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## Varieties of Parliamentarism in the Advanced Industrial Democracies

ALAN SIAROFF

**ABSTRACT.** This article outlines what is meant by a parliamentary form of government and analyzes how such regimes vary in the postwar advanced industrial democracies. A wide range of variables are discussed and measured annually. Factor analysis is used to produce eight different aspects of parliamentarism. The first two of these yield a two-dimensional analysis. Based on these two key factors, it is argued that there are three main types of parliamentary systems: (1) those of cabinet dominance; (2) those that are polarized with a central role for a fragmented parliament; and (3) those of cooperative policy-making diffusion with a working parliament. Generally, the first and third of these are polar opposite types, yet they each manifest greater cabinet durability than the cluster of polarized systems.

**Keywords:** • Cabinet durability • Executive dominance • Parliamentarism • Policy-making diffusion

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### Introduction

In recent decades, political science has placed increasing emphasis on institutional factors as explanations of (or constraints on) political outcomes. In this vein, it is contended that democracies, especially new ones, should consciously choose (or avoid) certain institutional features (see, for example, Sartori, 1994a). Perhaps the central debate in this regard is the argument about whether a parliamentary system should be established instead of a presidential one, inasmuch as “presidentialism seems to involve greater risk for stable democratic politics” (Linz, 1994: 70). A parliamentary system is seen to offer both better accountability and greater flexibility than a presidential one. Yet this conclusion (or argument) is based on essentially treating parliamentarism and presidentialism each as a fixed ideal type. However, parliamentary democracies in particular do not all function the same way, and some are less effective than others.

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In his analyses (most recently in 1999), Arend Lijphart has argued that there are two central dimensions for measuring the majoritarian (or Westminster) versus consensus nature of a democracy—one an executives–parties dimension and the other a federal–unitary dimension. One of the aspects of his executives–parties dimension is the relationship between the executive and the legislature, which Lijphart (1999: 3) argues involves the contrast between executive dominance and executive–legislative balance. This institutional aspect is thus seen as a unidimensional continuum. Moreover, Lijphart (1999: 129) stresses that for parliamentary systems the “best indicator” of the relative power of the executive and legislative branches is cabinet durability. Cabinet durability is frequently measured by political scientists, as by Von Beyme in his recent historical analysis of parliamentary democracy (2000: 190–1).

Of course, Lijphart has made his measurements for all democracies, regardless of their institutional features. In this article, I will limit the scope to the postwar parliamentary systems of the advanced industrial democracies, thus allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of the varieties of parliamentary government. Data on a wide range of variables have been measured across 23 countries, noting the score on each variable annually. Each annual national pattern will be treated as a distinct case of parliamentarianism. The article will then use factor analysis to determine which variables group together, thereby producing eight different aspects (factor loadings) of parliamentary systems. Of these loadings, the first and strongest two (“executive dominance over the legislature” and “fused parliamentarianism with policy centralization”) will be used to provide a two-dimensional analysis. Each case will then be measured in terms of these two aspects, which will yield three main types of parliamentary system. The division into three different categories will be further supported when one compares the resulting three system clusters in terms of cabinet durability.

### **Definitions of a Parliamentary System**

Parliamentary systems seem to lack the intuitive definitional features of presidential systems. This thus leads to a range of definitions. At one extreme, some scholars attribute to parliamentary systems an often long list of “propositions” (Verney, 1992), “features” (Heywood, 2000: 172–3), or “common institutional criteria” combined with “essential social-structural features” (Von Beyme, 2000: 9–11), some of which are more “likely” than “essential.” Conversely, for various scholars (Brunner, 1996: 76; Sartori, 1994a: 101, 1994b: 107–8; Steffani, 1996: 45) there is but a single defining feature of a parliamentary system, namely, the accountability of the government to the parliament, which requires the government to have the support or trust of the parliament in order to remain in office, and which gives the parliament the right to remove any government without such support or which has lost such support.

A reasonable compromise between these analytical extremes seems to be the definition of Lijphart (1999: 117–18), who considers parliamentary systems to be defined by three factors. First, as noted, the government is responsible to the parliament; ultimately, this means that the parliament can remove the government through a vote of nonconfidence. That said, removal may involve the resignation of the government or it may simply force an election which the government could win and so remain in office. Second, in a parliamentary system, the head of government (normally called the prime minister) is not directly elected by the

voters as in a presidential system, but instead is selected by the legislature. Lijphart notes that this process of selection can take many forms. However, it seems the key distinction here is whether “selection” takes the form of parliamentary “election”; in other words, whether there is a formal vote of investiture on a new prime minister or not. Third, and finally, Lijphart notes that parliamentary cabinets are collective or collegial, in contrast to the formal one-person executive of a presidential system.

Based on these three criteria, one would not include Switzerland as a parliamentary system, since there the government is chosen for a fixed (four-year) term and cannot be removed by motions of nonconfidence. Nor can one consider Israel to be parliamentary since 1996, inasmuch as the prime minister has been directly elected by the voters since then.<sup>1</sup> However, one can (and I shall) include as ultimately parliamentary those systems that have been called “semi-presidential” (Finland, France, and Portugal), since these not only have a prime minister, but in fact meet Lijphart’s aforementioned three conditions.

### Variations within Parliamentary Systems

In his analysis of parliamentary systems, Von Beyme (2000: 9–10) speaks to Lijphart’s first point, and discusses the extent of votes of investiture and the practice of dissolution if the prime minister has lost the confidence of the parliamentary majority. However, Von Beyme’s initial criteria deal with the factors facilitating cooperation between the parliamentary majority and the executive: first, the compatibility of parliamentary mandate and ministerial office (although he notes some exceptions); and second, the fact that prime ministers are normally members of parliament. These two factors tend to produce a fusion between the parliament and the government, in contrast to the separation between the congress and the president involved in a presidential system. This fusion seems further reinforced by Lijphart’s first point about the accountability of the government to the parliament. In this vein, Von Beyme (2000: 9) notes how in a general sense “Parliament controls the government by raising questions, exercising the right to interpellate, and setting up committees of enquiry, which facilitate the decision about whether the strongest sanction—a vote of non-confidence—should be used.” However, the extent of such fusion can in fact vary while still respecting the three criteria of parliamentarism.

