

PS 389.4: Comparative Democratic Institutions

Week 1: Introduction

I. Start with **definition of subject matter**:

A. What is a “(Developed) Democracy”?

1. **LeDuc, Niemi, & Norris, *Comparing Democracies* (1996)**: “elections & democracy are not synonymous concepts, [but...] free, competitive elections is invariably considered one of the critical features that define a nation as *democratic*”
2. **Powell, *Contemporary Democracies* (1982)**:
 - a. “working political democracies[:] Citizens...able to organize & vote in competitive elections[, and] the national political leaders are held accountable to their citizens through electoral means” (p. 1).
 - b. “‘democracy’[... :] political systems where representative leaders chosen through competitive elections. The competitive electoral context, with several political parties organizing the alternatives that face voters, is the identifying property of contemporary democratic process. ...competitive elections...most citizens eligible to participate” (3)
 - c. Case-selection criteria (p. 3):
 - (1) legitimacy of government rests on claim to represent desires of its citizens [Monte Python: “Arthur, King of the Britons.” “Well I didn’t vote for you.” “King, eh? How’d you get that, eh?” “Supreme executive power derives from a mandate from the masses...”]
 - (2) organized relationship that regulates this bargain of legitimacy is the competitive political election. Leaders elected at regular intervals, & voters choose among alternative candidates. In practice 2+ parties with a chance of winning is minimal
 - (3) Most adults can participate in the electoral process, both as voters & as candidates for important political office
 - (4) Citizens’ votes are secret & not coerced
 - (5) Citizens & leaders enjoy basic freedoms of speech, press, assembly, & organization
 - d. “Although definitionally possible to have a democratic context in which power did not change hands (because of continuing support of the incumbents by a majority of citizens [*e.g.*, Japan, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden for long periods]), such power changes seem a clear indication of importance of competitive elections” (p. 6).
3. **Lane & Ersson, *Politics & Society in W. Europe***: “open competition between political parties for the allegiance of the voter in free elections recruiting a legislative assembly that shares the exercise of power with government institutions in a national

setting” (p. 10).

4. **Powell, *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*:**

- a. *Democracies: governments* in which the people participate in *policymaking* (pp. 3-4)
 - (1) w/ many people, dem. *indirect*: choose policymakers in competitive elections
 - (2) *Elections* are instruments of dem. to degree give people influence over pol-makers
 - (3) Elections not only, but universally seen as crucial instrument, compel or encourage p-m's to pay attention to citizens.
- b. Two Views (each normative & positive): *Majoritarian v. Proportional* Visions

5. **Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*:**

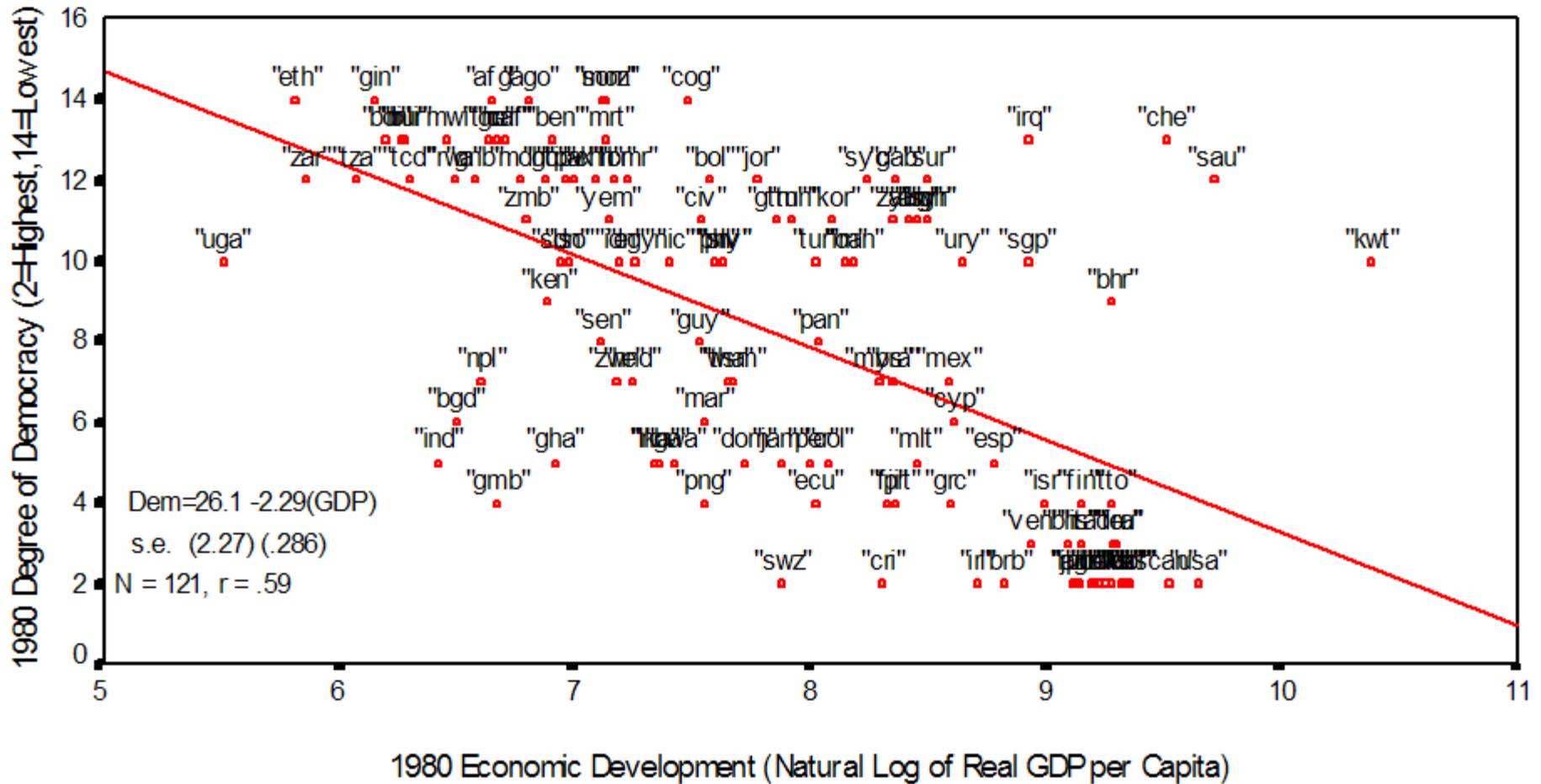
- a. *Democracy*: government for and by the people (Daniel Webster, 1830) (pp. 1-3). But, what if the people disagree & have divergent preferences?
 - (1) The *majority* of people.
 - (2) As many people as possible, [*proportionally*].
- b. Many ways to organize democracy, but cluster around *Majoritarian v. Consensus*. In that distinction, two dimensions discernable:
 - (1) *Executive-Legislative Dimension*
 - (2) *Federal-Unitary Dimension*

