

Governing Systems and Executive-Legislative Relations

(Presidential, Parliamentary and Hybrid Systems)

The relations among a country's governing institutions differ depending on whether a country has a presidential, parliamentary or hybrid political system. Although each country has its own variance on these political typologies, some conclusions have been drawn about the characteristics of each of these systems and their relationship to political conflict and executive and legislative power. These generalisations are useful for helping to determine characteristics of political systems of other nations, but actual practice varies between nations within each type. The next few pages will seek to highlight these characteristics. [Table I](#) provides a comparative view of these political typologies.

This paper examines the following three aspects of executive-legislative relations:

1. **Separation of powers** – the extent to which the powers of government are separated functionally between branches of government;
2. **Removal from office** – how each system defines the conditions for removing the executive and dissolving the government; and
3. **The structure of legislative parties and leadership** – the influence that the governing system has on the structures developed by parties in the legislature; degree of hierarchical control, internal discipline, and latitude for openness to representing local differences. Party discipline is needed to keep control of the executive, a need that varies among the three systems.

The **United States (US)** has a presidential system, as do countries it has influenced regionally, culturally or militarily, including **Latin American** countries and the **Philippines**. With the exception of the **US**, presidential systems in the past have often been associated with politically unstable and authoritarian regimes. Countries that have adopted a form of the parliamentarianism include the **United Kingdom (UK)**, much of continental **Europe, Israel, Japan**, many of the former **British colonies in Africa and Asia**, and most **Caribbean countries**. The **French hybrid** system has provided a model for a number of countries and is highlighted throughout this section. Countries that have adopted the French Model include former French colonies in West Africa – such as **Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, and Senegal** -- and a few eastern European states, such as **Poland and Bulgaria**. **Portugal** also has a hybrid system, with similar elements as the French model. The Portuguese system has influenced former colonies like **Mozambique and Angola**.

Separation of Powers

Key differences among the three systems include the extent to which the powers of government are separated functionally between branches, and in the powers one branch does or does not have over another. These include the extent to which the executive can control the legislative branch, or the extent to which the legislature can control the executive (oversight), and the extent to which the legislative branch controls the capacity to legislate. One important area of control and competition is the capacity to introduce and approve legislation, and these vary considerably among the three systems.

In a presidential system, political and administrative powers are divided between the executive, legislative and judicial branches. Officials in these branches serve different terms of office and different constituencies. In a parliamentary system, Parliament is sovereign and executive authority (exercised by the Prime Minister and Cabinet) is derived from the legislature. In a hybrid system, executive power is shared between a separately elected President and a Prime Minister.

Presidential

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

executive and legislative branches are independent of one another. Presidents have great control over their cabinet appointees who serve at the President's pleasure, and who are usually selected for reasons other than the extent of their congressional support (as in parliamentary systems). In general, the British Prime Minister is more constrained to represent his/her parliamentary party in the Cabinet.

The U.S. represents the strongest form of presidentialism, in the sense that the powers of the executive and legislative branches are separate, and legislatures (national and state) often have significant powers.

Parliamentary

Parliamentary systems, unlike presidential systems, are typified by a fusion of powers between the legislative and executive branches. The Prime Minister (who is the chief executive) may be elected to the legislature in the same way that all other members are elected. The Prime Minister is the leader of the party that wins the majority of votes to the legislature (either de facto, or in some cases through an election held by the legislature). The Prime Minister appoints Cabinet Ministers. However, unlike in the presidential systems, these members are typically themselves legislative members from the ruling party or ruling coalition. Thus, in a parliamentary system, the constituency of the executive and legislature are the same. If the ruling party is voted out of the legislature, the executive also changes. Continued co-operation between the executive and legislature is required for the government to survive and to be effective in carrying out its programs.

The UK represents the strongest form of parliamentarism (sometimes referred to as the Westminster system).

Hybrid

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

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

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

For purposes of clarity and simplicity, the French system is highlighted in the above and following text as the hybrid example. However, [Table I](#) and [Case Study I](#) point out possible variations on this model.

Legislative – Executive Terms and Removal from Office

A key difference between presidential and parliamentary systems lies in the power to remove a chief executive or to dissolve the legislature. In parliamentary systems, the chief executive's term of office is directly linked with that of the legislature, while in presidential systems the terms are not linked.

