

POLS 103 A

Comparative Politics

Class 20:

Political parties and interest groups

Recap

- Executives:
 - Heads of state and government
 - Executive structures
 - Executive functions and powers
 - Executives in Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom
- Coalitions and coalition-building:
 - Minimum winning and grand coalitions
 - Winner-take-all vs. consociationalism

Part V of the course

- Political parties
- Interest groups
- Contentious politics

Plan for today

- Political parties:
 - Types of parties
 - Party systems
- Interest groups

Why do political parties
and interest groups matter?

Why political parties and interest groups matter

- Interest articulation
- Interest aggregation

Why political parties and interest groups matter

- Interest articulation:
 - *Expression of political demands, needs, and wants*
- Interest aggregation

Why political parties and interest groups matter

- Interest articulation:
 - *Expression of political demands, needs, and wants*
- Interest aggregation:
 - *Combination of political demands, needs, and wants into policy programs*

What is a political party?

Political party

- *A political organization that seeks to influence policy primarily by getting candidates and members elected or appointed to public office*

What kinds of parties are there?

Types of parties

- Elite
- Mass
- Catch-all

Types of parties

- Elite:
 - *Membership restricted to a small number of political elites*
- Mass
- Catch-all

Types of parties

- Elite:
 - *Membership restricted to a small number of political elites*
- Mass:
 - *Membership comprised of large numbers of citizens*
- Catch-all

Types of parties

- Elite:
 - *Membership restricted to a small number of political elites*
- Mass:
 - *Membership comprised of large numbers of citizens*
- Catch-all:
 - *Ideological flexibility intended to attract broad-based support*

Which type of party is this?

- South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) has no strong ideological orientation. It includes both business and labor leaders and has a longstanding alliance with the South African Communist Party. ANC has 769,000 members.



- The United Kingdom's Labour Party is a center-left alliance of social democrats, democratic socialists, and trade unionists. It has 519,000 members.



- The United Kingdom's Conservative and Unionist Party is a center-right, ideologically conservative party. It has 191,000 members.



What is a party system?

Party system

- *Patterns of party politics characterized by the number of relevant parties in a country*

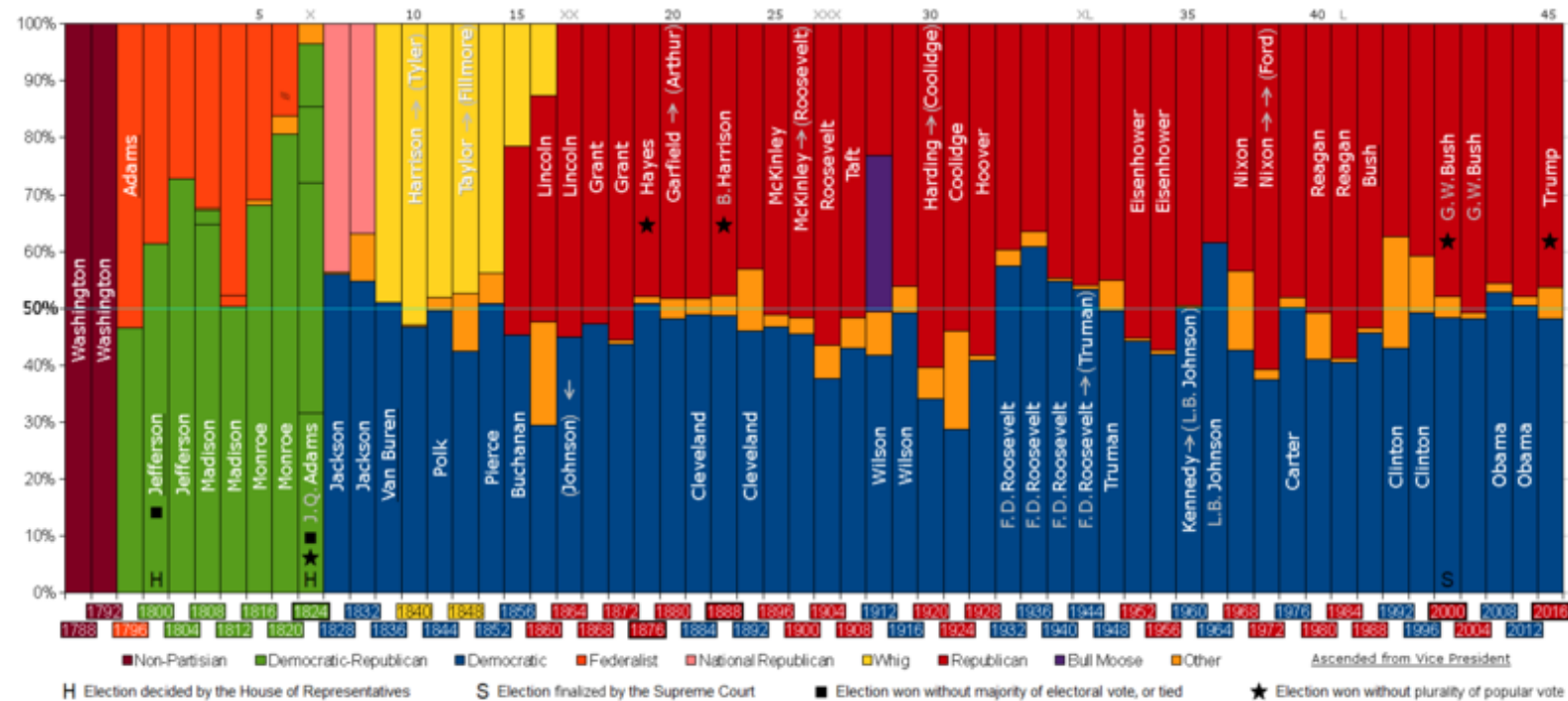
What kinds of party systems
are there?