B. Why do we choose to study developed democracies together and distinctly from ‘developing democracies’ and ‘non-democracies’?

1. Theories assume relatively “liberal democracy” [& sometimes relatively “free-market capitalism” as well] no longer part of but rather the general boundaries within which citizens and leaders (actors of our models) conduct day-to-day politics
2. Empirics: something distinct *re* these countries & related about dem&dev. Let’s see that relationship (next page) and use it as an example to discuss:
 - a. Positive theorization in political science
 - b. Operationalization (going from concept to measurement) of theory
 - c. Empirical evaluation of theory

C. Also consider Duverger’s Law (electoral & party system relationship) further below

The Relationship Between the Degree of Democracy and of Economic Development



II. Introductory examples of positive theory & empirical evaluation in context of Comparative Democratic Institutions

A. Powell, in earlier *Contemporary Democracies* (1982) asks why some Democracies

1. ...Work “Well”: Participate *via* elections, Stable & “effective” governments; Discontent expressed through Democratic competition not violent conflict
2. & others “Less Well”: Involvement characterized by turmoil not elected parties; Governments unstable, unresponsive, ineffective, or all of the above; Violence widespread-- at worst “the life expectancy of democracy itself is a matter of constant calculation.”
3. Why? Previous work tended to emphasize either:
 - a. Social & economic environment?
 - b. Political institutions & organizations?
 - c. Beliefs & strategies of leaders/citizens?
 - d. System of political parties?

B. Answer: Social Structure ==> Institutions & Parties ==> Democratic Performance

C. Definition: What’s an *Institution*?

1. Hall (1986): [I]nstitutions... refers to formal & informal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating practices that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the polity & economy... Institutional factors play 2 fundamental roles:
 - a. [They] affect the degree of power that any one set of actors has over policy outcomes [...and they...]
 - b. influence an actor's definition of his own interests, by establishing his... responsibilities and relationship to other actors...
 - c. With an institutionalist model we can see policy as more than the sum of countervailing pressure from social groups. That pressure is mediated by an organizational [i.e., institutional] dynamic...
2. *Numerous authors*: Institutions are the “rules of the game”. They therefore play role in:
 - a. Defining the players in any particular setting.
 - b. Shaping the set of actions they can take.
 - c. Shaping the relationships between players.
 - d. Shaping the relationships b/w actions the combination of players may take and outcomes.

