

# Presidentialism and Parliamentarism I



April 6, 2021

**POL 002: Introduction to Comparative Politics**

**Isaac Hale**

**Spring Quarter, 2021**

**UC DAVIS**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

# Outline

## 1. Parliamentary Systems

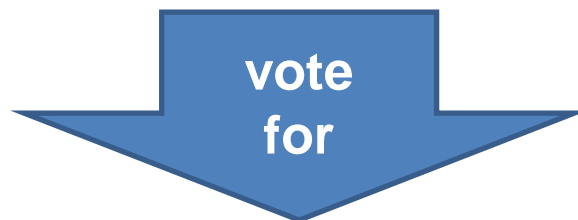
# Key Terms

- Government
- Head of state
- Head of government

# Parliamentarism

# Parliamentary System

**Voters**



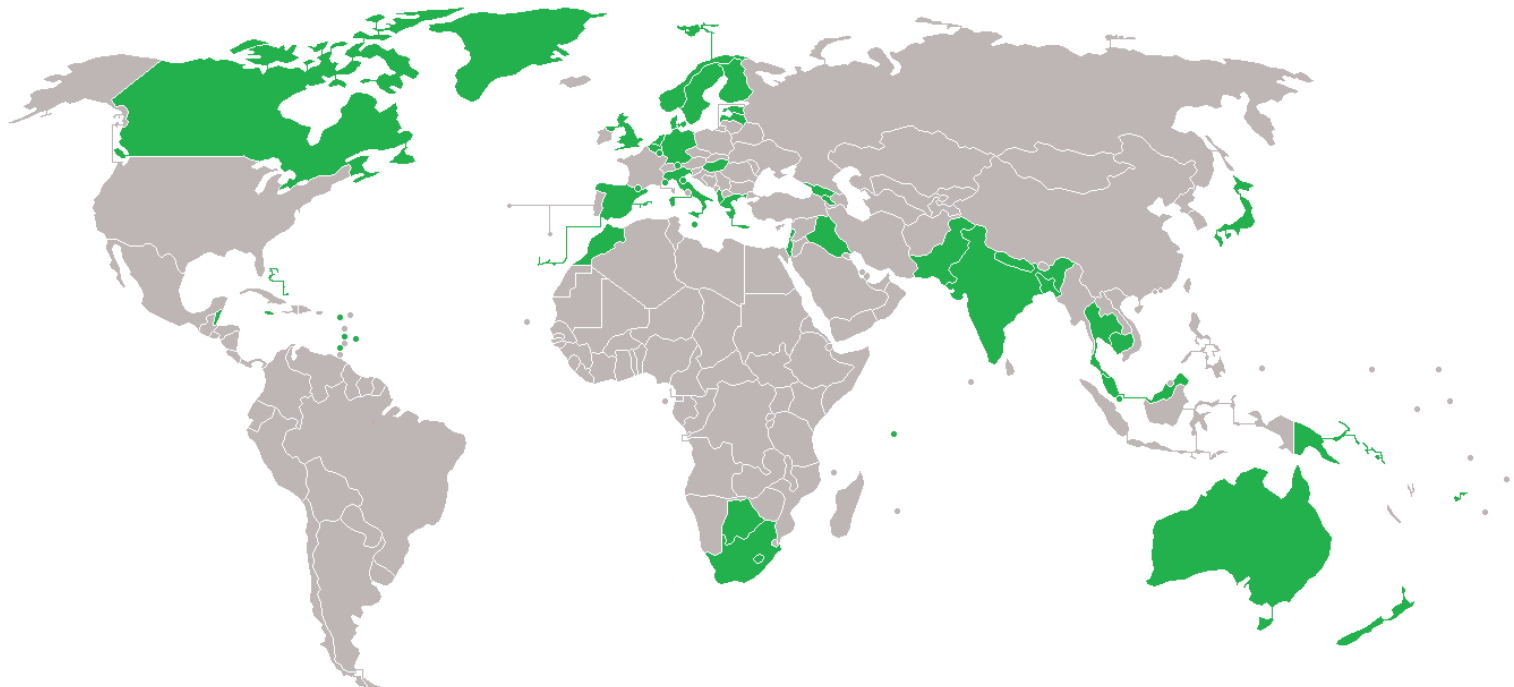
**Assembly**



**Executive**  
**(Prime Minister and Cabinet)**

# Parliamentary System

- The **government** (executive) originates in the assembly and is responsible to it.
- Government = prime minister + ministers (cabinet)



