

European Politics

Additional slides on Germany

Vilém Semerák, Ph.D.
vilem.semerak@fsv.cuni.cz

Mandalay University, January 7th 2018

<http://eu.jingjixue.net/>

Outline of the Session

- Back to the last session – some clarifications, examples and additional details
 - Parties and systems
- Germany: political institutions and political system

Main Texts for This Session

- Colomer: Comparative European Politics
- Cini & Perez-Solorzano Borrigan: EU Politics
- Additional reading and data:
 - EP website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>
 - Eurostat: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

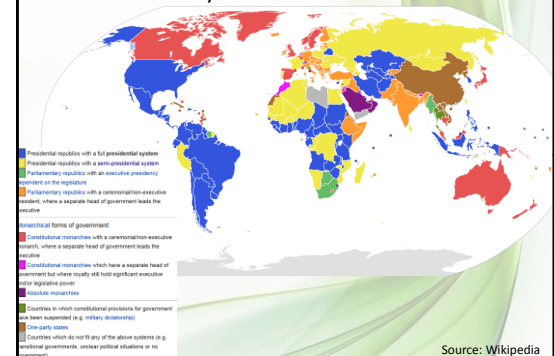
Implications of the Design of Political Systems

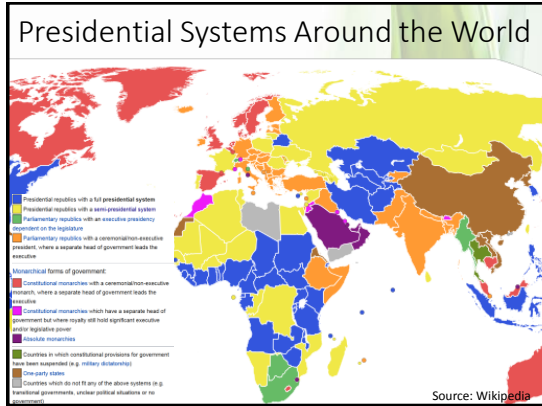
- Proportional system
 - Multiple representatives elected per constituency
 - Constituencies are larger
 - Multiple parties in the parliament, they are often more “specialized”
 - There could be even too much diversity → the need for thresholds
 - Typically need for coalition governments
 - Larger constituencies – smaller risk of fraud?
- Majority system
 - Only one member of parliament is to be elected per *constituency*
 - Small parties not so likely to succeed – often there are 2 main parties
 - But - the parties are likely to grow “wider” and can have more diverse internal structure
 - “One color” government more likely

Duverger’s Law


- Plurality single-member district election rules tend to create two-party systems in the legislature
- Proportional representation electoral systems generate multiple party systems in the legislature

Presidential Systems Around the World





French System – Semi-Presidential



- **President**
 - Elected directly for 5 years (since 2000)
 - Max. two consecutive terms (since 2008)
 - Executive role
 - Currently: E. Macron
- **Parliament**
 - Elected, majority rules
- **Government**
 - President chooses the Prime Minister, but the government must also get support from the Parliament
- **What is the President and the Parliament come from a different party?**
 - *Cohabitation*

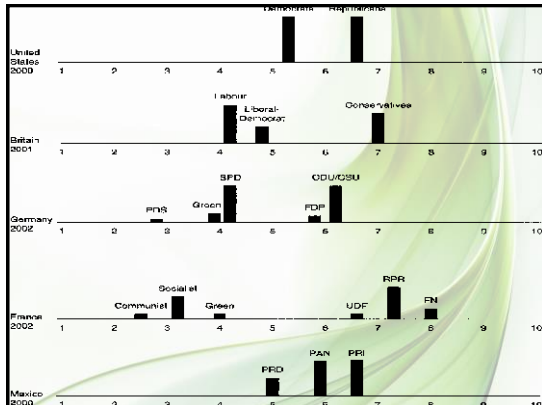
Political parties in democracies

- Traditional left-right political spectrum
- left end: communist parties
- left: social democratic parties
- right: Christian democratic parties
- right: conservative parties

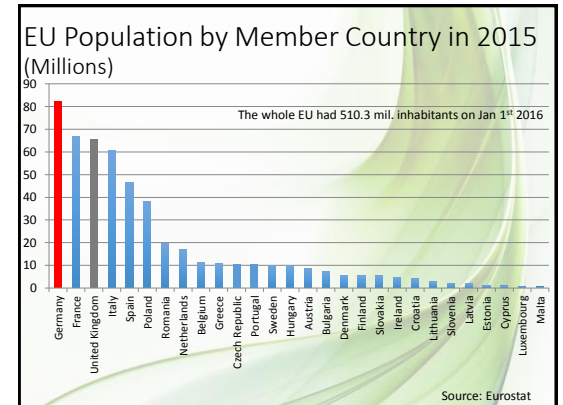
TABLE 2.4 Main Types of Political Parties by Country

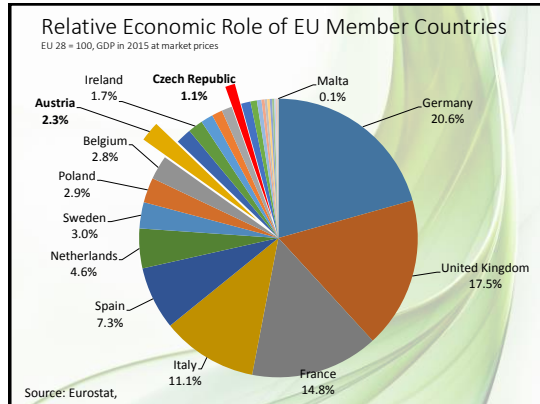
COUNTRY	COM-MUNIST	SOCIALIST	LIBERAL	TYPE OF PARTY		
				CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC	CONSERVATIVE	OTHER
Great Britain	—	Labour	Liberal Democrats ^a	—	Conservative	Regional ^b
France	PCF	PS	—	—	RPR/LDF	Green National Front
Germany	PDS	SPD	FDP	—	CDU	Green National Front
Japan	JCP	DSPJ	—	—	LDP	Komeito

^aLiberal to 1983, Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance 1983–87, Liberal Democrats 1988 on.
^bNationalist parties of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
 The French Radical and Christian Democratic parties are no longer big enough to include here.