Indeed, Von Beyme’s point about parliament controlling the government will no doubt strike many readers (especially in the English-speaking advanced industrial democracies) as being formalistic rather than reflecting the actual power dynamics of contemporary parliamentary systems. On the other hand, parliamentary control was certainly a feature of systems such as the French Fourth Republic. Thus, it seems that the issue of whether the parliament controls the government or whether the reverse is basically true is central in terms of variations within parliamentary systems. As noted, Lijphart (1999: 129) argues that the best measure of executive dominance, especially for parliamentary systems, is cabinet durability, that is, that powerful cabinets (*vis-a-vis* the legislature) will last a long time, whereas weak cabinets will not last very long at all.<sup>2</sup> Although this is a commonly accepted point, it does not really get to the nature of *how* and *why* executives are strong. In other words, the duration of cabinets seems more a consequence of other factors. What is needed is a more institutional study, which can then, in turn, be linked to cabinet durability.

The best such institutional examination of parliaments is the work on western Europe found in Döring (1995a), which looks at varying ways in which governments and legislatures coexist. Building on this book, Döring (1996: 46–7) goes on to suggest that government control, and conversely the weakened power of the average member of parliament (MP), has arisen due to what he calls the “rationalization” of parliamentarianism—a development which he notes is associated with the French Fifth Republic and to a lesser extent Greece, but which really began in 19th-century Britain. Döring measures the “rationalization” of parliamentarianism through three factors: (1) difficulties in removing a government through a nonconfidence vote; (2) government control of the plenary agenda; and (3) restrictions on the introduction of private members’ bills. Another line of research, begun by Strøm (1984, 1990), focuses on the nature of parliamentary committees, and their consequent ability or inability to control policy. What happens when these and other factors for all the advanced industrial parliamentary democracies are assessed?

### Variables for Analysis

To measure both aspects and subtypes of parliamentary systems, I have measured 27 different variables for the postwar advanced industrial democracies. The measures have been made annually (at the end of each year up to and including 2002),<sup>3</sup> beginning with the year of the first postwar (democratic and independent) elections in each case. The raw data have been taken from key chapters in Döring (1995a) and chapters in Ismayr (1999), with national sources as additions. Indeed, many of the measured variables are taken from the Döring (1995a) volume. Most variables are of the “yes/no” type, although some allow for an intermediate measure. Generally, then, scores of “2” and “0” (and sometimes “1”) are used. Perhaps controversially, the more majoritarian patterns are given the same score where possible, which means that for some measures “yes” equals “2” and for others “yes” equals “0.” In any case, the key findings will be determined by factor analysis. Each country at each year-end has been treated as a separate case, thus producing 1190 cases as of the end of 2002.

The first three factors measured are the component measures of Döring’s “rationalized” parliamentarianism. In terms of nonconfidence motions, no extra difficulties (scored as “2”) means that a simple majority (really a plurality) is all that is needed for a successful motion. A score of “1” is used when an absolute majority of all deputies is needed; that is, where abstentions or absentees count on the government’s side. Lastly, a score of “0” is used in the most difficult cases, where a nonconfidence motion must be “constructive” or “positive”; that is, where it must also specify a new prime minister.

Next, there is government control of the plenary agenda. This is scored a “2” where this is strong, “1” where moderate, and “0” where weak. Last in this area are restrictions on the introduction of private members’ bills. This is scored a “2” where these restrictions are severe, “1” where mild, and “0” where non-existent and thus where it is common for private members’ bills to be introduced and debated.

The next area involves aspects of parliamentary committees. Here, there are many key factors, including the number of committees and whether these match the structure of government departments. Although one can treat these two as separate measures, here I use the analysis of Powell (2000: 33–4), who notes whether there are more than 10 standing committees corresponding to

government departments, which are thus able to exercise collective oversight over most, if not all, of the government. In a sense, we are speaking here of a strongly versus a weakly institutionalized committee system. This leads to a dichotomous variable, where a “0” indicates such a committee situation and a “2” its absence, with consequent greater government autonomy. Pre-1971 Italy, let us note, is scored a “2” here, since its parliamentary committees had little oversight ability and individual committee members were basically more concerned with promoting private members’ bills to their own clientelistic ends (the so-called *leggrine*, or “little laws”).

The next variable in this area is whether the government controls the committee chairs, or whether these are shared proportionately with the opposition, which obviously produces much greater opposition influence. This is scored a “2” where the government controls all or almost all of the committee chairs, “1” where the opposition controls some and the government still has a disproportionate amount, and “0” where these are shared proportionately with the opposition. I used a category of “all or almost all” because in Westminster systems it is the norm for the opposition to control the public accounts committee; however, this is, of course, only one committee.

Next is measured whether the assembly first determines the principles of a bill before it goes to committee, which thus tends to constrain the committee. In Britain and Canada, for example, this establishment of principles occurs during a “second reading debate”; however, many parliamentary systems do not have such a legislative stage. This variable is scored “2” where the plenary clearly determines the principles of a bill first, “1” where this occurs sometimes, and “0” where this does not occur. Related to this is the ability of committees to rewrite the legislation they receive. This is scored a “0” when they can, “2” when they cannot, and “1” where their substitute texts are considered by the government against the original draft (Döring, 1995b: 236).

Lastly in this area is the issue of the influence of committee members on party positions; that is, whether being on a committee and accepting the committee’s views of a policy then leads the deputy to go back and try to affect her or his party’s position on the issue. This is, in a sense, the opposite of a deputy merely repeating or “towing” the party position on a committee. This is scored a “2” where there is low committee-member influence on party positions, “1” where this is medium, and “0” where this is high (from Damgaard, 1995: 316).