Presidential

In a **presidential system**, in line with the notion of a separation of powers, presidents and members of the legislature are separately elected for a given length of time. Presidents have no authority to remove members of the legislature. Premature removal of either legislative members or the President can only be initiated by a vote in the lower legislative chamber and

under particular conditions. Thus, under normal circumstances, even if the political party that the President represents becomes a minority in either or both houses of the legislature, the President will remain in his position for the full term for which he was elected.

A number of Latin American presidential systems have provided an additional constitutional check on the power of the President in this regard, likely due to a history of authoritarian executive rule. For example, in **Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama** and **Paraguay**, a President is not allowed to serve more than one elected term. In other countries, including **Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala** and the **US**, the President is not allowed to serve for more than two consecutive terms.

Parliamentary

In a ***parliamentary system***, the Prime Minister can be removed from office in two ways. The first is through a 'no-confidence' motion, which is typically filed by the opposition or a coalition of opposition parties. The no confidence motion calls for a vote in the legislature to demonstrate that the legislature no longer has confidence in the Prime Minister (the Chief Executive) and his cabinet of Ministers. If the vote passes by a majority, the Executive, including the Prime Minister, is forced to step down. Since the Prime Minister and his cabinet of ministers are members of the legislature, this brings about new legislative elections. The term of the Prime Minister, therefore, is generally linked to that of the rest of the legislature. However, the Prime Minister can be removed by his/her own party members, in a setting outside of the legislature. For example, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was removed by party vote and replaced by John Major during the Conservative Party caucus. Such a removal, whereby the party decides to change its leader, does not force legislative elections.

Hybrid-French

Unlike in a parliamentary system, the legislature in France cannot force the resignation of the President. Rather, the President may dissolve the parliament's Lower House, the National Assembly (but not the upper house, Senate). Further, the President appoints, and can remove the Prime Minister, who is effectively the head of the cabinet and legislature. Similar to the parliamentary model, the National Assembly can also force the government (the Prime Minister and legislative leaders) to resign by passing a motion of censure. Thus, in the French model, while the Prime Minister is vulnerable to removal from both the legislature and the President, the President cannot be removed prior to the end of his/her electoral term.

Party Discipline

Party discipline, simply defined, refers to the practice of legislators voting with their parties. It is typically stronger in parliamentary systems than in presidential because the "executive" government requires majority party cohesiveness for its own survival. In countries that are transitioning to a two or multiparty system -- whether presidential, hybrid or parliamentary -- party discipline may be generally weak owing to the fact that parties may be newer, lack a strong internal structure and constituent base and/or lack experience in operating in a multiparty legislature.

Presidential

Parties in presidential systems tend to be less structured than parties in parliamentary systems. Failure to vote with one's party does not threaten to bring the government down. Therefore, members of the legislature are freer to identify with regional, ethnic, economic or other divisions when considering policy issues. This tendency is likely strengthened in presidential systems -- such as the US -- that also employ a first-past-the-post electoral system. Because they are usually directly elected and identifiable with particular districts or regions, many members see a duty to their constituents (in a district or state) as the first priority, with allegiance to a party and its platform as secondary. While the legislators are under some pressure to vote with their party, particularly on important votes, the consequences of not doing so are not as serious to the individual legislator and to the system. Because legislatures and executives are elected separately and often for different terms, it is not uncommon for them to be controlled by different parties.

Parliamentary

Parliamentary systems in developed countries are characterized by parties that are highly structured and tend toward unified

action, bloc voting and distinct party platforms. This party discipline is required in parliamentary systems primarily because deviation from the party line could result in bringing down the government. Parliamentary systems require that the "executive" and legislative members come to agreement upon issues, lest it force the dissolution of the government. In addition, majority parties in parliamentary systems are perceived by voters to have a mandate to run the country. Therefore, each party may develop a system of punishments and rewards. Individual members of the legislature who deviate from a party vote may be punished by exclusion from their party within parliament or may not be nominated by the party in the subsequent election.

Similarly, opposition parties theoretically want to maximize their power in a system dominated by the majority by voting as a block and squelching internal dissent. Opposition party discipline is more likely if the party or parties perceive that they can eventually gain the majority. Consequently, for both majority and minority parties in parliament, important policy decisions are made within party structures, such as party caucuses, rather than within the legislature itself. Obviously, it is not possible for the legislature and executive to be controlled by different parties in a parliamentary system.