Party systems

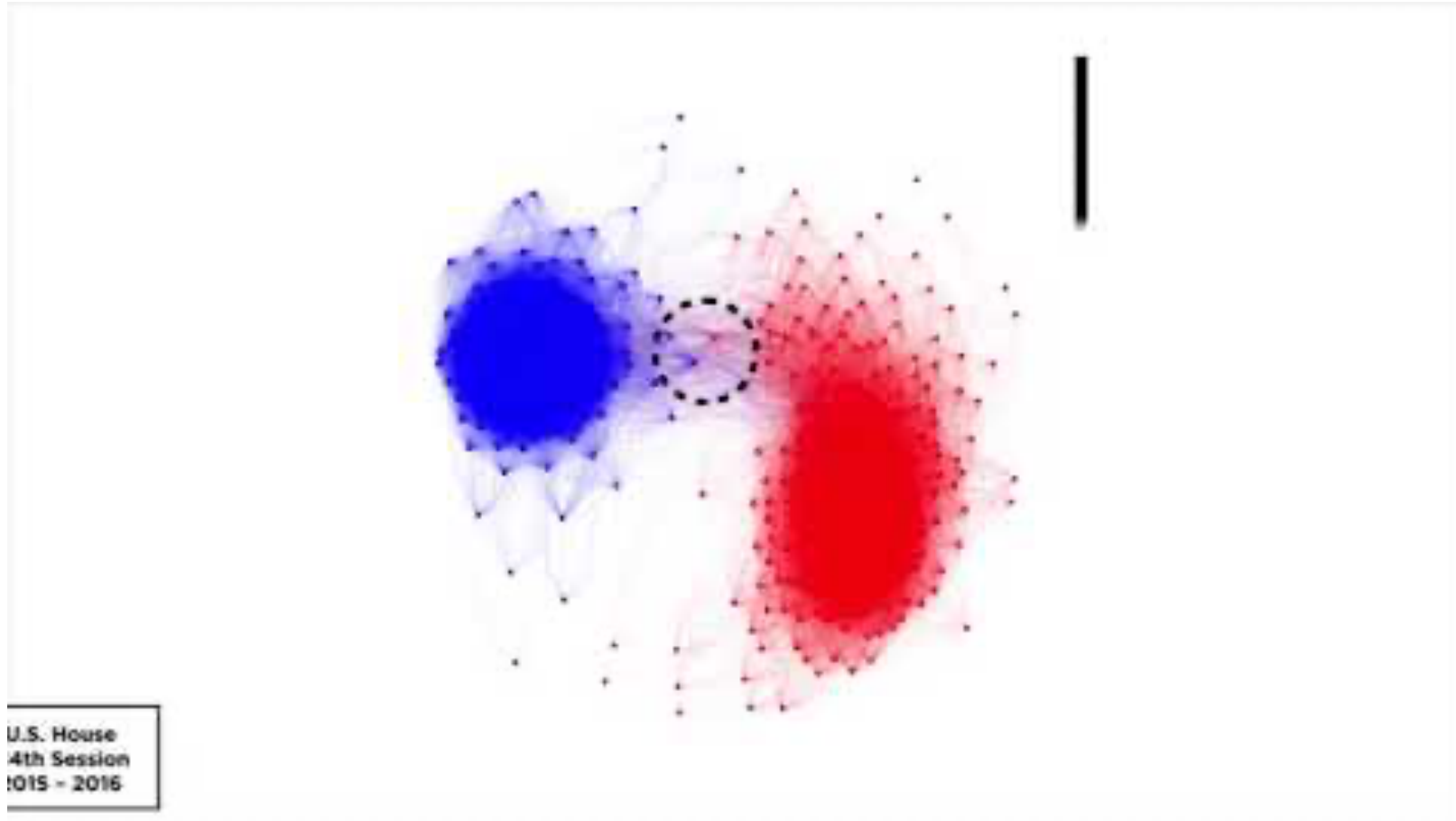
- Dominant-party
- Single-party
- Two-party
- Multiparty