Next, we turn to some other executive–legislative aspects. The first of these is the basic distinction between positive and negative parliamentarianism: the former requires a vote of investiture before a government can take office, whereas in the latter a government is simply appointed and it is up to the opposition to remove it after the fact. Negative parliamentarianism is found in Britain, in its former colonies, and in the Nordic countries;<sup>4</sup> most other systems use positive parliamentarianism. Here, I score positive parliamentarianism a “2” and negative parliamentarianism a “0.” For its part, Sweden after 1976 is scored a “1.” This is because although Sweden has a vote of investiture, absences and abstentions count on the government’s side. In other words, unless an absolute majority votes against a new Swedish government, it passes its vote of investiture and is confirmed. In contrast, the standard practice in positive parliamentarianism is simply that if there are more votes against than for, the investiture fails.

The second aspect here is whether there are any restrictions on early dissolution of the assembly by the government, or whether there are effectively

none—making early dissolution a power of the government and ultimately the prime minister. Where there are no such restrictions (true almost everywhere), the system is scored “2.” Where there are restrictions on early dissolution, the system is scored a “1.” This situation occurs in Germany (where one needs a supermajority to have early elections) and in Sweden (where this is limited temporally in the parliamentary term and where the “next” scheduled elections would still take place). This situation also occurred in the French Fourth Republic, where dissolution could only occur following two defeats of a government (of at least two weeks’ duration) within 18 months of each other, and with the first defeat coming after 18 months of the legislative term had expired (Williams, 1964: 236–7). Lastly, where early dissolution is simply not allowed (for example, in Norway), the system is scored a “0.”

The next aspect is whether “money bills” are a prerogative of the government, thus forbidding any opposition or private members’ bills which affect expenditure. This is scored a “2” where these are a prerogative of the government, “1” where there are some restrictions on the introduction of money bills (as in Greece, where these are delayed if there is no accompanying report by the minister of finance [see Döring, 1995b: 232]), and “0” where there are no restrictions on who may initiate money bills.

Next is the issue of closure; that is, whether debate on a bill can be curtailed early. Where this can be done by majority vote (and thus usually by the government of the day) this is scored a “2.” Where this can occur, but only by mutual agreement of the parties, it is scored a “1.” Lastly, systems without any real procedure for closure, and thus where governments are weakest, are scored “0.” On this variable, see Döring (1995b: 239–41).

The final question here is that of minority vetoes on nonconstitutional legislation. Many countries require a supermajority for *constitutional* changes; however, constitutional procedures are beyond the purview of this analysis. In contrast, granting a minority blocking power on (certain) nonconstitutional matters is very rare. Yet until 1992 this was the case in Finland, where one-third of the parliament could block legislation on economic matters (Arter, 1999: 213). In Belgium since its 1970 constitutional reforms, matters affecting the cultural autonomy of linguistic groups have required a two-thirds majority overall, but also a majority of each linguistic group—thus giving the French-speaking minority a veto (Lijphart, 1984: 30). In these situations where there is such a blocking minority it is scored “0,” while the (normal) absence of this is scored “2.”

We now turn to broader aspects of the (lower house of the) legislature. The first of these is simply the maximum length of the parliamentary term, coded in years (ranging from three to six).<sup>5</sup> Next is the size of the legislature in a conceptual sense. Here, legislatures of 100 members or less are deemed tiny and scored “0”; those of 101–200 members are called small and scored “1”; those of 201–400 members are considered medium-sized and scored “2”; and lastly, those of more than 400 members are deemed large and scored “3.” Intuitively, the role of the individual member should differ between larger and smaller bodies (Mattson, 1995: 469). Of course, legislative size tends to relate closely to national population size: the large parliaments are those of France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Third, there is the issue of whether the legislature is run individually by a speaker or collectively by a collegiate presidency of parliament, the latter being usually called either the “bureau” or the “presidium” (Bergognous, 1997: 92–4). Where there is no collegiate body, just the speaker,

this is scored a “2.” Where there is a collegiate body, but the speaker is still dominant, this is scored a “1.” Lastly, where there is a powerful collegiate body that collectively is clearly in charge of the legislature, this is scored a “0.”

Next is the nature of cabinet ministers, which has two aspects. The first of these is the relationship of ministers to the assembly in an office-holding sense; that is, whether ministers are also MPs. The compatibility of parliamentary mandate and ministerial office was noted by Von Beyme (above) as a central feature of parliamentarism. Where ministers may be MPs (and conversely MPs can become ministers without giving up their seats) this is coded “2,” and where ministers cannot be MPs (that is, these are incompatible positions) this is coded “0.” The second aspect here is whether cabinet ministers tend to be “generalists” or “specialists” (Davis, 1997: Ch. 4). Generalists come up through the parliamentary ranks, change cabinet positions frequently (and thus serve in various portfolios), and exist in a more hierarchical environment (even within the cabinet). In contrast, specialists are experts in their particular ministerial area, tend to keep the same portfolio for a long time, and may not be MPs or even politicians.

The next issue is whether there is a recognized leader of the parliamentary opposition, which would tend to imply the more adversarial nature of the parliament. Where this is a formal state appointment with various privileges and a “rank” equal to a cabinet minister (the British model),<sup>6</sup> this is scored a “2.” Where this is a recognized position with some privileges but no “rank” (that is, Greece since 1987), this is scored a “1.” Otherwise, where there is no recognized leader of the opposition, this is scored a “0.”

Lastly, there is the issue of the electoral system used to elect members to the assembly (that is, the lower house). Although there are many different types of electoral systems, I wish to make a distinction between single-member systems (of whatever calculation) and all other systems, since only in single-member systems does each member represent a given territory and represent this exclusively. Thus I have created a dichotomous variable in which a single-member system is coded “2” and all other systems (including mixed member) are coded “0.”