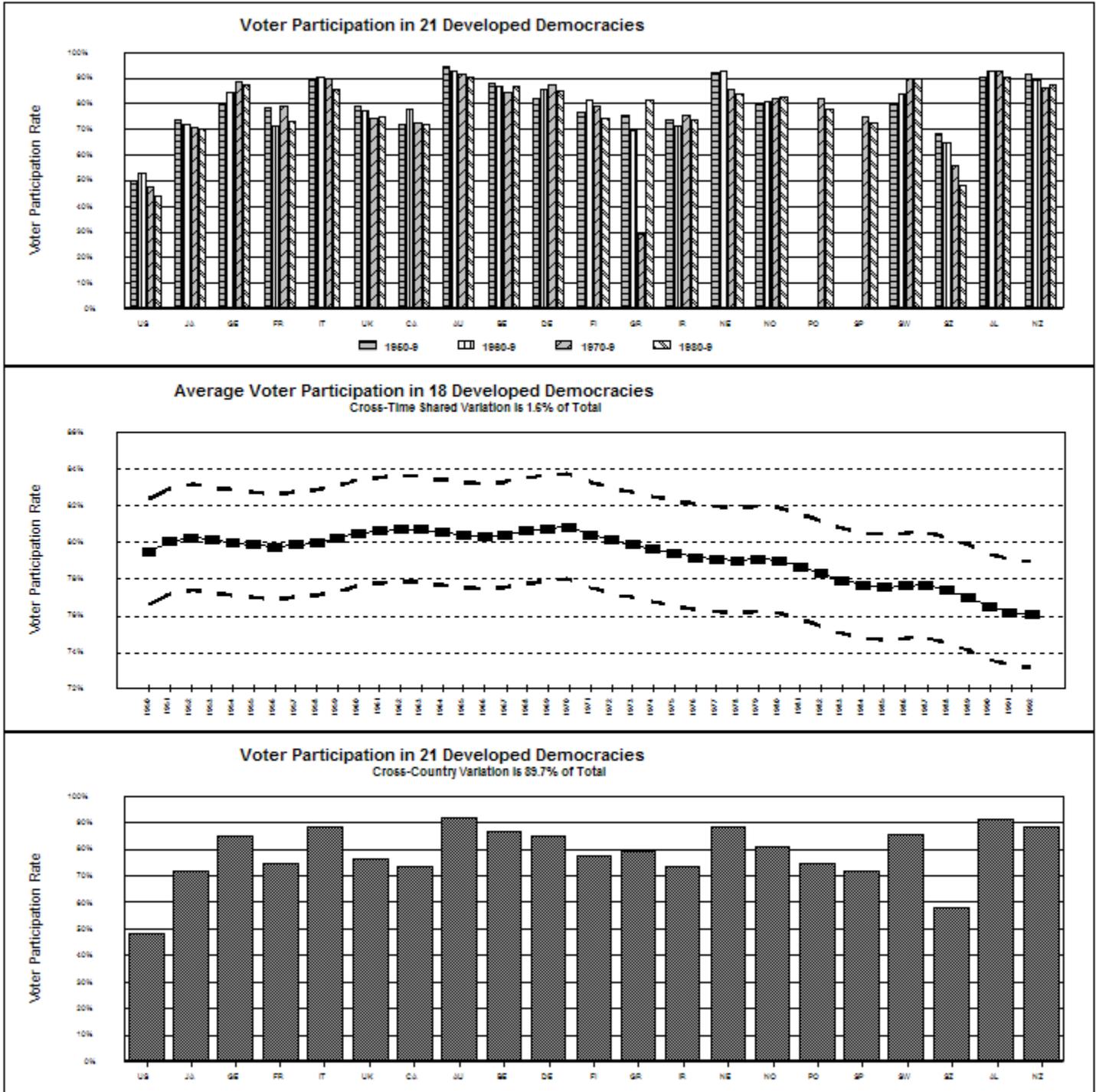
D. An Example of Institutional Theory & Empirics in Social Science: Duverger’s Law

1. State the “Law”: plurality/majority, i.e. SMD, electoral systems tend to produce 2-party systems; proportional-representation (PR) ele sys at least allow 3+
2. Theory/Argument/Logic
 - a. Mechanical Aspect: simple mathematics of translating votes into seats
 - b. Strategic Aspects:
 - (1) Who are the players? (Voters, Parties (candidates) who might enter)
 - (2) Voter’s Incentives: don’t waste votes => ...
 - (3) Potential Parties’ Incentives: gain office

<i>(circa 1990)</i>	<i>Countries with Four or Fewer Parties in Legislature</i>	<i>Countries with Five or More Parties in Legislature</i>
<i>Countries with Plurality / Majority Electoral Systems</i>	US, Canada, NZ, Australia (4: 16.67%)	France, UK (2: 8.33%)
<i>Countries with Proportional Representation Electoral Systems</i>	Austria, Greece, Malta (3: 12.5%)	Jap., W Ger., Italy, Bel., Den., Fin., Ice., Ire., Lux., Neth., Nor., Port., Spa., Swe., Swi. (15: 62.5%)
$\chi^2_{(1)} = 18.33 ; p = .0000185$		

E. Powell's (1982) Three focal Dimensions of Political Performance: Citizen Electoral Participation: (Voter Turnout = # voting/eligible population)

