

Answers / hints for the example exam questions:

Question 1:

The keys are cross-cutting v. reinforcing,
bargainability / compromisability

Regarding the number of parties: that's basically a function of the number of social groups into which the society is divided, with a strong moderating role being played by the electoral system.

Question 2:

a: Country B probably: the main thing for proportionality is the magnitude of electoral districts; if two tiers, the magnitude of the second tier especially is key.

b: Arguments could be made for several of the possible answers: keys about the electoral system for greater voter participation are the "closeness" of the elected representatives to voters, the proportionality of the election results (fewer "wasted votes"=higher turnout), and the relevance of the election results to changing governments / policies.

c: Country A: plurality system tends to produce 2 parties

Question 3:

a & b: straightforward

c: Fractionalized and polarized governments ==> harder to reach compromises and enact policies.

Question 4:

a: Each point of higher UE is predicted to reduce the government duration by 1.25 months. We are reasonably certain of that estimate because its standard error is less than a third of its magnitude. I.e., each point of UE brings about a 1.25 reduction in govt duration, give or take .41 of a month.

b: As the equation is written, the government with 2 more parties is expected to last 5 months longer. Substantively, more parties should mean shorter government durations; the plus sign there was a typo. The certainty is pretty good: we expect the one with 5 parties to last 5 months longer, give or take 2 months (std err=1, 2 more parties ==> 2*1=2).

c: 75%

d: single party ==> NumP=1
majority ==> Maj =1
single party ==> PolP=0
UE = 7

According to the equation, then, government should last:

$$\text{GovDur} = 24 + 3.75(1) + 2.5(1) - 1.4(0) - 1.25(7) \text{ months}$$

Inflation is irrelevant according to this equation.

Question 5:

Going from PR to a majority system with a president should reduce the number of parties on both accounts. Just putting in the president may reduce the number of parties because it creates an important office which is effectively a winner-take-all prize. This puts a heavy incentive on parties to aggregate to have a chance to win that winner-take-all prize. Thus, even a presidency alone should reduce the number of parties, but probably not by so much as both introducing president and replacing PR with majority has done.

Question 6:

Probably greater fluctuations in UK than Netherlands: key is the notion of wholesale vs. partial replacement.

Question 7:

Explained in the review session.