American party system

- Control over presidency and Congress by the Democratic and Republican parties since the mid-19th century



American party system



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k0WsU7cmtQ>

British party system

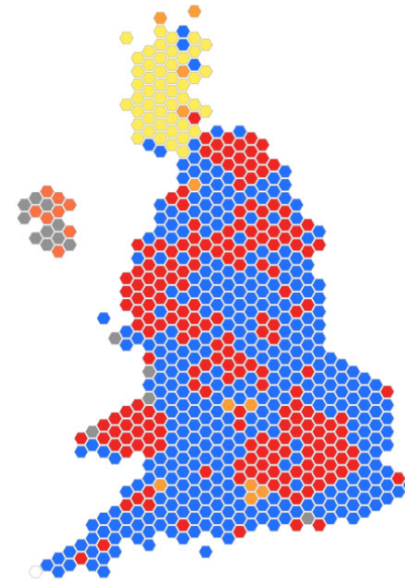
- National parties:
 - Conservative and Unionist Party
 - Labour Party
 - Liberal Democrats
 - Brexit Party (founded in 2019)
- Regional parties:
 - Scottish National Party
 - Democratic Unionist Party
 - Sinn Féin
 - Plaid Cymru

How the country voted

649/650 seats declared

2019 seat map

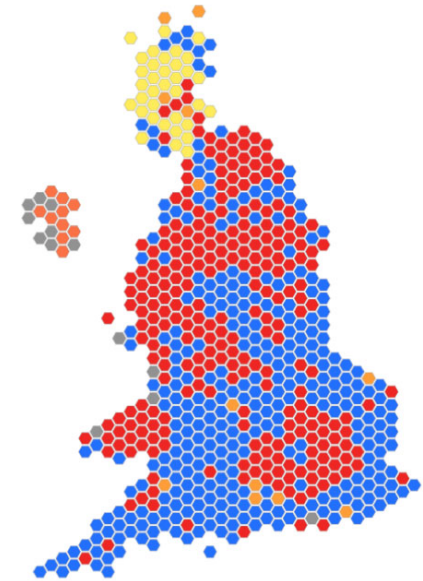
Con Lab Lib Dem SNP DUP
Other



Data: PA

2017 results

Con Lab Lib Dem SNP DUP
Other



Map: Ben Flanagan | Esri | Esri UK (CC)