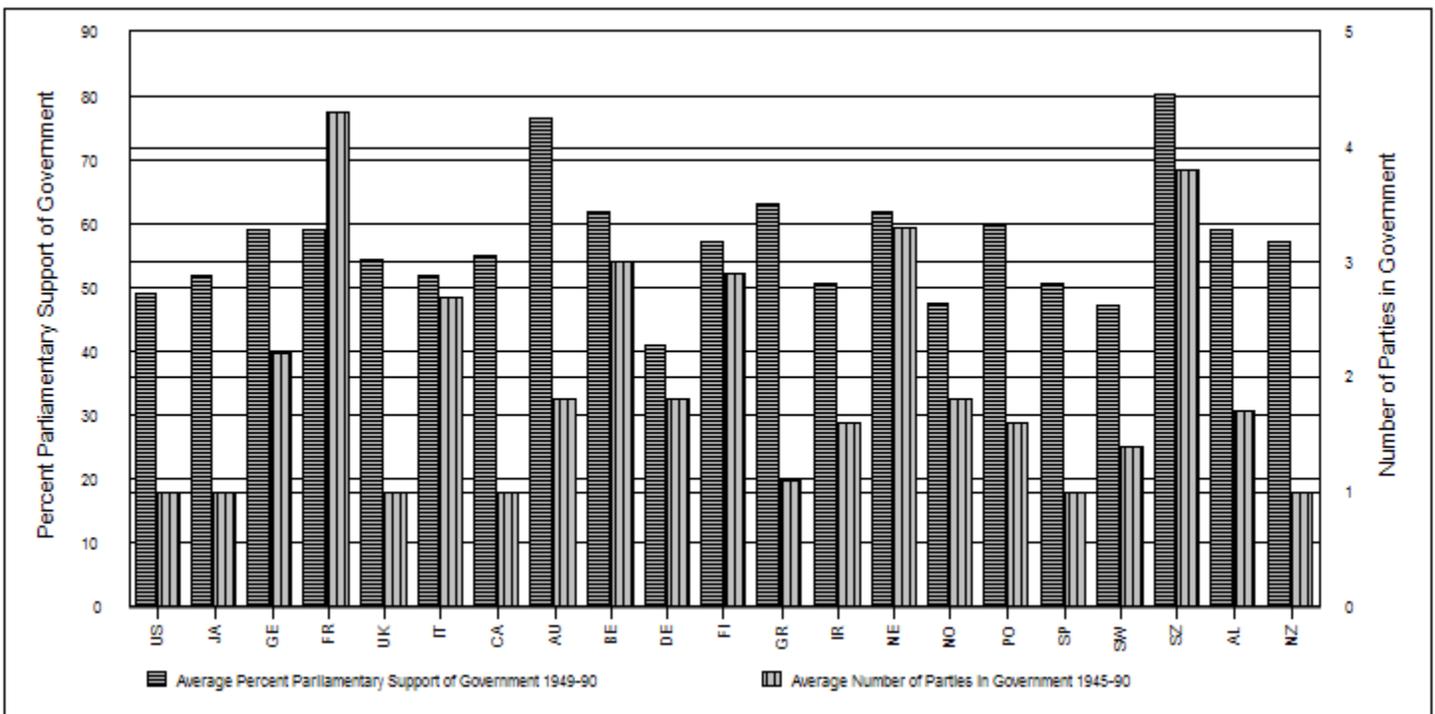
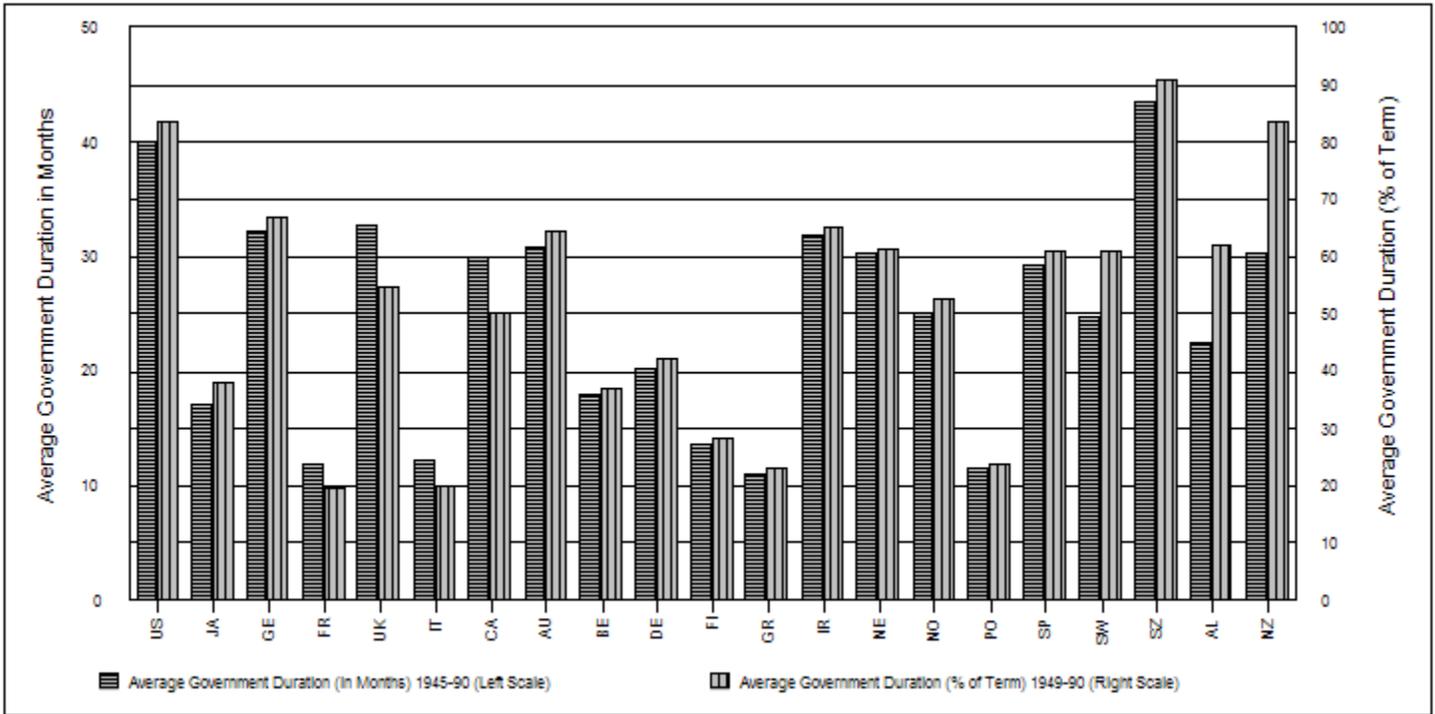
- a. Not only form of participation, but essential in forcing policy-makers to respond
- b. Symbolic--especially with increased secularization, legitimacy has come to rest on claim to respond to citizen's preferences
- c. STOP HERE: What is the empirical puzzle?



