-minded-Researchers-warn-echo-chamber-effect.html>

An understanding of the close connection between mass media and the state requires an understanding of the history of how the press and broadcasting emerged.

Broadcasting, whether radio or television, was central to the communications revolution of the 20th century. Use of radio in technological countries (1920s), and then television (1950s), changed mass media completely.

Before these the main means of gathering and gaining information about political matters were daily newspapers (later 1800s but earlier in many countries) and then news reels¹²³ in cinemas (1911 to 1967).

From radio balconies and TV firesides

After 1920 in industrialised countries the spread of political information and ideas could be heard not only by crowds below balconies, but also by whole nations at home.

After both world wars European societies still largely divided by class and religion 'could gather as one man'¹²⁴ around the new media.

The art of oral communication became important again. Political speech-making now involved talking to unseen millions. But in a new way. Rather than dramatically to a live and visible audience gathered in one place, leaders now needed to talk to citizens as though they were individuals.¹²⁵

Different models of the role and responsibilities of media

Not all governments share the same ideas about the role of the media. These different ideas are called the structure of the media. Using examples from the 'old world,' scholars have categorised three different structures or models: 1) the Anglo-American 2) the northern European and 3) the southern European.

The watchdog journalist in the Anglo-American structure is regarded to be in permanent opposition to the governing parties in power on behalf of the people. The role of journalists is as news gathering professionals who considers their primary duty as truth-teller for the public good.

Each significant social group has its own media

¹²³ A **newsreel** is a form of short documentary film prevalent in the first half of the twentieth century and ending in 1967, regularly released in a public presentation place and containing filmed news stories and items of topical interest.

¹²⁴ Reith, J. (1949) *Into the Wind* (London: Hodder & Stoughton).

¹²⁵ President Roosevelt was said to personify this new approach. His radio fireside chats in 19302 won his country's trust by talking 'not so much to the citizens but as a citizen.' (Hague & Harrop, 2013 p. 113)

The second model or tradition is the northern European structure (in Scandinavia, Belgium, Germany and Holland) where the media and political worlds are not so separate. Newspapers and even television represent particular groups such as trade unions, religions, and political parties.

The role of the journalist here is less adversarial, and their role includes being more sensitive to political stability, their newspaper's outlook and the social group it serves.

In the southern European structure or model (Greece, Portugal, Spain), public broadcasting, newspapers and non-government television is subject to party political influence. Journalists in a subdued media traditionally see themselves providing ideologically loaded commentary rather than hard news.

Variations of these models are also present in African states – and operate within varying degrees of freedom. And degrees of restrictions.

PART V: More choice, less profit, less analysis?

Following politics shapes participation

The media is the structure within which many people live their lives. Just following politics in the media is itself a form of political behaviour.

As the media are now most people's point of access to politics, all political encounters people have via the media also shape their later bodily participation in politics.¹²⁶ If they participate at all.

However, even watching movie dramas about political events can be as much a form of political participation as helping in an election campaign, or donating to an interest group.

'Narrowcasting' realities demand tailored techniques

With the shift to **narrowcasting**, the mass media have become user-driven and overall exposure to politics has fallen. Consequently electorates, and young people in particular, have become harder to reach.

¹²⁶ Peoples' encounters with the media provide 'mental maps of the political world outside our direct experience ... (providing) a reservoir of images and voices, heroes and villains, sayings and slogans, facts and ideas that we draw on in making sense of politics.' Jones, J. (2005) *Entertaining Politics: New Political Television and Civic Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield).

So to bridge the gaps caused by this media fragmentation new techniques have been developed. Personalised direct mail, email, social networks and telephone campaigning are now all part of modern elections.¹²⁷

‘Comment-rich, fact-poor, analysis-thin’

As readership of newspapers decline there is a rise in low-cost media, with amateur **bloggers** posting entries or **blogs** that are ‘comment-rich, fact-poor and analysis-thin’. Many of these are simply reacting to stories created elsewhere and lack informed analysis. Or they lack the kind of editing process that demands writer accountability and accuracy.

Consequently, there have been calls for professional news gathering and interpretation to be seen as a public good to bolster access to quality analysis. As such, it would require professional conditions guaranteeing independence and educated critique.