The last multivariate area to be included is what I call other factors beyond the lower house which may affect, or have affinities with, the workings of the parliamentary system. The first of these is bicameralism and its nature. Given the range of possibilities here, there are several categories coded. Where there is no bicameralism, the system is scored “0.” Where there is partial bicameralism in the sense that part of the (lower) house turns into a separate upper house (as in Norway and, until 1991, Iceland) this is scored “1.” Where there is clear bicameralism in the sense of two separately elected chambers, but where the upper house is weak, this is scored “2.” Lastly, in those rare cases where there is clear bicameralism and the upper house is strong in Lijphart’s (1999: 205ff.) sense, this is scored “4.” Somewhat related (via federalism) there is the issue of whether the political system has judicial review. Lijphart makes this a separate variable in his 1999 book, and Ackerman (2000) considers an independent constitutional court to be a key part of what he calls “constrained parliamentarism.” Where there is no judicial review or where this is weak (sometimes this is not a clear national distinction) the system is scored “0.” In contrast, where there is strong judicial review, this is scored “2.” Lastly, where the level of judicial review is of medium strength, this is scored “1.”

The next two variables were not in Lijphart’s 1984 analysis of democracies, but were included in his 1999 version (Lijphart, 1999: Chs 9, 13). The first of these

TABLE 1. *Factor Loadings*

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
<i>Eigenvalues</i>	6.540	3.394	2.719	2.694	2.252	1.957	1.689	1.482
<i>Percentage of total variance explained</i>	23.356	12.121	9.711	9.620	8.042	6.988	6.031	5.292
Powerful prime minister	<b>0.650</b>							
Elected president					– 0.828			
Bicameralism			<b>0.824</b>					
Lack of judicial review			– 0.833					
Independent central bank							<b>0.938</b>	
Pluralism	0.442	<b>0.602</b>						
Length of parliamentary term								<b>0.768</b>
Single-member system	<b>0.689</b>					0.476		
Size of legislature			<b>0.657</b>				– 0.445	
Speaker versus bureau or presidium	0.439				<b>0.609</b>			
Positive parliamentarianism						– 0.828		
Lack of difficulties with early dissolution		<b>0.598</b>						
Ministerial–MP compatibility		<b>0.783</b>						
Ministers as generalists		<b>0.661</b>			0.556			
Leader of the opposition	<b>0.688</b>							
Nonconfidence difficulties			0.466		– 0.541			
Government control of plenary agenda	<b>0.794</b>							
Restrictions on private members' bills	<b>0.460</b>		0.416					
Government control of committee chairs		<b>0.720</b>						
Plenary first determines principles	<b>0.734</b>							
Closure	<b>0.731</b>							
Money bills are a government prerogative	<b>0.869</b>							
Weakly institutionalized committees		<b>0.594</b>						
Inability of committees to rewrite legislation	<b>0.720</b>							
Low committee influence on parties	<b>0.876</b>							
Lack of nonconstitutional minority vetoes					<b>0.801</b>			
Effective number of parliamentary parties					– 0.821			
Size of largest party (seat percentage)	0.446				<b>0.752</b>			

*Note.* Principal components analysis, varimax rotation. Only absolute values of at least 0.400 are shown. Bold indicates where the variable has the strongest effect.

“economic” variables is the independence of the central bank. Where this is limited or weak, this is scored “0”; where this is moderate, it is scored “1”; and where this is high, it is scored “2.” The other “economic” variable is whether interest-group behavior and intermediation is pluralist or corporatist. In fact, this variable has an affinity with strictly institutional features of the parliament, since there seems to be a relationship between sharing policy-making with the opposition and sharing it with organized interests. That is, as Döring (1996: 44–5) notes, the stronger the corporatism, the greater the authority of parliamentary committees. Here, a country that is corporatist at the end of a given year is scored “0” and one that is pluralist is scored “2.” The measurement of corporatism and most of the scores are drawn from Siaroff (1999), wherein I prefer the term “integration” to corporatism (and these are the scores used).

Next is a general sense of the power of the prime minister, taken from King’s (1994) analysis of western Europe. Systems where the prime minister has low power are scored “0”; systems where the prime minister has medium power are scored “1”; and systems where the prime minister has high power are scored “2.” Lastly, there is the issue of whether there is an elected president and, if so, how powerful she or he is, given that this may be an alternative to prime ministerial power. Here, there seems to be four relevant categories (taken from Siaroff, 2000: 9–11). Systems without an elected president (such as the United Kingdom or Australia) are scored “0”; systems with an elected president, but a weak one (such as Austria) are scored “1”; systems with a moderately strong elected president (such as Finland until 2000) are scored “2”; and systems with a strong elected president (such as the French Fifth Republic) are scored “3.”

The very last area for measurement is the fragmentation of the legislature. This is measured in two ways, based normally on the last election preceding the end of the year concerned. The first measure here is the effective number of parliamentary parties. The second measure is the size, that is, the seat percentage, of the largest parliamentary party alone.

### Factors of Parliamentarianism

Factor analysis was conducted using all of the aforementioned variables. The consequent results of the eight factors with eigenvalues above one are reported in Table 1. As noted therein, for readability only absolute values of at least 0.400 are shown. In some cases a variable will have such a value on more than one factor, but in all cases the greatest value is indicated in bold.

The first factor is far and away the most important. It involves the greatest number of the variables included—and of these, 10 in their most significant capacity (those indicated in bold). The vast majority of these factors speak to executive dominance in the political system, be it through a powerful prime minister, government control of the legislative process, or the weakness of individual MPs. Indeed, the highest values here are for deputies repeating or “towing” the party position on a committee (low committee influence on parties) and for money bills being a government prerogative. Given the nature of these variables, it is reasonable to call this factor a measure of *executive dominance over the legislature*. Two other variables which load strongly on this factor are also worth noting: a single-member electoral system and a formal leader of the opposition. Neither of these is part of executive dominance over the legislature strictly speaking, but a single-member electoral system can be seen to facilitate it (and to

make MPs more oriented to debating and personal re-election), whereas a formal leader of the opposition perhaps parallels a strong prime minister.