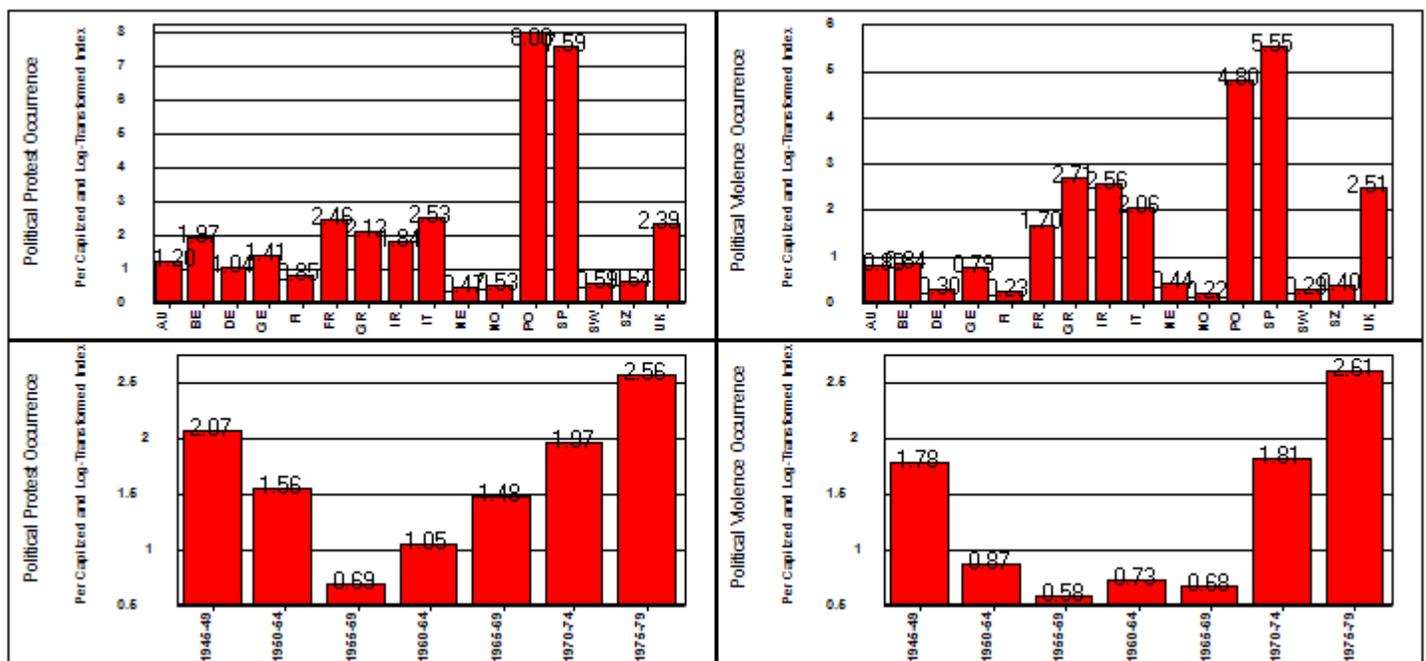
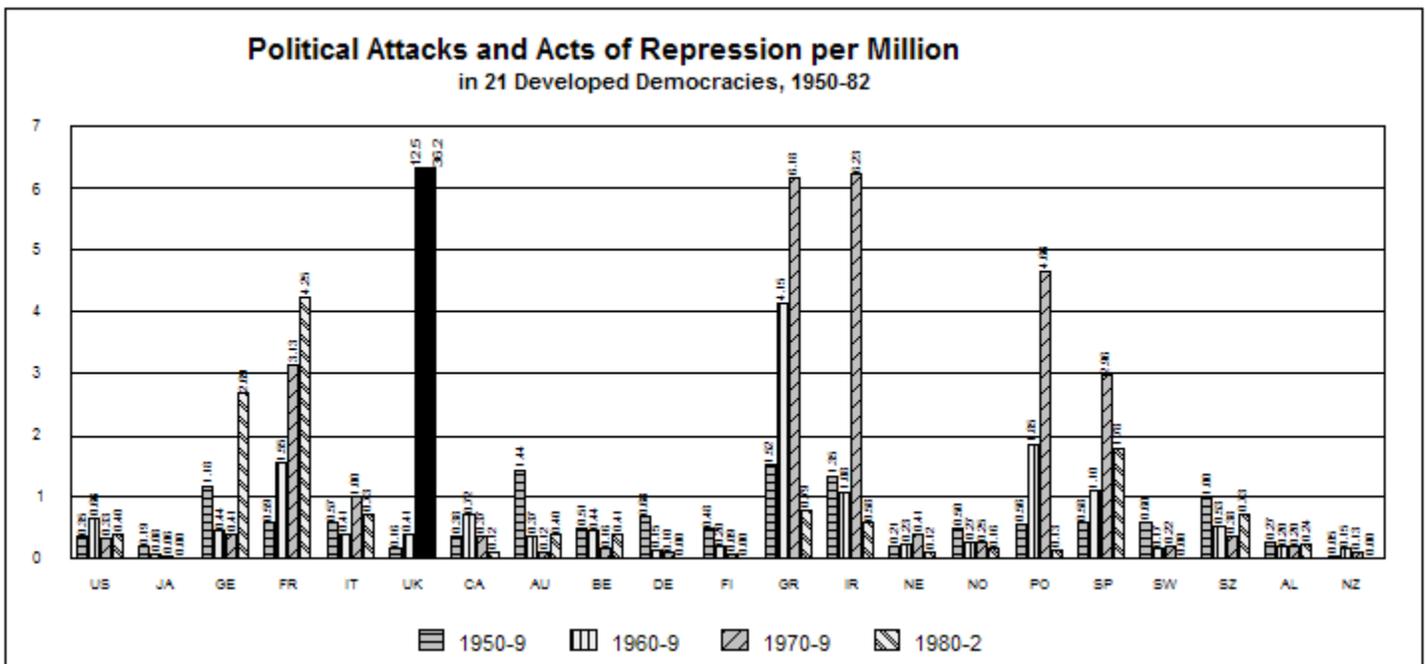
(1) Some Data. Why do people vote? [Gen Hypoth]. Tell irratt. vote story. [Gen more H]

2. Government Stability & “Effectiveness”

- DEF: Stability: (Government Duration)--Some issues/problems in defining
- DEF: Effectiveness: Define? (Measure: % of legislative support for executive)
- Note difference b/w def'ss (theoretical, abstract) & op's (empirical, concrete)
- Stability: Data. Hypotheses.
- Leg. Supp.: Data. Hypotheses. [Better ideas?] [Aside on party discipline?]