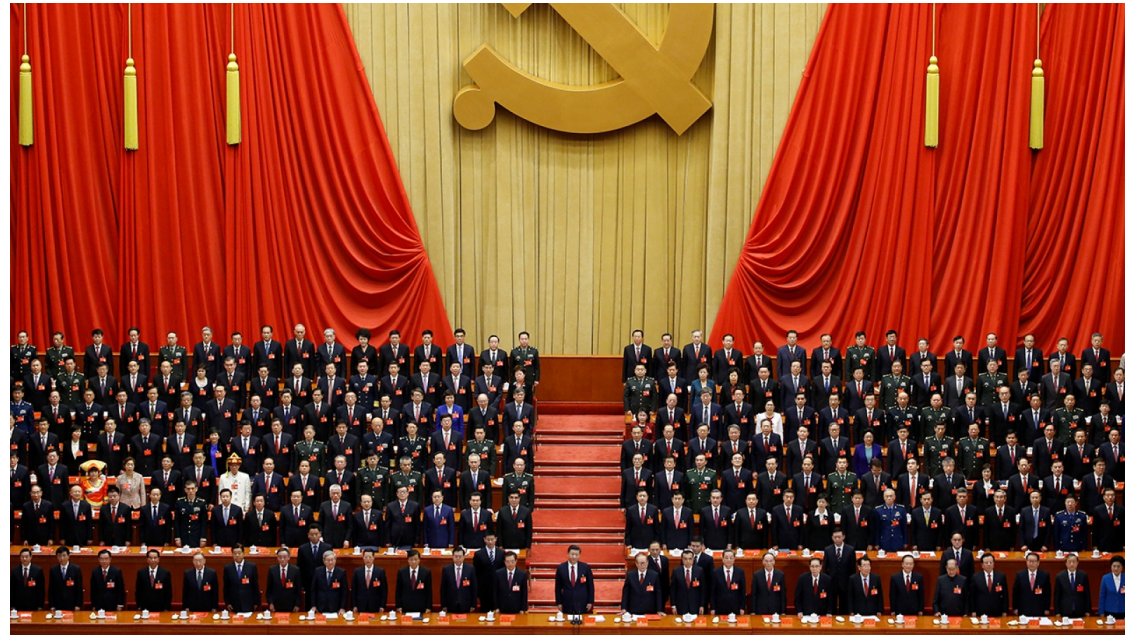
British party system



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

Chinese party system

- Political dominance of the Chinese Communist Party
- Eight other subordinated parties allowed to exist



Chinese party system



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lw3ltOzQgU4>

South African party system

- African National Congress (ANC) in power since 1994
- ANC's proportion of the vote in parliamentary elections:
 - 1994: 62.65%
 - 1999: 62.65%
 - 2004: 69.69%
 - 2009: 65.90%
 - 2014: 62.15%
 - 2019: 57.50%



South African party system



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hTNGpR9Yws>

How would we classify the
American, British, Chinese,
and South African party systems?

Features of party systems

- Fragmentation vs. concentration
- Effective number of parties
- Institutionalization

Features of party systems

- Fragmentation vs. concentration:
 - *The extent to which political power and representation in a party system are characterized by:*
 - *Relatively large numbers of relatively small parties (fragmentation)*
 - *Relatively small numbers of relatively large parties (concentration)*
- Effective number of parties
- Institutionalization

Features of party systems

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 - *The number of major parties in a party system*
- Institutionalization

Features of party systems

- Fragmentation vs. concentration:
 - *The extent to which political power and representation in a party system are characterized by:*
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- Effective number of parties:
 - *The number of major parties in a party system*
- Institutionalization:
 - *The degree to which a party system remains stable over time*