The second factor involves six key variables: pluralism as opposed to corporatism, the lack of difficulties with early dissolution, ministerial–MP compatibility, ministers as policy generalists, government control of committee chairs, and weakly institutionalized committees (not having more than 10 standing committees corresponding to government departments). It is notable that government control of committee chairs and weakly institutionalized committees load here and not on the first factor. A committee chair, let us suggest, should be viewed as a position of influence (like a cabinet minister), rather than as a procedural role. In any case, this second factor can be better understood if one imagines the alternative extreme: a situation of corporatism, in which there are difficulties (or even impossibilities) with early dissolution, where ministers cannot be MPs and are policy specialists, and where the chairs of strongly institutionalized committees are shared proportionately with the political opposition. These factors seem to speak to a *checks and balances* situation, wherein the government and parliament are not so asymmetrical in power, but rather constrain each other, and where opposition parties are relevant to the policy process through their control of committee chairs (as are key interest groups through corporatism). In contrast, where the government can “easily” (in an institutional sense) call early elections, where ministers sit in parliament, where government MPs run what committees there are, and where interest groups can be marginalized, a situation of what may be called *fused parliamentarianism with policy centralization* seems to evolve. Certainly in 19th-century parliamentarianism, the development of the government’s (as opposed to the monarch’s) right to dissolve parliament became its “legal counterbalance to Parliament’s right to censure governments” (Markesinis, 1987: 179). Lastly, the fusion of the executive and legislative powers is often presumed to be a definitional feature of parliamentarianism, in contrast to the separation of powers involved in presidential systems. However, it seems that parliamentary systems can have their own sort of separation of powers, or at least checks and balances.

It should also be noted that the factor analysis and resulting Factor 2 (see Table 1) confirm the above-discussed affinity between sharing policy-making with the opposition and sharing it with organized interests. Döring’s (1996: 44–5) finding that the stronger the corporatism, the greater the authority of parliamentary committees is thus confirmed for the advanced industrial democracies as a whole (at least using a dichotomous division of corporatism versus pluralism).

Factor 3 in Table 1 is certainly relevant, but does not appear to be as insightful: combining (strong) bicameralism, judicial review, and a large lower house, this factor speaks to Lijphart’s federal–unitary dimension, although central bank independence (one of the component measures in his 1999 book) does not load significantly here. Factor 4 is driven by a low effective number of parliamentary parties, the lack of nonconstitutional minority vetoes, and the large size (seat percentage) of the biggest party. What is perhaps most interesting is that the measures of parliamentary fragmentation load much more strongly on this factor than on Factor 1 (executive dominance over the legislature), since the effective number of parliamentary parties is a key variable in Lijphart’s (1984, 1999) measure of majoritarianism.

Factor 5 has four relevant aspects, the strongest of which is the absence of a (powerful) elected president. This factor also includes a speaker-run legislature, ministers as generalists (although not as strongly as in Factor 2), and the absence

of nonconfidence difficulties. The inclusion here of nonconfidence difficulties doubtless comes from the reality that the three cases which require a “constructive” motion of nonconfidence (Germany, Spain, and Belgium since 1993) also have either a figurehead president or a monarch. The overall combination may, however, simply be driven by shared British traditions.

The remaining factors in Table 1 are, of course, weaker statistically, and tend to contain just one or two key variables. Factor 6 involves the lack of positive parliamentarism (that is, negative parliamentarism) and to a lesser extent a single-member electoral system; again, this is a British-type combination. Factor 7 is driven by an independent central bank, but it also includes a small legislature. It thus seems that Lijphart’s federal–unitary dimension is split between Factors 3 and 7, rather than being one distinct factor. Lastly, Factor 8 simply revolves around the length of the parliamentary term.

### Clusters of Parliamentary Systems

Let us now focus more on the interplay of what are the two strongest factors in Table 1: executive dominance over the legislature and fused parliamentarism with policy centralization. To this end, I have established additive indices of the relevant variables in each case. For Factor 1, this involves the 10 variables which are most significant in this factor, but also the speaker versus bureau or presidium variable, since this is relevant here even if not as significant as in Factor 5. An additive index of these 11 factors, then, is straightforward, since each of the factors have the same positive sign in Table 1. They are also all coded the same way, with a maximum score of 2, a score always indicating the more executive-dominant (or majoritarian) situation. Lastly, these 11 items form a highly reliable index: the standardized Cronbach’s alpha for them is 0.9350. Table 2 gives the data for each of these variables in the briefest space possible, listing each country by the year(s) when all scores are the same. The combined additive value here can range from 0 up to 22—although as Table 2 shows, the lowest actual scores are 1 and 2 in the French Fourth Republic, and 3 in pre-1992 Finland, the Netherlands, and Norway. “Perfect” high scores of 22 occur in Australia, New Zealand (until its electoral system change of 1996), and the United Kingdom.

The six significant components of Factor 2 also each have a maximum of 2. These six items, each with the same positive sign, form their own reliable index: the standardized Cronbach’s alpha for them is 0.8266. Table 3 gives the data for each of these variables.<sup>7</sup> The resulting Factor 2 scores thus range from 0 in Norway and 1 in Sweden (since 1970) up to the maximum of 12 in Australia (except for the corporatist Hawke–Keating Labor era), Greece, Iceland (through 1990), Ireland, Italy (through 1970), Malta, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

Figure 1 then groups the scores for each of these two factors into five categories: very high, high, medium, low, and very low. Combining the categories from Factor 1 on executive dominance over the legislature and Factor 2 on fused parliamentarism with policy centralization does produce a basic global pattern, in that these two factors are certainly related. Specifically, the intercorrelation of the two additive indices for the 1190 country-years is a highly significant 0.633. That said, the relationship is far from perfectly linear. Rather, it seems that most postwar parliamentary systems fall into one of three clusters, as has been indicated with boxes in Figure 1.