3. Political Order--Absence of turmoil & violence & maintenance basic forms democracy
 - a. Distinguish observing order from attributing *blame/credit*; disorder may reflect: regime policy failures, bargaining intransigence by either party to another, efforts by either party to dispute to undermine democracy itself, etc.
 - b. Democracies unique in providing citizens (a) resources, & (b) freedom to use, (c) expand it by organizing & mobilizing other citizens, & (d) allowing use to express discontent
 - c. Democracy=a gamble that discontent can be channeled through legit (electoral & other) channels--outbreak serious, collective violence is sign not working (whose fault=diff Q)
 - d. Measures: Riots, Deaths from Political Violence, Suspension/Replacement of Regime



III. Syllabus:

A. Introduction

1. Definitions, Questions, Approaches
2. Intellectual History: L&E ch. 1
3. Cycle (Schematic Overview Democratic Politics): F ch. 1

B. Further Introduction...

1. ...to *Science* in Soc Sci: Theory: Olson chs. 1-3, Empirics: KKV ch. 1
2. ...to Comp. Gov'tl Sys. (i.e., Describe Altern. Dem Structs): GLM 2-4

C. Electoral Systems

1. Overview: GLM ch. 11, Lij *Patterns* ch. 8
2. Depth: Lijphart *Elect Sys & Party Sys*

D. Parties & Party Systems

1. Overview: GLM chs. 7-10
2. MidTerm

E. (Coalition) Government Formation & Dissolution

1. Overview: GLM ch. 12, Lijpart *Patterns* ch. 6
2. Depth: Laver & Shepsle, *Making & Breaking Govts*

F. Representation & Policy Outcomes

1. Overview: GLM chs. 13-14
2. Depth on Dem Insts & Rep: Powell, *Elections as Instruments Democracy*
3. Depth on Dem Insts & Pol/Outs: Franzese, *Macroecon Policies Dev'd Dems*

G. Final

IV. Intellectual History of Comparative Politics as a Field of Inquiry (built from Lane&Ersson, intro-ch. 1)

- A. **Theoretical Framework:** “We organize our [study]...in terms of cleavages, political institutions, & public policies” (p. 11)
- B. “Traditional” (to *ca.* 1950s) Study of Politics: 5 Characteristics
 1. *Configurative Description*: just describe from A to Z everything political that exists or happens in some country
 2. *Parochialism*: Western (& predominantly US) slant on identification of issues to be considered
 3. *Formal Legalism*: Excessive focus on constitutional & legal details of a ctry
 4. *Absence of Empiricism, Methodology, & Theory*: description & legalism w/ no attempt to relate aspects & outcomes systematically
 5. *Non-Comparative*: despite the name, the field tended to focus on one country at a time (relates to previous problem)
- C. Continuing Methodological Problems & Debates
 1. Case Study *vs.* Comparative Method
 2. Political Sociology evolving into Political Institutionalism
 3. Newer Debates
 - a. Formal (*i.e.* mathematical) *v.* Qualitative (linguistic) derivation theoretical arg’s
 - b. Quantitative (*i.e.*, statistical) *v.* Qualitative empirical evaluation
 - c. Positive theory (positivism) *v.* Interpretation & “Understanding” (interpretivism)
 4. “Either/Or” divisions somewhat arbitrary in that all involve some degree of other; further, several quite highly related; still, some controversy remains
- D. Gabriel Almond & the Parsonian Revolution (mid 1950s)
 1. Influence of Sociology
 - a. Gabriel Almond “Comparative Political Systems” (1956)
 - b. Talcott Parsons [*Toward a General Theory of Action* (with Shils, 1951), *The Social System* (1951), & *Economy & Society* (with Smelser, 1956)] brought Weber’s new systematic approach to the study of social behavior (“Sociology”) to the forefront of political science (and social science more generally)
 2. Intro’s Central Q: What fosters (stable) (democratic) political development

3. Theory/Argument: Almond argued Anglo-American political systems stable b/c high degree consensus on political means & ends & b/c political roles of individuals & institutions clearly differentiated & delineated. (As a theoretical conjecture, interesting; empirically, he neither defined nor measured either independent or dependent variables. Still, huge advance over what preceded.)