Impact or effects of the media

Any analysis of the impacts of the media needs to examine the ways it influences citizens and potential voters. These four mechanisms are:

- **reinforcement**
- **agenda-setting**
- **framing**
- **priming**

Knowledge of how these mechanisms operate can help citizens and politicians go beyond blanket generalisations about media impacts to make finer judgements about its role in political life.

Impacts of the media: reinforcement

The **reinforcement model** of media effects says the media strengthens already existing opinions.

¹²⁷ The US Democratic party used these methods in the 2008 and 2012 elections in successful attempts to attract donations and volunteers. And raise awareness. Kreiss, D. (2012) *Taking Our Country Back: The Crafting of Net worked Politics from Howard Dean to Barack Obama* (New York: Oxford University Press). McChesney, McChesney, R & Nichols, J (2013) *Dollarocracy* (Nation) describes corrupting influence of insufficiently regulated lobby money on US’s dysfunctional democracy.

Surveys that reveal stable party loyalties within families, and even extended families, can be explained by the fact voters are reinforced in their views by their choice of news media. And tend to exclude any contrary views.

Loyalties learned through family upbringing or **socialisation** act as a filter: voters see and remember what they want to. In countries with **partisan newspapers**, citizens mostly chose those agreeing with them, reflecting reader self-selection. For example, people who already are racist tend to use racist media or websites.

These media then tend to 'preach to the converted' by angling their stories to such readers or viewers.

Self-selection makes reinforcement easier but limits conversion

Other terms useful to make sense of studies which shows this are: **selective interpretation**: interpreting new information to make it fit prior opinions such as racial superiority); and **selective recall**: forgetting information that runs counter to existing beliefs.

Except for the few who wish to know or anticipate the opposing views of other parties, web-users will still search for, and be reinforced by, opinions they already sympathise with.

Information silos are not the typical experience

However, scholars say the reinforcement model is now not the full story. Today typical voters are seldom dominated by one political outlook. This is because:

- party loyalties in established democracies have weakened
- the press has declined in influence (in some areas it never existed)
- TV news is on the whole more neutral than other **partisan media**

Other ways of looking at the effects of the media are now needed to explain how people are influenced by advances in media technology.

Impacts of the media: agenda-setting

From the 1970s onwards television began to have a greater impact on how citizens' opinions were formed.

Surveys reported minor candidates were often left out of 'exposure.' And **agenda-setting** by television programmers became more important: not only for what was included but also for what was not covered.

News broadcasts became on average 30 minutes so editors set the agenda. The prioritising of the stories chosen was also significant. The world-view projected onto screens invariably focused on the exceptional, the fresh, and what could be simplified.

Creating opinions or circulating them?

The agenda-setting impact helps voters and politicians become aware of bias by exclusion. It also helps explain the powerful impact of editors as gate-keepers to a powerful projected reality.

For example, in cultures where corruption is just regarded as the cost of doing business, stories about its practices could be edited out. Or integrity stories could be neglected by **shock-jock comperes** or media catering for the sensational ('if it bleeds it leads').

Such distortions can be checked by editors and programmers with experienced **news sense** – plus an awareness of their role to balance as well as reflect.

As the electronic era advanced into the 1990s, any agenda control has become more difficult. An explosion of available channels has meant news consumers can shape their own agendas through some media outlet somewhere. They can search for like-minded political views, for specialist ones or find contrary ones if open-minded.

Impacts of the media: framing

As knowledge has grown about how agenda-setting can become **agenda-bending** – how it can affect voters world-view – so too has the knowledge of how stories can be framed. This **framing**, or arrangement of the images and words of the story, helps not just in the interpretation of a story, but can also encourage a particular reaction to it by viewers.

Immigrants, for example, can be presented as a threat to the unity of a society or as a much-needed help to the economy of societies with below-replacement birth-rates.¹²⁸

The shorter the news report the more the **narrative** of a reported story must rely on **consensus frames** or what is already known. This often limits the ability to include a story's full complexity.