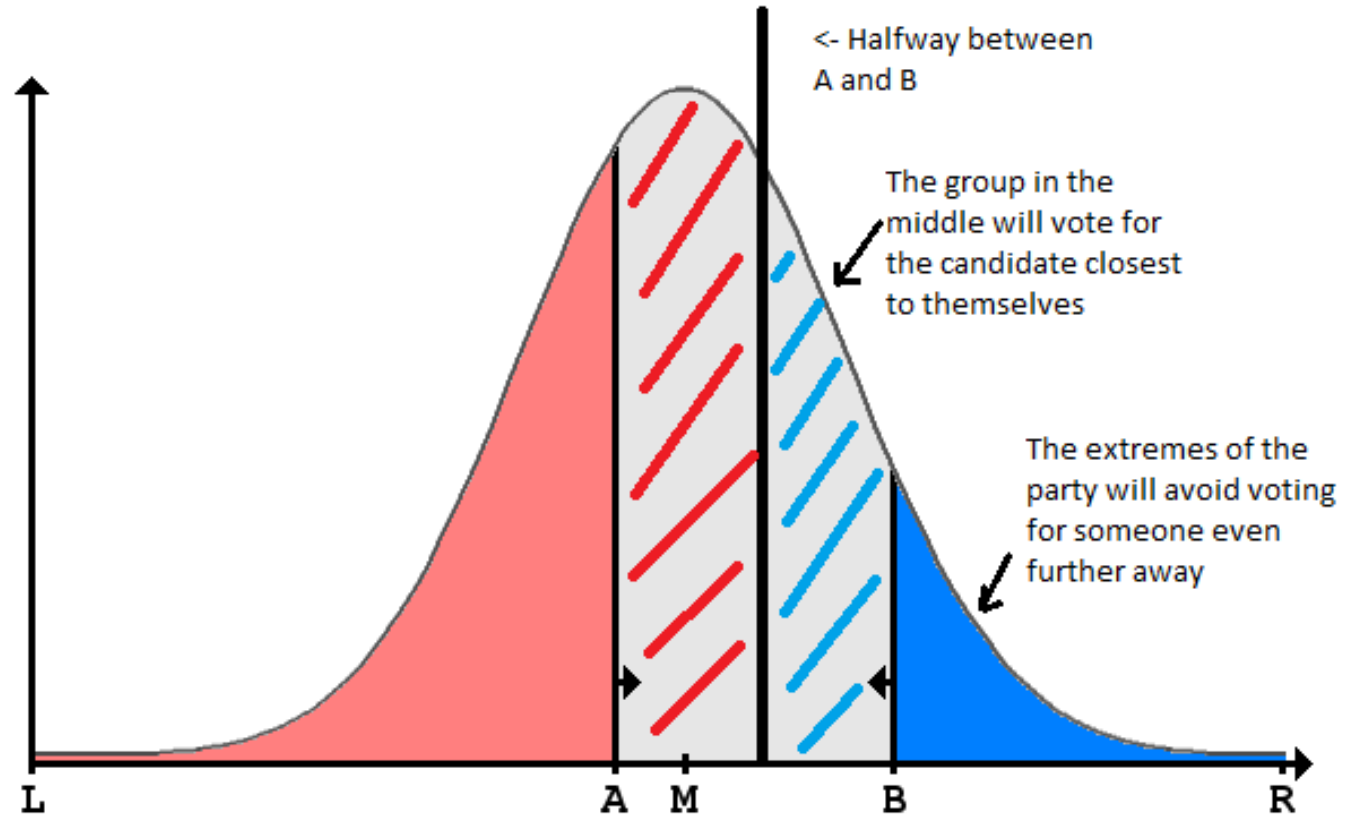
Which of the American, British, Chinese, and South African party systems are concentrated?
Which of them are fragmented?

What is the effective number of parties in the American, British, Chinese, and South African party systems?