TABLE 2. *Scores on First Factor Variables*

	Government control of plenary agenda	Restrictions on the introduction of private members' bills	Plenary first determines the principles of a bill	Ability of committees to rewrite legislation
Australia since 1946	2	2	2	2
Austria since 1945	1	2	0	1
Belgium since 1946	1	1	0	0
Canada since 1945	2	2	2	2
Denmark since 1945	0	0	1	2
Finland 1945–91	0	1	0	0
Finland since 1992	0	1	0	0
France IV 1946–51	0	0	0	0
France IV 1952–58	0	0	0	0
France V 1959–73	2	2	0	2
France V 1974–85	2	2	0	2
France V 1986–87	2	2	0	2
France V since 1988	2	2	0	2
Germany since 1949	1	2	0	0
Greece 1974–86	2	2	0	2
Greece since 1987	2	2	0	2
Iceland since 1946	0	1	0	0
Ireland since 1948	2	2	2	2
Israel 1949–95	2	0	0	0
Italy since 1948	0	2	0	0
Japan since 1946	2	2	0	1
Luxembourg since 1945	2	2	0	1
Malta since 1966	2	2	2	2
The Netherlands since 1946	0	0	0	2
New Zealand 1946–95	2	2	2	2
New Zealand since 1996	2	2	2	2
Norway since 1945	1	0	0	0
Portugal 1976–81	2	1	0	1
Portugal since 1982	2	1	0	1
Spain since 1977	1	2	2	0
Sweden since 1948	0	1	0	0
United Kingdom since 1945	2	2	2	2

In the very upper right of Figure 1, one finds a group of basically pure “Westminster democracies”: Australia (most of the time), Malta, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Close to these, and crucially still within the upper right box, are slightly imperfect variants of the Westminster model: Australia (when it was corporatist), Canada (due essentially to its institutionalized committee system), Greece (due especially to its lack of a single-member electoral system and lack of a second reading debate), and Ireland (due to its use of a single transferable vote [STV] in multimember constituencies and lack of a leader of the opposition). Also just within this box is the French Fifth Republic (France V), except during its brief switch to list proportional representation (list PR). These are all cases with both a clear cabinet dominance over the legislature and (France V excepted) a strong

Influence of committee members on party positions	Money bill a prerogative of government	Curtailling of debate before the final vote	Parliamentary bureau or presidium	Recognized leader of the opposition	Single-member electoral system	Power of the prime minister	Total
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	22
0	0	1	0	0	0	1	6
1	0	1	1	0	0	1	6
2	2	2	1	2	2	2	21
1	0	1	1	0	0	1	7
1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
1	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
2	2	2	0	0	2	0	14
2	2	2	0	0	2	1	15
2	2	2	0	0	0	1	13
2	2	2	0	0	2	1	15
1	0	1	1	0	0	2	8
2	1	2	1	0	0	2	14
2	1	2	1	1	0	2	15
0	0	1	1	0	0	1	4
2	2	2	2	0	0	2	18
2	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
2	0	1	1	0	0	0	9
1	0	1	1	0	0	1	9
2	2	2	2	2	0	2	20
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	22
2	2	2	2	2	0	2	20
0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
2	2	1	0	0	0	0	9
2	2	1	0	0	0	1	10
2	2	1	0	0	0	2	12
1	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	22

fusion of the executive and legislature. Since it is cabinet dominance over both the legislature and the policy process that is apparently its most unique feature, this cluster can be classified as such—as “cabinet dominance,” although “Westminster systems loosely defined” is also appropriate. It should be stressed that New Zealand’s 1996 switch from single-member plurality to mixed-member proportional (MMP) was not a sufficient overall change to cause the country to change its placement in Figure 1 in the absence of any changes to its legislative procedures, ministers, and so on. For the moment, New Zealand has perhaps become largely like Malta, a long-standing “Westminster with PR” system (although New Zealand’s governments have usually been coalitions since 1996).

In the lower right of Figure 1 are several systems with legislative balance with

TABLE 3. Scores on Second Factor Variables

	Not over ten standing committees corresponding to government departments	Government control of committee chairs	Lack of difficulties with early dissolution	Ministers can be MPs [2] or cannot be [0]	Ministers are generalists [2] or specialists [0]	Pluralism [2] or corporatism [0]	Total
Australia 1946–82	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Australia 1983–95	2	2	2	2	2	0	10
Australia since 1996	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Austria since 1945	0	2	2	2	0	0	6
Belgium since 1946	0	0	2	2	2	0	6
Canada since 1945	0	2	2	2	2	2	10
Denmark 1945–71	2	0	2	2	2	0	8
Denmark since 1972	0	0	2	2	2	0	6
Finland 1945–65	2	0	2	2	0	2	8
Finland since 1966	2	0	2	2	0	0	6
France IV 1946–58	0	1	1	2	2	2	8
France V since 1959	2	2	2	0	0	2	8
Germany since 1949	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Greece since 1974	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Iceland 1946–90	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Iceland since 1991	0	2	2	2	2	2	10
Ireland since 1948	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Israel 1949–95	2	1	2	2	2	0	9
Italy 1948–70	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Italy since 1971	0	2	2	2	2	2	10
Japan 1946–48	0	1	2	2	2	2	9
Japan since 1949	0	1	2	2	2	0	7
Luxembourg since 1945	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Malta since 1966	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
The Netherlands since 1946	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
New Zealand since 1946	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Norway since 1945	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Portugal since 1976	0	0	2	0	0	2	4
Spain since 1977	0	1	2	2	0	2	7
Sweden 1948–69	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Sweden since 1970	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
United Kingdom since 1945	2	2	2	2	2	2	12