The following are common attributes mentioned by supporters of the two systems based on party discipline:

Advantages of weaker party discipline in presidential systems:

- Relations between individual members and constituents tend to be stronger.
- The President and individual members are directly accountable to the voters.
- In deeply divided societies, some theorists argue that the parliamentary system can lead to one party controlling the state and locking other ethnic or regional groups out of power.

Advantages of stronger party discipline in parliamentary systems:

- Parties and stable party coalitions within parliament can be held accountable to the public based on their promotion of the party platform.
- The chief executive can be made accountable to her/his party and the parliament as a whole by a vote of no confidence at any time.
- Highly organized parties can act as a link between party leaders and constituents at local levels.

Hybrid-French System

France's transition from a parliamentary to a semi-presidential or hybrid system has been credited with resolving the instability created by shifting party alliances and resulting changes in government. The French hybrid system functions more smoothly when the majority party in parliament is also the party of the President, but this needs not always be the case. However, the French system has sometimes resulted in a situation of **cohabitation**, whereby the separately elected President may face a Prime Minister and majority party in the legislature from a party different than his own (which occurred in 1993 and 1997).

This situation has the potential to combine the possible negative aspects of both presidential and parliamentary systems, leading to conflict and deadlock. As in a parliamentary system, party discipline is encouraged, as deviation would potentially bring down the majority party and its Prime Minister. At the same time, party discipline may discourage cooperation with the President, paralyzing the policy-making process. This prospect is tempered by the fact that the President can dissolve parliament and/or remove the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is encouraged to play a balancing role, as he or she must maintain the confidence of both the President and the legislature.

Case Study I: Westminster System: Coalition Governments and Party Discipline in Nepal

Nepal transitioned from absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, multi-party parliamentary system in the early 1990's with a plurality-majoritarian electoral system similar to that of the UK. Throughout the 1990s the parliament has faced disruptions in the legislative process and the frequent collapse of governing coalitions through votes of no confidence. Critics have pointed to several interconnected factors, including: generally weak parties without strong attachments to a party platform; too many parties; coalitions without a strong majority; and a lack of party discipline, whereby the potential for MPs

voting against their own party or joining/forming another has encouraged frequent votes of no-confidence. The Members of Parliament (MPs) themselves attempted to address the party discipline issue with 1998 *anti-defection legislation*.

In 1991, the historically strong Nepali Congress Party (NC) won a majority of parliamentary seats. Over the next three years, internal party conflict and public dissatisfaction with alleged corruption and economic woes led to the King's dissolution of the government in 1994. Nepal subsequently held national elections in which the United Marxist Party (UML) won 88 of 205 seats in the lower house. The UML was able to form a minority government, as the other three parties were unable or unwilling to forge a coalition. A year later, the UML lost a vote of no confidence, bringing into power a coalition of the NC, Rashtriya Parajatantra (RPP) Party and the Sadbhavana Party. This fragile coalition held together for one and a half years, when **bi-elections** (elections that are held between normal election cycles, for example, to replace an MP who dies) gave the UML party a majority. A failed vote of confidence in the existing government led to a new coalition with the UML, RPP and Sadbhavana Party.

Lack of internal party discipline contributed to these frequent votes of no confidence. Each of the parties faced internal difficulties and "**crossing of the floor**" (where an MP votes against his party or coalition, or actually joins another party). The RPP contained two factions who often ignored the party leadership and did not vote along party lines. UML MPs disregarded party leadership during an important vote in 1996 that nearly brought down that government. Some MPs left their parties altogether and joined new ones, a few on the promise of cabinet positions. Because the parliament had to deal with these power-shifting crises, it had less time to focus on priorities of representing constituents, executive oversight and passing laws.

In an attempt to force stability, the parliament passed anti-defection legislation in 1998 as an amendment to the constitution, which terminates MPs who resign from their party, join another or form a new party (except in large numbers and under specific conditions). Their seats are then considered vacant. The purpose of the legislation is to discourage members from joining or formulating other parties to minimize shifting power among the coalitions between elections. Anti-defection legislation in the UK, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka provided a model for this effort.

While the bill had overwhelming support in parliament, opponents doubted the law would be successful. The new law did not get to the root of the problem, they felt, which is that the parties are not ideologically based or internally well organized. They also felt that the law would limit MPs' abilities to function as representatives of their constituencies. In the most recent parliamentary elections of May 1999, the Nepali Congress Party won a majority of seats, and a majority government was formed for the first time in five years. Political observers are watching to see if this development will bring some stability.

