

PLS 140  
Introduction to  
Comparative Politics

Week 11, Lecture 1:  
Political parties and interest groups

# Recap

- Formal organization of the state

# Part V

- Collective action:
  - Political parties and interest groups
  - Contentious politics
- Collective identities
- Ideas and ideologies

# Plan for this week

- Collective action:
  - Political parties and interest groups
  - Contentious politics

# Plan for today

- Political parties
- Interest groups

# Functions of parties and interest groups

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

# Political party

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

# Other functions of political parties

- Coordination
- Electoral contestation
- Recruitment
- Representation



# 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*
  - E.g. South Africa's African National Congress

# Party systems

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

# 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:
  - *The number of major parties in a party system*
- Institutionalization:
  - *The degree to which a party system remains stable over time*

# Causes of party system emergence

- Formal political institutions:
  - Duverger's laws and electoral systems
  - Federalism
- Political cleavages

# Brazilian party system

- High degree of fragmentation and a large (effective) number of parties
- Limited institutionalization
- Largest parties:
  - Social Liberal Party + Democrats —> Brazil Union
  - Workers' Party



# Indian party system

- Fragmentation and de-institutionalization over time
- Largest parties:
  - Bharatiya Janata Party
  - Indian National Congress



# British party system

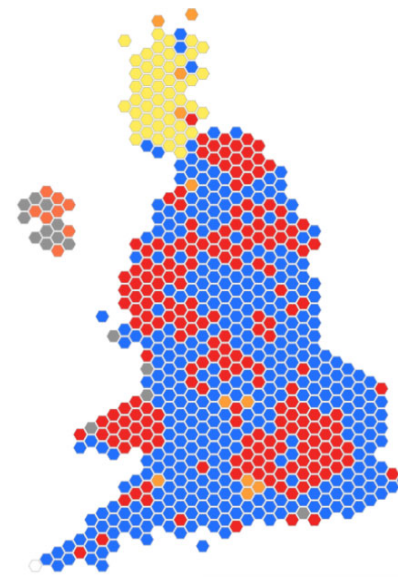
- Institutionalized, relatively concentrated 'two-and-a-half' party system.
- Largest parties:
  - Conservative Party
  - Labour Party
  - Liberal Democrats
  - Scottish National Party

## How the country voted

649/650 seats declared

### 2019 seat map

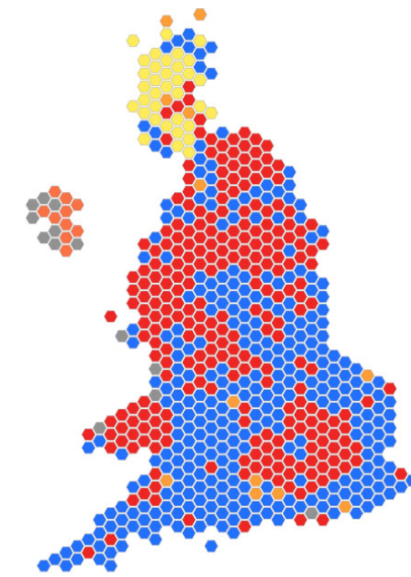
● Con ● Lab ● Lib Dem ● SNP ● DUP  
● Other



Data: PA

### 2017 results

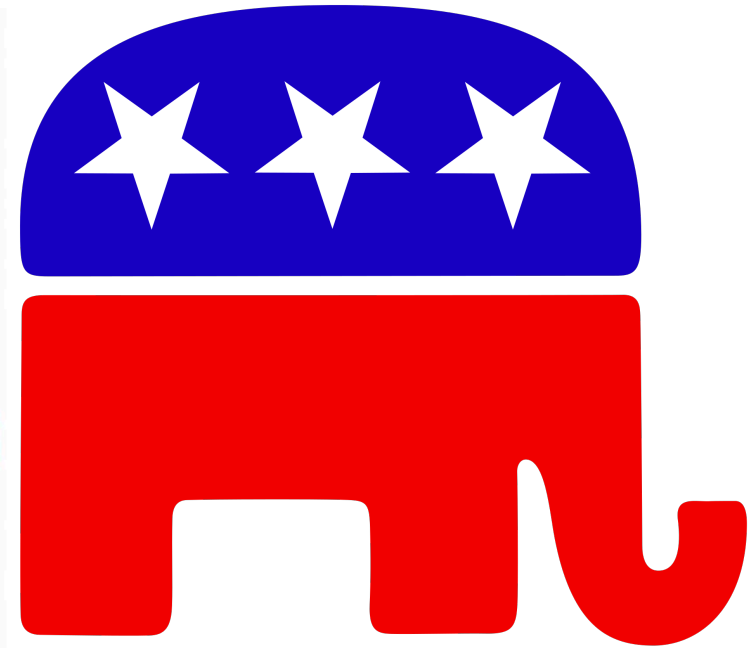
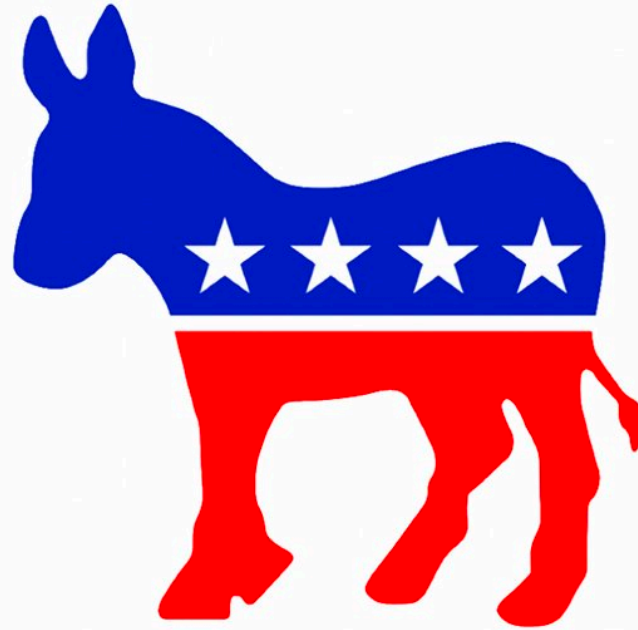
● Con ● Lab ● Lib Dem ● SNP ● DUP  
● Other



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

# American party system

- Highly concentrated and institutionalized two-party system
- The two parties:
  - Democratic Party
  - Republican Party





# American party system



<https://youtu.be/VEmOUHxessE>

# Russian and Kazakhstani party systems

- Electoral dominance, but limited actual political importance, of:
  - United Russia
  - Amanat



**AMANAT**



# Chinese party system

- Political dominance of the Chinese Communist Party
- Eight other subordinated parties allowed to exist within the highly institutionalized single-party system



# Chinese party system



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uzn8f38sw90>

# Interest groups

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

# 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*

# Interest groups in the United States



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOvBA7oIIgc>

# Takeaways

- Political parties and interest groups as the primary non-state organizations engaged in representing societal interests within the state