Awareness of media impacts improves political judgements

Any awareness of these impacts of the media, therefore, can help viewers and listeners judge the truth of stories and political actions. Also it can help to know what further questions to ask. Do I believe this story, does it affect me, should I – and can I – take any action about it?

Major impacts of news media are in the form of:

- the way citizens select and exclude stories
- the way stories are presented
- their placement among other news items
- their framing by reporters and editors.

Awareness of these influences helps explain how media can still polarise or neutralise opinion. It also helps citizens avoid being manipulated by biased media – and prevents the blaming of media ('shooting the messenger') for doing its job in exposing the misuse of political powers.

History shows us scapegoating the messengers is a common reaction to the sting of a true message. It is also an ancient human tendency.

Impacts of the media: priming

An important impact of news media that is often not obvious is its **priming** effect. Media coverage can have this indirect cueing effect on how viewers or listeners judge or act later on.

For example, positively, the more television focuses on the effects of corruption the more likely voters will be primed to judge parties on their policies to do with this problem.

Negatively, coverage of racist attacks can prompt later 'copycat' attacks, if the opportunity arises.

As an extreme example, in Rwanda in 1994 the influence of radio in priming hatred for the Tutsis (by smearing them as 'cockroaches' to be eliminated in revenge for

past power abuses) was a prime trigger in the killing of 800, 000 in the 100-day genocide.¹²⁹

Knowledge of priming effects prevents wrong judgments

Neither primers nor triggers are causes. However, knowledge of the impacts of mass media on a collective **mind-set** does help in countering its effects. It also helps to prevent blaming media for behaviour which has complex causes or whose roots lie elsewhere.

Knowledge of how content and tone of media coverage can impinge on an audience can prevent simplistic analysis seeking single causation.

New funding models for a new democratic age

Various funding models are being tried around the world to try to restore independent journalism to its role as the fourth estate checking the other three.

Given the importance of political communication to democracy, many analysts argue this public good may need to be at least partially public funded.

Accordingly initiatives are being considered –some have already been introduced – in democracies that value a free flow of information.

¹²⁹ Led by popular comperes or DJs , such radio propaganda demeaned Tutsis as cockroaches who wanted to eliminate all Hutus in payback for past or perceived injustices. By being repeated so often, these messages wound Hutus up. They also broke down inhibitions and dulled consciences enough to trigger killing sprees when authority figures later gave the word. For a fuller analysis of further triggers and complex causes: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3257748.stm>; http://www.rwandanstories.org/genocide/hate_radio.html; http://www.rwandanstories.org/origins/hutu_and_tutsi.html.

"As a rule, the populations of African states are multi-tribal (Congo is inhabited by 300 tribes, Nigeria by 250), whereas only one group inhabits Rwanda, the Banyarwanda, making up a single nation divided effectively into three castes: the Tutsi cattle owners (14 percent of the population), the Hutu farmers (85 percent), and the Twa labourers and servants (1 percent).

LESSON 10 FURTHER READING:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/this-is-the-essay-on-corruption-that-david-ferguson-didnt-want-you-to-read-a7026496.html>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-declaration-against-corruption/global-declaration-against-corruption#corruption-should-be-exposed---ensuring-there-is-nowhere-to-hide>

Back Book Cover with 2 bios of authors and blurb

About the Book

Rebuilding Somalia One Institution at a Time examines the essential steps Somalia must take to strengthen governmental systems and to educate both civil service workers and citizens.

Written by specialists *Mohamed Ibrahim and Steve Liddle*, this book offers lessons on governance reform, institution building, and accountability. These lessons provide a practical roadmap toward a stable, just, and prosperous Somalia.

Drawing on international governance practices and grounded local experience, the authors present time-tested strategies for rebuilding Somalia through the establishment of effective, homegrown institutions. The focus is *institutional strength, public education, and sustainable reform rather than short-term political fixes*.

About the Authors



Mohamed Ibrahim is a former Somali Minister of Telecommunications and a researcher at Swinburne University. He is a business specialist known for his leadership in modernising Somalia's telecommunications sector.



Steve Liddle is a researcher in governance and public policy based in New Zealand. He is known for his expertise in *democratic development and civic education*.

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