The Legislative Function: Who Formulates, Initiates and Amends Legislation?

In parliamentary, presidential and hybrid systems, the legislature is a forum for discussion of political, economic and social issues and is required to legitimize new laws. One of the major differences of these systems lies in the legislature's power (or lack thereof) to formulate and initiate legislation.

Presidential

In a presidential system, the legislature sets its own agenda and passes its own bills. The legislature typically formulates and introduces legislation. The legislature can and often does work closely with the executive branch in formulating legislation, particularly when the same party is in power in both branches. The executive can draft laws, but members of the legislature must introduce them on the floor. Some presidential systems, however, limit the legislature's power to amend the proposed executive budget, and a president may force the legislature to act on legislation within a certain period.

- The legislature tends to have broad powers to amend any legislation. Lack of resources, and other factors may act to blunt this power, however. In some countries, like Mexico during the period of one-party domination, the President effectively controlled the Congress' lawmaking function.
- The potential for legislative assertiveness is greater in presidential systems, but the actual realization (and staffing up for assertiveness) depends on the presence of other conditions.
- Legislatures in presidential systems are more likely to have specialized and permanent standing committees and subcommittees with a number of professional staff to help draft, review and amend legislation. Large congressional staffs in the United States came about in the post WWII years, with the greatest growth in the sixties and seventies.

Staff and other resources are typically much greater in the U.S. presidential system than in the Latin American or other presidential models.

- Via the committee system, the legislature has extensive powers to call expert witnesses, members of the cabinet, presidential advisors, etc. for public or private hearings before the legislature.
- The President can veto legislation, which can only be overridden by a 2/3 vote in the legislature.

Parliamentary

In **parliamentary systems**, the executive (meaning the Prime Minister, cabinet and bureaucracy) controls the legislative agenda, and individual legislators have little political power to introduce their own legislative initiatives.

- The chief executive and his/her cabinet initiate any piece of legislation affecting the budget or revenue. In the UK and other similar models, legislatures can only amend legislation on narrow, technical terms.
- There are significantly fewer permanent or standing committees with relatively few professional staff to help draft and review legislation. (There are exceptions – Germany's semi-parliamentary system has relatively strong committees where legislation can be initiated, reviewed and amended by individual members. Australia has a larger staff system than does the UK).
- Important policy decisions can and often are made at party caucuses rather than within committees.

Hybrid French System

- Bills can be introduced by the individual members, the executive and the government (the Prime Minister and the cabinet). However, the introduction of executive initiated bills takes precedence over member bills.
- The executive sets the agenda in the legislature and can call for a package vote, which forces all or none of the pieces in a package of legislation to be passed.
- The executive can make any bill it initiates result in a motion of censure if rejected, which dissolves the parliament.
- The President can by-pass the legislature by taking a proposed bill directly to the public through a national referendum. If a majority of voters support the bill, it becomes law without any input from the legislature.

Case Study II: The Hybrid System, Executive and One-Party Domination in Cote D'Ivoire

The post-independence Ivorian Constitution was modelled closely after France's V Republic Constitution, with a strong, centralised semi-presidential system. It is a unitary republic with a national government composed of a directly elected President who appoints a Prime Minister to lead a separately elected parliament. Article 7 of the 1960 constitution also allowed for multiparty political competition. However, in practice there was only one legalised political party, the PDCI, to which all adult citizens were required to belong. Until 1980, there was no competition within the party for legislative seats -- a list was drawn up by the central party leaders and approved by the electorate. President Houphouët-Boigny led the country from 1960 until his death in 1993.

The first multiparty presidential and legislative elections were held in 1990, resulting in a landslide for Houphouët-Boigny and the PDCI, who captured 164 of 175 seats in parliament. Some observers subsequently called for a change in the electoral system from plural-majoritarian to proportional representation to allow for greater opposition representation, although opposition leaders did not support this idea in the apparently mistaken belief that they could do better under the existing system in the next elections. Three political parties currently hold seats in the National Assembly -- PDCI (149 seats), FPI (13 seats), and RDR (13 seats). The National Assembly faces some of the same challenges cited by political observers of other developing countries, including: a very strong executive, lax rules of procedure, a lack of resources and inefficient committee structures.