# Parliamentary Democracy

- Parliamentary democracy is a top-down system of government
- The executive branch has its **origin** and **survival** in the legislature itself
  - The executive consists of the prime minister and the cabinet
  - The government (executive) **originates in the assembly**

# Who Forms the Government?

- Single party majority
- Single party minority
- Multiparty coalition
  - Minimum winning coalition
  - Oversized coalition
  - Minority coalition
- These all share a key feature: there is **no majority to oppose** the government in parliament



## Example: Canada 2015 (National)

- **Liberals**: 54% of seats (184)
- **Conservatives**: 29% of seats (99)
- **New Democratic Party**: 13% of seats (44)
- **Bloc Quebecois**: 3% of seats (10)
- **Green Party**: 0.3% of seats (1)
  
- TOTAL SEATS: 338
  
- Who can form a government?

# Example: Australia 1993

- Who can form a government?



	Party	Seats
	Labor	80
	Liberal	49
	National	16
	Independents	2

- Labour can form a single party majority government
- Why is any alternative unlikely?

## Example: British Columbia 2017

- **Liberals**: 49% of seats (43)
- **New Democratic Party**: 47% of seats (41)
- **Green Party**: 3% of seats (3)
  
- TOTAL SEATS: 87
  
- Who can form a government?
  
- What actually happened?

# The Results of the Election

A photograph of three political figures from British Columbia. On the left is a woman in a red jacket, in the center is a man in a dark suit and red tie, and on the right is another man in a dark suit and red tie. They are standing in front of a dark backdrop that features the text 'BRITISH COLUMBIA' and 'What's Next?' along with a faint image of a building. Overlaid on the image is the text 'B.C. has elected a minority government' and 'What's next?' in large white font.

B.C. has elected a  
minority government  
*What's next?*

## Example: British Columbia 2017

- What actually happens in British Columbia?  
Why?
- Why did the NDP and BC Liberals both compete so heavily over the Green Party, who only have 3 seats?
- What does it mean that the NDP and the Green Party have a “supply and confidence” agreement?

# 3 Weeks After the Election: A NDP-Green Agreement

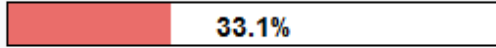
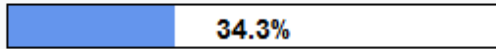
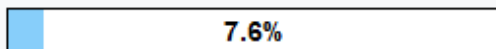
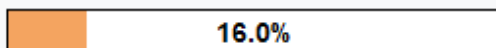

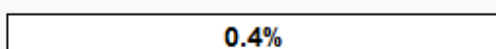


# 52 Days After the Election: A New Government



**The  
National**

# Example: 2019 Canadian Election

Party	Votes			Seats	
Liberal	6,018,728	 33.1%	▼ 6.4pp	157 / 338 (46%)	▼ 27
Conservative	6,239,227	 34.3%	▲ 3pp	121 / 338 (36%)	▲ 22
Bloc Québécois	1,384,030	 7.6%	▲ 3pp	32 / 338 (9%)	▲ 22
New Democratic	2,903,722	 16.0%	▼ 3.8pp	24 / 338 (7%)	▼ 20
Green	1,189,607	 6.5%	▲ 3.0pp	3 / 338 (0.9%)	▲ 1
Independent	75,836	 0.4%	▲ 0.1pp	1 / 338 (0.3%)	▲ 1

- Total seats: 338
- Who can form a government?
- What actually happened?