Soc-Pol Struct (<i>Culture</i>) → Political Role Structure ↓	Homogenous	Fragmented
Highly Differentiated	Anglo-American	Continental European
Low Differentiation	Totalitarian	Pre-Industrial (Traditional)

E. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (1959): “conditions necessary for democracy in societies & organizations’ (p. 9)” (p. 19)

1. “Democracy ‘implies
 - a. political formula or body of beliefs specifying which institutions–parties, free press, etc–legitimate (all accept as proper);
 - b. one set of political leaders in office; and
 - c. one or more sets of recognized leaders attempting to gain office’ (p. 45)”
2. Seeks to explain which systems exhibit these characteristics stably & why?; i.e. stability of democracy not govt stability within democracies
3. Representative dem operates w/ govt. & opp.; thus rep-dem can hardly exist w/o cleavages; question was which cleavages are “too much”/too irascible, and which factors may serve to mitigate conflict arising out of cleavages
4. Lipset’s factors argued to facilitate stability:
 - a. Economic Development: => greater income, economic security, & widespread education–all considered conducive in that they form the terms of the ‘class struggle’ permitting the less well-off to take a long-term [and optimistic] view
 - b. Class Structure: large middle class good
 - c. 2-Party System: claim 2-party compete fosters integrative rather than divisive pol
 - d. **Cross-Cutting Cleavages:** also arg’s territorial rather than PR help in this regard
 - e. Federal, not Unitary, System: (claims concentration of power frequently a threat to democracy; others note Weimar)
 - f. Historical development of conflict resolution (problematic?)

Cleavage Structure → Class Stratification ↓	Cross-Cutting	Reinforcing
Highly Stratified	Intermediate	Least Stable
Low Stratification	Most Stable	Intermediate

F. Stein Rokkan: Cleavage Struct & Democratization ('67, '70, '83)

1. Four fundamental developmental processes in democratic transformations of Western Democracies (note the historicism)
 - a. Protestant Reformation—divided Catholic/Protestant
 - b. National Revolution—breaking local & regional affiliations (Germany & Italy mid to late 19th century)
 - c. Industrial Revolution—replacing diffuse agrarian & religious loyalties w/ class
 - d. Communist Revolution—international fault lines

CLEAVAGE TYPOLOGY	National/Center	Local/Periphery
Interests/Economy	worker v. employer/owner	primary v. secondary econ.
Ideology/Culture	church v. state	subject v. dominant culture

G. Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy* (1971): The Conditions for & the Degree of Democracy (“polyarchy”)

The Two Dimensions of Political Systems

Participation → Contestation ↓	High	Low
High	<i>Polyarchies:</i> Italy, Finland	<i>Competitive Oligarchies:</i> Switz., Ire.
Low	<i>Inclusive Hegemonies:</i> Hungary, Poland (pre-Dem.)	<i>Closed Hegemonies:</i> Portugal, Spain (pre- Dem.)

1. Conditions for Democracy: A Long List

- a. Peaceful evolution of democracy (transferring legitimacy from old to new regime)
- b. Decentralized economy (avoiding concentration of economic power)
- c. Economic development
- d. Economic equality
- e. Social homogeneity
- f. Elite pro-dem beliefs (best when authority structures same in most institutions of soc)
- g. Popular beliefs in dem. efficacy & in sincere intentions of adversaries
- h. Passive or supportive int'l cond's

H. Merkl, Almond & Verba: "Political Culture"

1. Peter Merkl, *Modern Comparative Politics* (1970)

- a. Common State of Democracy is Change, Instability, & Disequilibrium
- b. Culture (beliefs, attitudes) explain this best since they change observably (survey research): problems with cultural arg's: often just descriptive, even tautological

2. G. Almond & Sid Verba, *The Civic Culture* (1965): key to democracy is how citizens relate (sub & ob-jectively) to political system

- a. People have attitudes toward:
 - (1) political system
 - (2) input activities of citizens (e.g., voting)
 - (3) output activities of government (policies and programs)
 - (4) themselves as political participants
- b. These configure into three archetypes of society

Involvement Pol. Sys. →	High	Low
Knowledge Pol&PolSys ↓		
High	Participant Society	Subject Society
Low	[Not Considered]	Parochial Society

- c. => Peoples attitudes, (a), defined public orientation toward political system, (b), which produced politics of identifiable patterns

I. Gordon Smith, *Pol & Soc in W. Eur.* (1984): linking soc to pol cohesion

1. Social Cohesion not directly or Necessarily linked to Political Cohesion

2. Governing Institutions structure Actors' Incentives from Voters to Leaders
3. ==> **Sociological Structure Works through Political Institutions to Determine Democratic Functioning**

4. Critique came at point when structuralism & culturalism were losing steam

J. Arend Lijphart: *Consociationalism* (Consensus), Institutionalism, & Dem

1. Social heterogeneity creates impetus to instability, but impetus modified or redirected by institutions

2. ==> two original foci

a. **capacity** of pol institutions & pol leaders to respond to stimuli from society

b. institutional means of dividing power to diffuse disruptive conflict:

(1) Minority representation

(2) Division of power: geographic, demographic, or functional

3. Then on elite behavior:

Social Structure → Elite Behavior ↓	Homogenous	Plural (Heterogenous)
Coalescent	<i>Depoliticized Democracy:</i> Switzerland	<i>Consociational Democracy:</i> Austria
Adversarial	<i>Centripetal Democracy:</i> United States	<i>Centrifugal Democracy:</i> Italy

4. Only bottom-right unstable ==> Heterogeneity only a necessary condition for instability, absent consociation it becomes sufficient

5. **Democracies (1984): stress again structure of decision-making process mediating b/w social cleavages & instability ==>**

6. Two ideal-types of democracy:

a. *The Westminster Model*

- (1) 1 party, bare-majority govts
- (2) fused legis&exec pow, & cab dom
- (3) asymmetric bicameralism
- (4) Two-party System
- (5) One-dimensional party-system
- (6) plurality electoral system
- (7) unitary & cntrlz territorial govt
- (8) unwritten const & parl sovereignty

b. *The Consensus Model*

- (1) Executive power-sharing
- (2) Sep. pows, formal & inform
- (3) Bal'd Bicam & minority rep
- (4) Multi-party system
- (5) Multi-dimensional prty sys
- (6) Proportional representation
- (7) Terr. & non-terr. fed & dec.
- (8) Written const & min. vetos