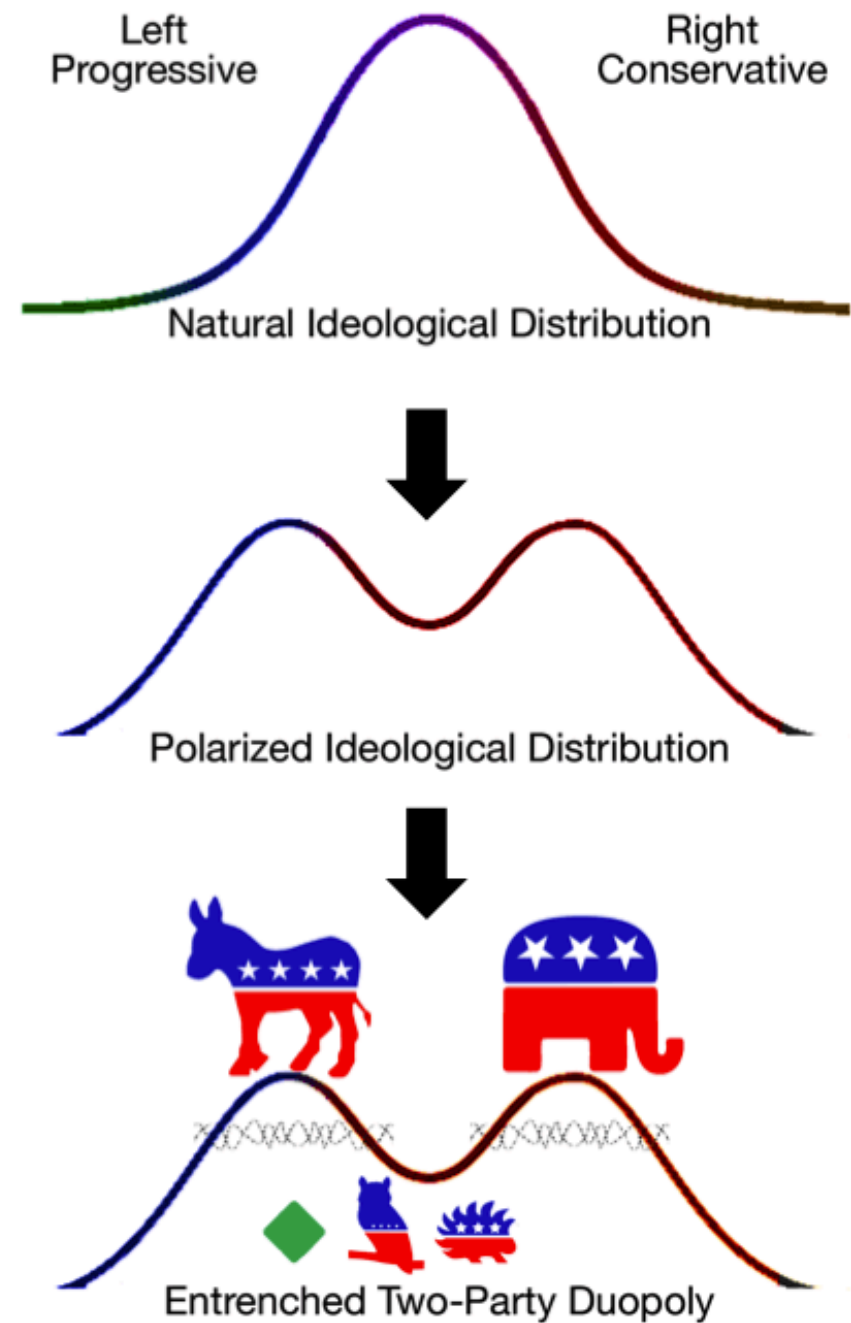
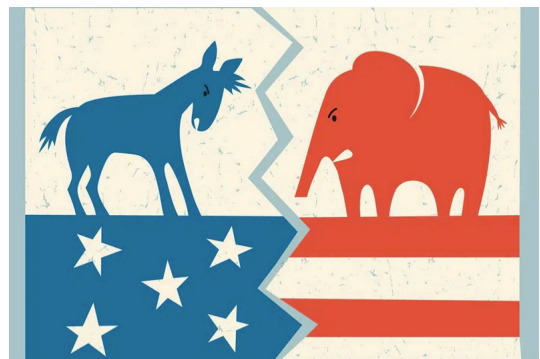
What is the degree of institutionalization of the American, British, Chinese, and South African party systems?