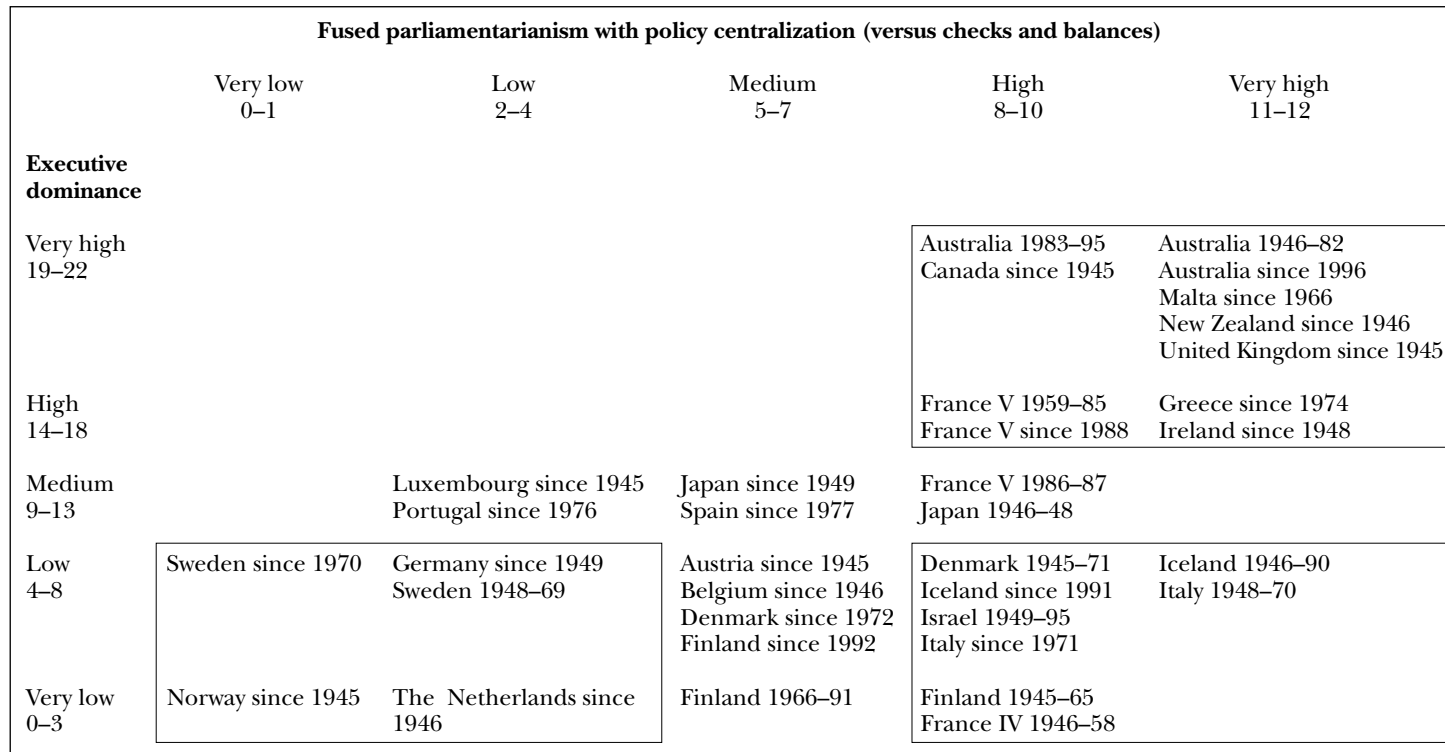


FIGURE 1. *Clusters of Parliamentarianism*

(or even dominance over) the cabinet, but still exhibiting fused parliamentarism with policy centralization: Denmark until 1972, Finland until 1966, the French Fourth Republic, Iceland, Israel, and Italy. None of these are completely “ideal types” in the extreme lower right, however. Some of these cases were centrifugal parliamentary systems, especially the French Fourth Republic and postwar Italy. More broadly, though, these have all been rather polarized political systems (although “polarized” is probably too strong a term for Iceland). Still, let us call this box a situation of “polarized systems with a central role for a fragmented parliament”—importantly, with the stress on the parliament as a whole (versus, say, a key role for parliamentary committees). As we shall see, the cases in this box have tended to have low cabinet durability.

Lastly, in the box on the lower left of Figure 1, one finds Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, with Norway being the strongest variant of this box. The countries in this cluster score the same on Factor 1 (executive dominance over the legislature) as do those in the second cluster; that is, these countries also lack such a pattern. However, the extent of policy-making diffusion and checks-and-balances elements in this third cluster, such as corporatism, ministerial specialization, and opposition influence on and through parliamentary committees, separate this cluster from *both* other clusters. Moreover, Arter (1999: 213–5) has noted that, of the Nordic cases, Norway and Sweden best fit the model of a “working parliament,” in which the “action” occurs in standing committees and where legislators are oriented to detailed policy matters rather than debating or being drawn to the media spotlight. Let us thus call those systems in this cluster ones of “cooperative policy-making diffusion” with a working parliament.

I shall now measure these three clusters in terms of cabinet durability. To this end, following Lijphart (1999: 131), one can define a change of cabinet as involving any of: (1) a change in party composition; (2) a change in prime minister; (3) a parliamentary election; or (4) a shift to majority or minority status due to by-elections.<sup>8</sup> One can also use just the first event, a change in party composition. This is the succinct, if more controversial, definition of Dodd (1976: 6), which allows cabinets to exist (indefinitely) across elections. Lastly, the average of these two measures can be combined, as Lijphart (1999: 132–3) does. Table 4 shows the values for each of these three measures for each case in each of the three clusters in Figure 1.<sup>9</sup> Table 4 also gives the averages for each cluster. These averages are both unweighted and weighted by total years; in fact, weighting makes little difference. Overall, one sees that no matter the measure or calculation, it is the cluster of polarized systems in the lower right of Figure 1 which has the lowest cabinet durability. The lower left cluster of Figure 1, in fact, benefits from cooperation even in the face of fragmentation, and thus is actually in the middle in terms of cabinet durability.

## Conclusions

Parliamentary systems have a wide variety of variables and resulting factor groupings, but some of these are more or less self-evident, such as executive dominance over the legislature versus executive–legislative balance, federalism versus a unitary system, and variations in the nature and role of the head of state. However, this analysis has shown that executive dominance over the legislature is the broadest dimension, since it is, in fact, a composite of no less than 11 measures. Moreover, there is a key second dimension of parliamentary systems,