Germany





Germany

- The biggest European economy
- Experienced most radical changes during the modern history
 - Constitutional monarchy: 1871-1918
 - Unstable democracy: 1919-1933 (Weimar Republic)
 - National Socialist totalitarianism: 1933-1945
 - Military occupation: 1945-49
 - Two separate German states: 1949-1990
 - Liberal democratic market economy – West Germany
 - Communist dictatorship – GDR
 - Unified democratic state: 1990 - ?

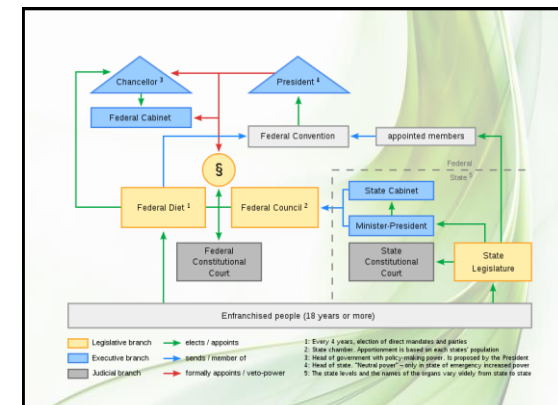


Transition to Democracy

- Success appeared unlikely in 1945
 - Brutal history
 - Military defeat and wartime destruction, occupation
 - Influx of 12 million refugees
- Success factors
 - Discrediting of non-democratic alternatives
 - Support of Western allies
 - Economic miracle: high economic growth in 1950s and 1960s

Political Institutions (1)

- Constitution: Grundgesetz (1949)
- Federal Structure:
 - Lower House (Bundestag)
 - Upper House (Bundesrat)



Party Structure

- CDU-CSU (Christian Democratic Union, Christian Social Union)
 - Center-right, pragmatic
 - On average 43.3 per cent votes 1949-2005
- SPD
 - Center-left
 - "People's party", unionized workers
- FDP (Free Democratic Party)
 - Liberals
- Gruenen (Green Party)
- PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism)

Table 5.1 Elections to the German lower house, 1949–2005

Year	Turnout	Communist KPD/PDS/Left	Green Gr/90	Socialist SPD	Liberal FDP	Christian CDU-CSU	Right	Others
1949	79	6	–	29	12	31	2	20
1953	86	2	–	29	10	45	1	13
1957	88	–	–	32	8	50	1	9
1961	88	–	–	36	13	45	1	5
1965	87	–	–	39	10	48	2	2
1969	87	–	–	43	6	46	4	1
1972	91	0	–	46	8	45	1	0
1976	91	0	–	43	8	49	0	0
1980	89	0	2	43	11	45	0	0
1983	89	0	6	38	7	49	0	0
1987	84	0	8	37	9	44	1	1
1990	78	2	5	34	11	44	2	2
1994	79	4	7	36	7	41	2	2
1998	82	5	7	41	6	35	2	4
2002	79	4	9	39	7	39	–	2
2005	78	9	8	34	10	35	1	3

Note: Party vote is measured as a percentage of the total second vote.

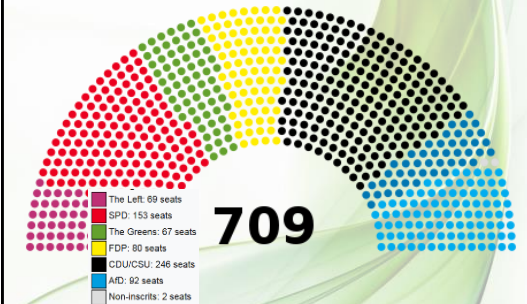
Communists and post-communists: KPD: 1949 and 1953 (banned in 1956 by a ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court); DKP: German Communist Party, 1972–87; MDP: Marxist-Leninist Party in Germany, 1987; PDS: Party of Democratic Socialism, 1990–2002; PDS/Left party 2005.

Greens: Greens (Die Grünen and since 1993 Bündnis 90/Die Grünen).

Socialists: SPD: German Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands).

Liberals: FDP: Liberal Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei).

Bundestag 2017



Interesting Features

- Narrower and more concentrated party structure relative to unstable Weimar Republic (and to most countries with proportional representation)
- Absence of an agrarian party, secular conservative party of an Anglo-US type, or of a larger right wing extreme Party
 - Latest change – ascent of the AfD

Elections

- Proportional representation
 - Universal suffrage for citizens of German nationality aged eighteen or over
- Lower House
 - Voters have two votes
 - For constituency
 - For a party list
 - ½ of seats in LH allocated through majority votes in constituencies, the other ½ through party lists in each of the 16 states
 - The second vote is the decisive one!
 - How many seats
 - Who gets the seats
 - Proportionality = 5 per cent threshold

References and Recommended Literature

- Colomer: Comparative European Politics, 3rd edition
- Information on EFTA states:
 - <http://www.efta.int/about-efta/the-efta-states>
- Information on the ordinary legislative procedure:
 - <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ordinary-legislative-procedure/en/home.html>
- Information on EU citizenship:
 - <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/>
- Website of the European Parliament
 - <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>