Causes of party systems

- Duverger's law
- Median voter theorem
 - → Hotelling's law

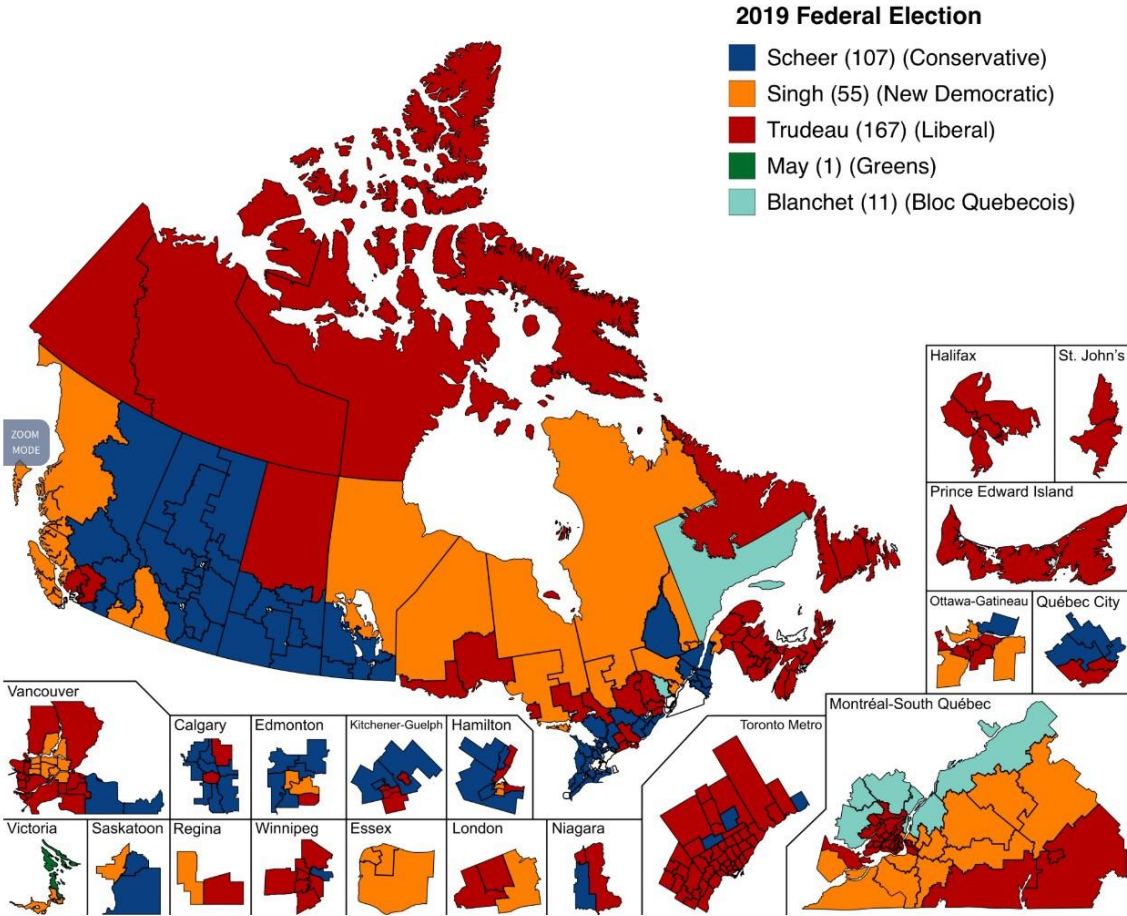


Can Duverger's law and median voter theorem explain party polarization in the US?



Does Duverger's law hold?