As in the French system, the President has broad powers to initiate legislation and pass decrees and regulations. These broad powers under a one-party system dominated by the personality of Houphouët-Boigny made the PDCI parliament in effect a rubber-stamp for initiatives emanating from the executive. Furthermore, in June 1998, Houphouët-Boigny's elected successor, President Henri Konan Bédié, proposed -- and the PDCI-dominated parliament enacted -- amendments to the Constitution that further increased the power of the executive vis-a-vis the legislature. The amendments propose to do the

following: reduce the authority of the Prime Minister; authorise the President to annul elections or postpone announcing election results; extend the presidential term from 5 to 7 years; and mandate the creation of a second legislative chamber (Senate) in which one-third of the members are to be appointed by the President; and provide for the Senate's president to succeed the President. Domestic and international observers and political party opposition criticised these constitutional amendments, and the opposition parties in parliament boycotted the National Assembly's vote and organized demonstrations.

While the Ivorian system is structurally similar to that of the modern French system, there are key checks in practice on the domination of one party in France. For example, in France, there are three major political parties or groups that could reasonably expect to become a governing party via legislative elections. At times, the President from one party must face a Prime Minister from another party, or must face a governing coalition that includes other parties. In addition, the opposition members have official status and coalition member parties are given a proportion of leadership on National Assembly committees and in the Cabinet, and all opposition parties are given committee chairmanships in the Senate. Constitutional amendments require passage by both houses in the same form followed by a public referendum, or in other cases, a three-fifths majority of the National Assembly. These elements require an on-going negotiation process between the executive and various political parties and among the parties represented in the legislature.

In the Ivorian context, there hasn't yet developed an attending political pressure on the ruling party to negotiate with the opposition in parliament in matters of policy formulation. There is also not a strong press or civil society to which opposition members could represent their concerns and call attention to matters of disagreement, which is the way opposition parties often try to affect policy change in parliamentary systems. In December 1998, in an accord between the ruling party and a major opposition party, President Bedie did agree to renounce some of his new constitutional powers, including the power to postpone announcements of election results; the power to annul elections; and the power to appoint one-third of the new Senate.

Table I. Executive-Legislative Relations in US and European Models

	US Presidential	UK – Westminster parliamentary	German semi-parliamentary	French Hybrid
<i>Who makes up the Executive Branch?</i>	Separately Elected President, Cabinet nominated by the President and confirmed by the legislature (Cabinet members cannot simultaneously be members of legislature, and vice-versa)	Prime Minister; PM and Cabinet elected by the majority party in the legislature The Cabinet, or Ministers, are members of the legislature. A Hereditary Monarch is head of state (mostly ceremonial).	Chancellor , chosen from the majority party (or coalition) in parliament; cabinet members selected by Chancellor with parliament's approval (may also be members of the leg.); indirectly elected President is head of state (weak powers)	Separately elected President with strong powers chooses a Cabinet and Prime Minister who presides over the legislature. (The President resides over the Cabinet, who cannot be members of the legislature.)

<p><i>Can the legislature remove the executive, and vice-versa?</i></p>	<p>Legislature cannot remove the President, except under extreme conditions, and the president cannot dissolve the legislature.</p>	<p>The legislature dissolves the chief executive and cabinet through a vote of no confidence, forcing new parliamentary elections.</p>	<p>The legislature can dissolve parliament, removing the Chancellor and cabinet, but only if they simultaneously select a new chancellor.</p>	<p>The legislature cannot remove the President, but can dissolve parliament, removing the Prime Minister and cabinet. The President can dissolve the lower house.</p>
<p><i>Bodies involved in the legislative process?</i></p>	<p>Upper House: Senate Lower House: House Govt. cabinet departments assist in drafting bills, but most originate via committees in legislature; President can veto legislation, which can be overridden by 2/3 vote of both houses.</p>	<p>Upper: House of Lords Lower: House of Commons The government (Prime Minister, cabinet and bureaucracy) Occasionally bills referred to select committees for consultation.</p>	<p>Upper: Bundesrat Lower: Bundestag Chancellor and Cabinet; Council of State</p>	<p>Upper: Senate Lower: National Assembly President; Prime Minister and cabinet appointed by PM who sits in the legislature (can be MPs).</p>
<p><i>Who Initiates Legislation?</i></p>	<p>Both Houses Executive can draft legislation but a member must introduce it.</p>	<p>Executive and Both Houses, but MPs can't introduce bills that affect govt. spending or taxation. Can only amend on technical grounds. Executive-initiated bills take precedence over member bills.</p>	<p>Executive and both Houses are active, but the majority of bills passed are introduced by the Executive. The President can issue "decrees," which have the force of law, without the legislatures consent.</p>	<p>Executive and both Houses, Appointed bodies, such as the Economic and Social commission make recommendations on drafting legislation. MPs cannot introduce any bill that raises or reduces expenditures. Executive-initiated bills take precedence over member bills.</p>