# Example: New Zealand 2017

Parliament seats

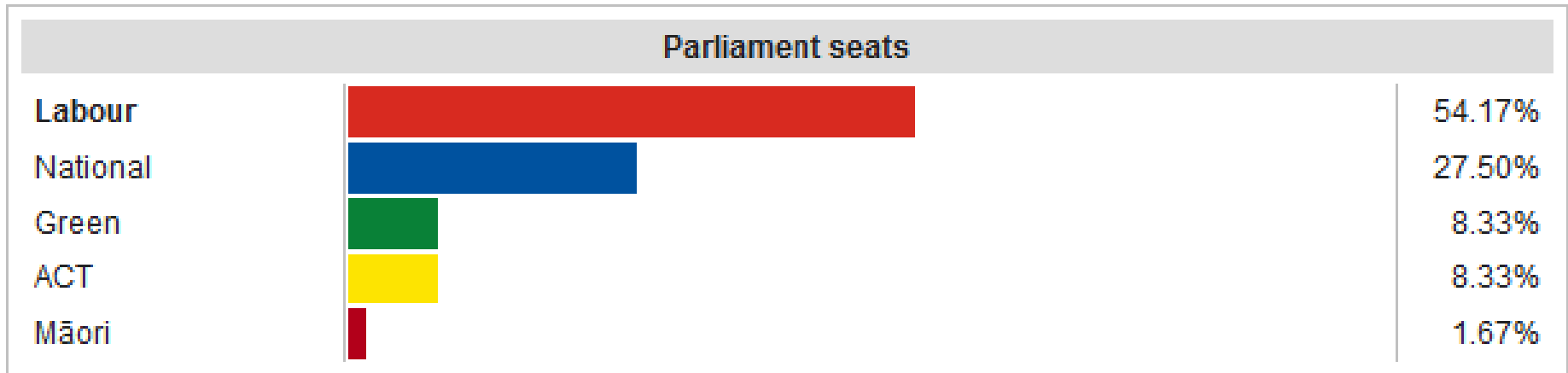


- What are the options for government formation?
- What actually happened?

# Jacinda Ardern Becomes Prime Minister



# Example: New Zealand 2020



- What are the options for government formation?
- What actually happened?

## Example: Germany 1998 (National)

- **SPD (center-left):** 45% of seats (298)
- **CDU (center-right):** 30% of seats (198)
- **CSU (center-right):** 7% of seats (47)
- **Green Party:** 7% of seats (47)
- **FDP (center):** 6% of seats (43)
- **PDS (left):** 5% of seats (36)
  
- **TOTAL SEATS: 669**
  
- Who can (realistically) form a government?

## Example: Israel, 2021

- Likud (right): 25% of seats
- Yesh Atid (center): 14% of seats
- Shas (religious): 8% of seats
- Blue & White (center): 7% of seats
- Yamina (right): 6% of seats
- Labor (center-left): 6% of seats
- UTJ (religious right): 6% of seats
- Yisrael Beiteinu (secular): 6% of seats
- Religious Zionist (far-right): 5% of seats
- Joint List (Arab/left): 5% of seats
- New Hope (right): 5% of seats
- Meretz (left): 5% of seats
- UAL (Arab/right): 3% of seats

# Parliamentarism: Fused Survival

- The government (executive) originates in the assembly and **is responsible to it.**
- A majority of parliament can remove the government
- The executive can be dissolved at any time by a vote of “no confidence” in the legislature
- The exact procedures vary from country to country

# A Recent No-Confidence Vote



# Confidence Takes Many Forms!





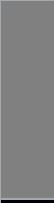



- Before start of legislative session
  - Investiture vote
  - Or: Assumed confidence
- Once the legislative session begins
  - **Motion** of no confidence
  - **Constructive vote** of no confidence
  - Vote of confidence



## Example: Spain, April 2019

- **PSOE (center-left):** 35% of seats
- **PP (center-right):** 19% of seats
- **Cs (center):** 16% of seats
- **Podemos (left):** 12% of seats
- **Vox (far-right):** 7% of seats
- **ERC (separatist):** 4% of seats
- **Others:** 7% of seats
  
- Who can (realistically) form a government?








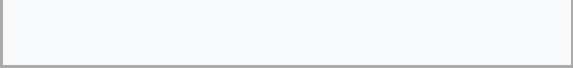
# The Government Formation Vote

Ballot →		25 July 2019
Required majority →		Simple <b>X</b>
 Yes <a href="#">[show]</a>		124 / 350 
 No <a href="#">[show]</a>		155 / 350 
 Abstentions <a href="#">[show]</a>		67 / 350 
 Absentees <a href="#">[show]</a>		4 / 350 

## Example: Spain, November 2019

- **PSOE (center-left):** 34% of seats (-1%)
  - **PP (center-right):** 25% of seats (+6%)
  - **Vox (far-right):** 15% of seats (+8%)
  - **Podemos (left):** 10% of seats (-2%)
  - **ERC (separatist):** 4% of seats (no change)
  - **Cs (center):** 3% of seats (-13%)
  - **Others:** 9% of seats (+2%)
- 
- Who can (realistically) form a government?

# The Government Formation Vote

Ballot →		7 January 2020
Required majority →		Simple ✓
 Yes	<a href="#">[show]</a>	167 / 350 
 No	<a href="#">[show]</a>	165 / 350 
 Abstentions	<a href="#">[show]</a>	18 / 350 
 Absentees	<a href="#">[show]</a>	0 / 350 

# **Next Class: Presidentialism & Why Do These Differences Matter?**