K. Suzanne Berger, Gerhard Lehbruch, Phillippe Schmitter: *Corporatism & Interest Intermediation* (1970s & 1980s)

1. B/w interests created by social structure & policies implemented by govts lie organizations that aggregate, mobilize, & press for policies: Parties + Other actors... (esp. economic actors: unions, employers, banks, etc.)
2. Corporatist Policymaking [DEFINE] credited with successful macroecon. management & thereby facilitation of democratic stability
3. Recent innovations have begun to shift focus toward role of firms as employers & allocators of capital

L. Giovanni Sartori: *Parties & Party Systems* (1976): **fractionalization and polarization**

1. Parties do not simply reflect underlying cleavage structure of society == > independent role of party systems for stability

Prty-Sys Polarization → Prty-Sys Fractionaliz'n ↓	Low	High
Low	<i>Bipartism</i> : United States	<i>Centripetal Competition</i> : U. K.
High	<i>Segmented Multipartism</i> : Ireland	<i>Polarized Multipartism</i> : Italy

2. Also emphasizes key role of anti-system parties

M. Comparative Party Research

1. Schumpeter (1942): defined party role
 - a. interest articulation, aggregation, policy-making, & system legitimation
 - b. parties offer voters choice b/w ideologies represented in election manifestos & implemented by govts in office: voters evaluate
2. V.O. Key (1966): do parties set agenda for voters or do voters choose parties?
3. Pateman, Rose, Lawson (*When Parties Fail?*) => parties increasingly failed these roles (?): studied “why stability ended” (?)
4. Strategies of Parties (Rokkan, Otto Kirchheimer): Mobilize a **niche** or manufacture a **catch-all** coalition == >

- a. p(success) of prty strategy depends on soc struct, inst'l rules, & *strategies of other parties*
 - b. Strength: highlights strategic behavior of political actors
 - c. Weakness: tends to explain change by actor mistakes & stability by actor wisdom
5. Comparative Party Research, New directions: why parties at all? "Post-materialist" values stress independence & critical of system => crisis for parties

N. Origins of Modern Institutionalism

1. Douglas Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* (1971)

a. Duverger's Law & Beyond

b. Relations between voting rules and...

- (1) Voters' incentives & actions
- (2) Policymakers' incentives & actions

2. Lawrence Dodd, *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government* (1976)

a. Argues that multiparty parliaments ==> coalition govts; coalition govts unstable; so multiparty systems unstable = false

b. "Minimal Winning Coal's" (DEF) Riker, *The Theory of Pol Coalitions* (1962)

c. Implications

- (1) MWC's are stable: Single-party majority or Multiparty
- (2) Emphasis on.....willingness to enter coalition and.....informational uncertainty in coalition bargaining...
- (3) => Re-emphasis on fractionalization & polarization

d. Extensions:

- (1) Minority governments' workings: Kaare Strom & George Tsebelis
- (2) Parliamentary behavior: Party discipline; "Constituency"

3. Dodd & *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government* (1976)

a. Introduces notion of Minimal-winning coalitions—MWCs are stable

- (1) Single-party governments are usually MWCs, so they're usually stable
- (2) Multi-party governments are stable too if they're MWCs

b. Formation of MWCs is a function of **parties' willingness to enter coalitions & informational uncertainty in bargaining with potential coalition members**

c. Minority gov'ts: how work & conditions wherein work well (Strom, Tsebelis)

d. Parliamentary behavior: **party discipline** a key factor related to ele & govt sys

4. Modern Successors:

- a. Gary Cox, *Making Votes Count* (1997)
- b. Michael Laver & Ken Shepsle, *Making & Breaking Governments* (1995)

O. Political Outputs & Outcomes:

1. Traditionally little focus on what governments actually did (!)
 - a. All about societal inputs & how political institutions produced governments from them (corporatism exceptional here), but
 - b. Little or nothing about what policies were produced, *i.e.*, “So What?”
2. **Increasing focus on policies & outcomes produced by struct & insts =>**
 - a. **Focus on Actors’ Opportunities, Objectives, & Constraints**
 - b. **Focus also on outcomes that concretely affect citizens’ lives in democracy**
 - c. **Empirical Analysis: attempt to link differences in policies & outcomes across time & countries to structure & institutions**
3. The Keynesian Welfare State & Successor Policies become a central focus for modern comparative study
 - a. E.g.: Countries faced similar economic conditions & responded differently, Why?
 - (1) Partisan differences?
 - (2) Socio-economic-structure differences?
 - (3) Institutional differences?
 - b. Q, originally, “Do Institutions Matter?” A: yes; so new Q: “How?”

P. G. Bingham Powell: *Contemporary Democracies* (1982)

1. One of first systematic analyses struct & insts => Partic. & Stab. & Order
2. Fertile ground by then: rich in theory & assumption, empirical vacuum

Q. We’ll follow:

1. Gallagher, Laver, & Mair (2006), *Representative Government in Modern Europe: Institutions, Parties, & Governments*: Superb Text in this Modern Mode CP
2. Lijphart, *Electoral Systems & Party Systems* (1995) [We’ll return to this]
3. Laver & Shepsle, *Making & Breaking Governments* (1996)
4. Powell, *Elections as Instruments of Democracy* (2000) [We’ll return to this]
5. Franzese, *Macroeconomic Policies of Developed Democracies* (2002)

Figure I.22: The Cycle of Political Economy