Other Systems

Monarchy

A monarchy is a form of government in which one person has the hereditary right to rule as head of state during his or her lifetime. In Western Europe, most monarchy systems transitioned to constitutional monarchy after World War I, whereby the monarch became essentially a symbolic head of state with nearly all of the actual executive power vested in a President or

Prime Minister. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan continue to invest ultimate authority in the King, although they share power with other political institutions to varying degrees.

Saudi Arabia represents one of a few **absolute monarchies** remaining, where power resides primarily in the King and the royal family and political competition is outlawed. In other monarchies such as Jordan, Morocco and Swaziland, the King has ultimate authority but power increasingly lies in other elected institutions, such as parliament. The royal family derives its legitimacy from the religion of Islam, and the state and religion are intertwined, with the Koran considered to be the country's constitution. In 1992, King Fahd issued decrees that were collectively entitled "A Basic System of Government," creating a "quasi-constitution". The new laws changed the process used to select the heir to the throne, established a right to privacy, prohibited infringements of human rights without cause, and set a framework for a national consultative council (a quasi-legislature) that is appointed by the King. The council has the formal power to initiate and review laws and to approve or reject treaties and budgets. However, it is ultimately subordinated to the Council of Ministers and the King in practice.

Constitutional Monarchy

A constitutional monarchy is a parliamentary governing system whereby a hereditary monarch of sovereign shares power with the parliament and executive. Modern democratic examples include the UK, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Japan, Luxembourg, Nepal, The Netherlands, Thailand and New Zealand. While enjoying formal powers, in these countries, the monarchy has evolved over time into almost solely a ceremonial position and the monarchy does not act without the advice and consent of the Prime Minister and cabinet advisors. Examples of formal powers of a monarchy (based on the British model) include:

- Summoning and dissolving Parliament;
- Formally appointing the prime minister;
- Declaring war; and
- Giving royal assent to bills.

Table II: Monarchy Systems and Legislative Power

	Constitutional Monarchy - Norway	Constitutional Monarchy -Thailand	Monarchy in Multi-Party System - Jordan	Absolute Monarchy – Saudi Arabia
<i>Bodies involved in the legislative function</i>	Unicameral Legislature: Storting Executive: Prime Minister and cabinet who are not MPs King is Head of State (Largely ceremonial)	Upper: Senate Lower: House of Deputies Executive: Prime Minister and Cabinet King is Head of State (mostly ceremonial, plays a mediating role)	Upper: Senate Lower: House of Deputies Executive: PM and cabinet (who are not necessarily MPs) King is head of state.	Legislative branch consists of a 90-member consultative council appointed by the king for four-year terms Council of Ministers appointed by the king and includes many royal family members. King is Head of State and Chief Executive.

<p>Power to initiate, amend of veto legislation</p>	<p>King can initiate legislation.</p> <p>King has suspensive veto – if the legislature adopts the same law King has rejected two years after initial passage, with an intervening election, it becomes law.</p>	<p>Laws are drafted by the Council of State, who are responsible to the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers</p>	<p>King may refuse assent and return bill within 6 months, and then must be passed by 2/3 majority of House of Deputies.</p>	<p>Reviews proposed laws and approves treaties and budgets. Submits proposals to the Council of Ministers. If both bodies agree, ideas can be implemented with the consent of the King. If disagree, the King decides.</p>
<p>Monarch's role in nominating and dismissing executive, MPs</p>	<p>King selects PM, but must have the confidence of the parliament.</p> <p>King's successor is hereditary, but if none, parliament votes on his choice.</p> <p>King can dissolve parliament, but only does so at request of PM.</p>	<p>King selects Senators, 20% of whom must be military (this system is changing)</p>	<p>PM appointed by King, who also appoints ministers on advice from PM.</p> <p>King can dissolve parliament at any time.</p> <p>King can call or suspend elections at any time.</p>	<p>The Monarch is the chief executive. The Monarch can dismiss the council or council members at any time.</p>
<p>Emergency Powers</p>	<p>During war, king can suspend legislature but must notify parliament of the provisions abrogated</p>		<p>In advent of war, King may suspend parliament and elections</p>	<p>King holds ultimate authority.</p>