TABLE 4. *Cabinet Durability*

	Total governments			Average length (years)		
	Total years	Lijphart measure	Dodd measure	Lijphart measure	Dodd measure	Combined average
<i>Cluster One (systems of cabinet dominance)</i>						
Australia since 1946	57	29	6	1.966	9.500	5.733
Canada since 1945	58	22	7	2.636	8.286	5.461
France V 1959–85	27	15	9	1.800	3.000	2.400
France V since 1988	15	7	6	2.143	2.500	2.321
Greece since 1974	29	12	6	2.417	4.833	3.625
Ireland since 1948	55	23	16	2.391	3.438	2.914
Malta since 1966	37	9	5	4.111	7.400	5.756
New Zealand since 1946	57	30	14	1.900	4.071	2.986
United Kingdom since 1945	58	22	8	2.636	7.250	4.943
Unweighted average				2.444	5.586	4.015
Weighted average				2.440	6.097	4.270
<i>Cluster Two (polarized systems)</i>						
Denmark 1945–71	27	15	6	1.800	4.500	3.150
Finland 1945–65	21	23	21	0.913	1.000	0.957
France IV 1946–58	13	25	16	0.520	0.813	0.666
Iceland since 1946	57	24	18	2.375	3.167	2.771
Israel 1949–95	47	32	27	1.469	1.741	1.605
Italy since 1948	55	51	40	1.078	1.375	1.227
Unweighted average				1.359	2.099	1.729
Weighted average				1.540	2.230	1.880
<i>Cluster Three (systems of cooperative policy-making diffusion)</i>						
Germany since 1949	54	27	15	2.000	3.600	2.800
The Netherlands since 1946	57	22	18	2.591	3.167	2.879
Norway since 1945	58	28	15	2.071	3.867	2.969
Sweden since 1948	55	25	10	2.200	5.500	3.850
Unweighted average				2.216	4.033	3.124
Weighted average				2.220	4.180	3.200
For the unweighted averages	F			5.539	5.325	6.648
	Level of significance			0.015	0.017	0.008

that of fused parliamentarism with policy centralization, which is not normally stressed in comparative analysis, but which has been shown to be quite significant. If we combine this dimension with that of executive dominance over the legislature, as is done in Figure 1, and emphasize the resulting clusters, the following points bear noting. First, in the advanced industrial democracies, parliamentarism basically occurs in three different main types. Second, there is no real-world type that combines executive dominance over the legislature with cooperative policy-making diffusion; that is, there are no cases in the *upper left* of Figure 1. (The absence of this combination is certainly a topic for future

research.) Executive dominance over the legislature thus only coexists with fused parliamentarianism and policy centralization, but fused parliamentarianism and policy centralization need not coexist with executive dominance over the legislature. Lastly, it has often been the case that the fragmented, legislative-centered regimes of an Italy or a French Fourth Republic are seen as the antithesis of the British model.<sup>10</sup> Yet this is only a “half-antithesis.” In fact, it is the lower left cluster of Figure 1 which is the sharpest alternative to the Westminster parliamentarianism found in the United Kingdom, its former colonies, and elsewhere. Specifically, if one wishes to contrast British parliamentarianism, then the strongest contrast (cabinet durability excepted) in the advanced industrial democracies is with selected northern European cases, especially Norway.

More generally, if we move beyond the advanced industrial democracies, parliamentary systems have also been established in various developing societies and in most post-communist states of central and eastern Europe. Although unstable cabinets are invariably seen as a political problem, since they are less effective, these would be worse for any new parliamentary democracy which is trying to consolidate itself. To this end, all parliamentary systems, but especially new ones, should try to avoid being or becoming “polarized systems with a central role for a fragmented parliament.” Based on our analysis, there are thus two options here for a new (democratic) parliamentary system. The first scenario is to aim to establish cabinet dominance, in particular by (1) using a single-member electoral system, and by (2) giving the government control over money bills and the overall parliamentary agenda, and by giving it the right to use closure, as well as, conversely, by limiting the ability of parliamentary committees or individual members to determine legislation. These features should produce a system with effective governments and powerful prime ministers. Yet such a majoritarian scenario is risky and thus probably undesirable for heterogeneous societies; nor would it appeal to those who see a more consensual style of democracy as being of higher quality and “kinder and gentler” (Lijphart, 1999: Ch. 16). If a country thus opts instead for executive–legislative balance, then one needs to add to this pattern the series of checks and balances found in the cluster of countries with cooperative policy-making diffusion. However, a central aspect of these systems is corporatism, and as I have noted elsewhere (Siaroff, 1999: 177–9), an “ideal type” of corporatism involves a range of structural features, functional roles, behavioral patterns, and favorable contexts. These aspects cannot just be created overnight. What can be “easily” implemented, however, are limits on early dissolution of the legislature, an institutionalized committee system, a proportionate sharing of committee chairs, and (perhaps easiest) the incompatibility between being a cabinet minister and being an MP (which, in turn, will discourage policy generalists). These features should thus increase policy consensus and governmental stability, even if (or especially if) the polity is heterogeneous.

### Notes

1. Indeed, Lijphart (1999: 119) goes so far as to put Israel after 1996 in with presidential systems.
2. Since presidential systems (and Switzerland) lack motions of nonconfidence, cabinet durability in such regimes is more of a “given” than a reflection of strength.
3. For Israel, measuring each year up to and including 1995.
4. It should be noted that as of its 2000 Constitution (Section 61), Finland now uses

- positive parliamentarianism. However, this change did not come into effect until after the 2003 elections, that is, until after the period of our data analysis.
5. In Luxembourg, until 1954, the parliamentary term was six years. (It is still six years in some of the Austrian *Länder*.)
  6. This “rank” normally involves a salary also equal to that of a cabinet minister; however, in Canada this goes further, since its leader of the opposition is also provided with an official residence at the taxpayers’ expense.
  7. Data on any and all variables not included in either Table 2 or Table 3 are available from the author.
  8. Again following Lijphart (1999: 131 footnote 7), if a cabinet resigns but is then reformed, this is *not* treated as a new cabinet in the absence of any of (1), (2), or (3).
  9. If a country has slight variations in its scores, but still exists continuously within a cluster, then it is treated as one ongoing case in Table 4.
  10. Let us stress that this is not the case for Lijphart, for whom Belgium has been the main parliamentary example of a consensus system. Certainly, Belgium is a clear opposite of Westminster democracies on the dimension of executive dominance over the legislature; however, it is only moderately opposite on the dimension of fused parliamentarianism with policy centralization.

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