Explanatory power of Duverger's law: evidence from Canadian federal elections



Party formation activity: electoral systems

- Political orientations of politicians in the People's Republic of Sewanee:
 - Left-wing
 - Center-left
 - Center-right
 - Right-wing
- Party-list PR electoral system
- FPTP electoral system

Party program creation activity: median voter

- Political orientations of politicians in the People's Republic of Sewanee:
 - Left-wing
 - Center-left
 - Center-right
 - Right-wing
- Unimodal distribution of party preferences
- Bimodal distribution of party preferences

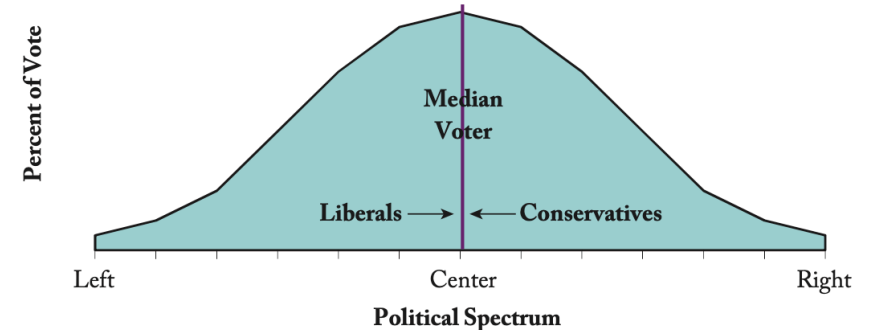


Figure 11.1 Voter Distribution and Political Party Strategy with the Median Voter.

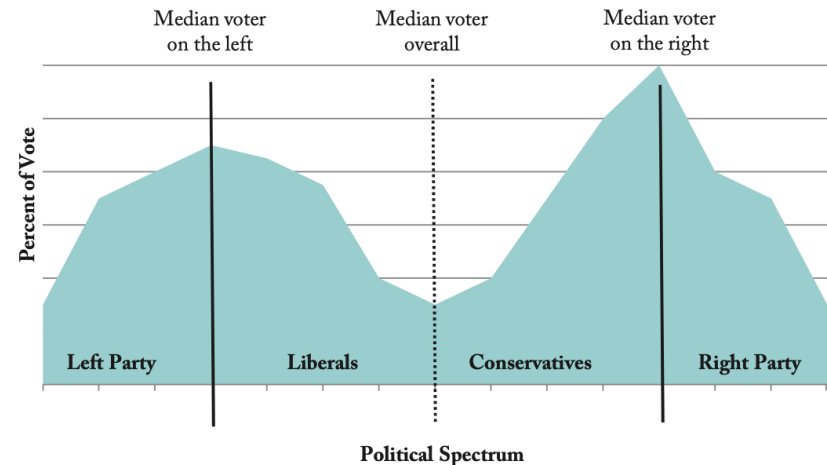


Figure 11.2 Bimodal Voter Distribution.

What are interest groups?

Interest groups

- *Organizations that make demands in the political system on behalf of their constituents and members*

Regulation of interest groups

- Pluralism
- Corporatism

Regulation of interest groups


- Pluralism:
 - *Competition between interest groups*
- Corporatism

Regulation of interest groups

- Pluralism:
 - *Competition between interest groups*
- Corporatism:
 - *Recognition of specific interest groups as representatives of certain interests + structured interaction and bargaining between those groups and government*
 - Peak organizations

Regulation of interest groups

- Pluralism:
 - *Competition between interest groups*
- Corporatism:
 - *Recognition of specific interest groups as representatives of certain interests + structured interaction and bargaining between those groups and government*
 - Peak organizations:
 - *Top associations comprised of many organizations with shared interests, e.g. labor federations and large business organizations*



What have been the effects of
excessive special interest
power in South Africa?

The long read

**'State capture': the
corruption investigation
that has shaken South
Africa**

▲ Composite: Guardian Design/YouTube

State capture in South Africa



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2jRuvxNBn0>

Takeaways

- Political parties:
 - Types of parties
 - Party systems
- Interest groups

Next class

- Iron law of oligarchy
- Contentious politics