Military Regimes

In military governments, the head of state achieves a ruling position by virtue of a place in the military chain of command or support of the armed forces. When there is deadlock between an executive and a legislature in a political system that is otherwise not very stable, it is often the military that steps in as the "tie-breaker."

Military rule is typically authoritarian and one-party and has a similar affect on the power of legislative bodies. In the late 1980's a number of Latin American countries emerged from military rule, including Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. The legacy of military rule has varied from state to state. In Brazil and Argentina, heavy military spending resulted in large debts and a bloated state. In Chile, a history of bloody repression led to a transition where military officers insisted on protection and retained a certain degree of representation in the upper house of the bicameral parliament. In Thailand, frequent military coups resulted in frequent changes in the parliament, where until legislative elections in 1995, the MPs had to be approved

by the military.

The Legacy of Military Rule and the Legislature: The Case of Chile

Chile incorporated the principle of the separation of powers into its original constitutional framework based on the U.S. model. Since its inception in 1811, the Chilean National Congress remained a critical arena for the formulation of national policy until the military coup of 1973. It served as the most important institution for cross-party bargaining and consensus building in Chile's fragmented political system, initiated important legislative decisions and exercised oversight of the executive through an ability to "impeach" Ministers chosen by the executive. The military junta, led by Augusto Pinochet, dissolved the Congress and the junta itself acted as a quasi-legislative body. A bicameral legislature was later re-appointed.

The 1980 constitution sought to broaden and consolidate the powers of the military government. When the country transitioned to democratically elected government in the late 1980's, many of the provisions of the 1980 constitution remained intact. Pinochet remained the head of the Armed Forces for eight years and the position of Senator for Life. Nine Senate seats were set-aside for appointed military leaders. This gave the right wing forces (who were military supporters) a majority of seats in the upper house. Key changes were made in the 1989 constitution, such as removal of 1980 amendments that barred any oversight of the executive and allowed the executive to dissolve the legislature. The constitution however severely limits the role of Congress in legislative matters relative to earlier legislatures in Chilean history. In several areas, the president is given sole authority to introduce bills. The president may grant certain initiatives priority status, requiring that Congress act within a short period. The president has the exclusive power to set the legislative agenda and, therefore, the political agenda.

The continuing power of the military had some short-term positive effects. The continuation of Pinochet in office gave comfort to the military and other supporters of the former regime. It also contributed to the strong unity and discipline of the former opposition parties that make up the government, reinforcing patterns of accommodation and compromise and contributing to the success of the new President. Held together by their opposition to the dictatorship and fear of return to authoritarianism, both the President and legislative leaders sought consensus and implemented moderate policies in the post-authoritarian era. However, this political accommodation has begun to show cracks in the long-term. With the inauguration of the new Frei administration in 1994, it was clear that members of Congress resented their lack of significant input into the policy process and their relative weakness, both in terms of constitutional powers and a lack of staff resources and expertise to review complex legislative matters.

Further Reading

1. Kurian, George Thomas, ed., World Encyclopedia of Parliaments and Legislatures, Volume II, 1998.
2. Horowitz, Donald, "Democracy in Divided Societies", Journal of democracy, vol. 4, no. 4, October 1993.
3. Lijphart, Arend & Carlos H. Waisman, Eds. Institutional Design in New Democracies: Eastern Europe and Latin America, Boulder, Colo., Westview Press, 1996.
4. Linz, Juan and Arturo Valenzuelo, eds, The Failure of Presidential Democracy, Boulder, Colo., Westview Press, 1996.
5. Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Michael Laver, Eds. Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentary Government, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1996.

Web Sites

<http://www2.hawaii.edu/~fredr/welcome.htm> – Essays on parliamentary vs. presidentialism and links to related sites.

<http://www.adminet.com/elus/an.html> – provides links to sites and articles on the French parliament (in French).

<http://www.ipu.org> – provides links into world parliaments and describes their legislative structure