

UNIT 4 – 13-18%

Party and Electoral Systems and Citizen Organizations

Electoral Systems and Rules

In some regimes, electoral rules and systems are structured to allow for the competitive selection of representatives, while in other regimes rules are frequently changed to advance different political interests.

- **China:** The National People's Congress of China selects members indirectly through a series of local and regional elections. Executive is appointed by NPC
- **Iran:** Majles members are directly elected in **single-member and multi member districts**, which sometimes requires a second round of voting; candidates are vetted by the Guardian Council, and the legislative body lacks formal political party structures; a small number of the 290 seats in the Majles are reserved for non-Muslim minorities, such as Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians.
- **Mexico:** Congress has two chambers: the Chamber of Deputies, which has 300 members directly elected in single-member districts by plurality and an additional 200 members elected by a proportional representation, party list system; and the Chamber of Senators, which has 96 members elected in three seat constituencies and 32 by proportional representation; gender quotas in the party list system have helped increase female representation in the legislature.
- **Nigeria:** House of Representatives are directly elected in single-member districts with representatives from each of Nigeria's states; the number of representatives elected from each state is based on population size, whereas the Senate has three members directly elected from each of Nigeria's 36 states; two major parties have alternated control of the National Assembly.
- **Russia:** Changes to state Duma elections in Russia have returned it to a system in which half of the representatives are directly elected

from single-member districts and the other half are chosen through elections that use proportional representation with a threshold.

- **UK:** House of Commons members are directly elected under single member district, first-past-the-post rules.
- **Electoral terms to keep in mind:** →
 - Plurality: most votes wins, also known as first-past-the-post or winner-take-all
 - Majority: need over 50% of vote to win
 - Single-member districts: districts where only one representative wins, tend to be plurality elections
 - Multi-member districts: 2 or more representatives per district.
 - First-past-the-post elections: whoever has the most votes wins the election
 - Proportional representation: Seats are based on proportion of votes, MMDs, party lists and thresholds to determine winners and seats.
 - Majority or run-off election: if no candidate wins 50% of vote, run-off election between top 2 vote getters.

Objectives of Election Rules

- Types of electoral systems and rules can determine party systems and power
- PR elections can result in increase to number of political parties and more seats for minority and women candidates
 - Single-member district plurality systems tend to promote two-party systems. They provide voters with strong constituency service and accountability because there is a single representative per district, and they ensure geographic representation.
- Different presidential election systems have different rules for determining election winners;.
 - **Mexico:** president is elected by a plurality of the national popular vote, not a majority.
 - **Nigeria:** must win the most

votes and secure at least 25 percent of the vote in two-thirds of Nigeria's states, reflecting the federal characteristic of this regime.

- **Russia and Iran:** must win an absolute majority of the popular vote in either the first or second round of national voting. If no candidate wins an absolute majority in the first round, the second round is conducted between the top two vote earners in the first round
- Different political systems use electoral regulatory organizations to set various rules about ballot access and competition.
 - **Iran:** Guardian Council excludes reform minded candidates or those who do not support Islamic values from the ballot, which limits the number of candidates and reduces electoral competition and representation.
 - **Nigeria and Mexico:** created independent election commissions that attempt to reduce voter fraud and manipulation and enhance electoral competition
 - **Russia:** limits presidential competition with strict requirements to run for executive (need party representation in Duma)
- Some regimes use an appointment system for membership in legislative bodies to promote a diversity of viewpoints, while other regimes use it to advance the political agenda of governing elites.
 - **Iran:** Half of Iran's Guardian Council members are selected by the Supreme Leader, and half are nominees from the judiciary with Majles approval.
 - **UK:** Appointments for the House of Lords are approved by the monarch with recommendations made by the prime minister and an independent commission.
 - **Russia:** appointment of Federation Council is done

by regional governors and the regional legislature. The creation of nine federal districts (with the annexation of Crimea) has reasserted federal power under the Russian president by allowing him to appoint leaders to the districts, and allowing regional legislatures to forgo elections and appoint a governor from a list of candidates approved by the president.

Political Party Systems

- Party systems and membership differ among countries, ranging from dominant party systems to multi-party systems.
 - One-party system: only one party can hold political power
 - One-party dominant: one party wins power in executive and majority of legislature, smaller parties win seats in legislature
 - Two party system: two majority parties compete for power in executive and legislative
 - Multi-party system: three+ parties compete for power.
- **China** has rules that allow only one party, the Communist Party of China, to control governing power to maintain the values of centralism and order, while allowing eight other parties to exist to broaden discussion and consultation.
- **Russia:** Rules ensuring one-party dominance for **United Russia** include increasing party registration requirements, allowing only legally registered parties to run for office, using selective court decisions to disqualify candidates, limiting the ability of political opposition to present their viewpoints in the media, increasing threshold rules to limit party access to the ballot, and eliminating gubernatorial elections.
- **Mexico:** rules that led to transition away from one-party dominance include eliminating el

dedazo, privatizing state-owned corporations to decrease patronage, decentralizing and reducing one-party power at the subnational level, and establishing and strengthening the National Electoral Institute (IFE).

- **Catch-all political parties** can earn support from groups with different characteristics, attracting popular support with ideologically diverse platforms.

Role of Political Party Systems

Party systems vary across the course countries in terms of rules governing elections, party structure, and laws regulating political parties, as represented by:

- **China:** one party (Communist Party of China) has controlled the government (and military) since 1949, while minor parties have limited power to fill minor political offices.
- **Iran:** lacks formal political party structures
- **Mexico:** a multiparty system is dominated by, National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) National Action Party (PAN), the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI); parties are allowed to form coalitions to nominate candidates for any particular election.
- **Russia:** one party has been dominating recent elections; diminished representation of smaller parties occurs because of changing threshold rules; the elimination and then reinstatement of single-member districts has affected regional parties and the representation of independent candidates.
- **Nigeria:** multiple parties with ethnic quotas affect

representation in the country's federal legislature.

- **UK:** two large parties (Labour and Conservative) dominate the House of Commons; single-member district plurality elections diminish minor party representation; single-member districts allow regional parties to win legislative seats. (Scottish National Party)

→ Current Parties in power

1. **China:** China Communist Party (CCP)
2. **Russia:** United Russia
3. **Mexico:** MORENA
4. **Nigeria:** All Progressives Congress (APC)
5. **UK:** Conservative

• Impact of Social Movements and Interest Groups

- **Social movements:** involve large groups of people pushing collectively for significant political or social change.
- **Interest groups:** explicitly organized to represent and advocate for a specific interest or policy issue, while social movements represent multiple groups and individuals advocating for broad social change.
- Social movements across countries have put pressure on the state to promote indigenous civil rights, redistribute revenues from key exports such as oil, conduct fair and transparent elections, and ensure fair treatment of citizens of different sexual orientations, including →

Green Movement in

Iran: protested corruption in elections

- **Current women's movement in Iran over wearing of hijab**

- and economic issues
- **Zapatistas in Mexico**,
in response to
socioeconomic
inequality and the
negative impact of the
North American Free
Trade Agreement
(NAFTA)
- Mexico women's
movement in response
to violence against
women
- **Nigeria: Movement
for the Emancipation
of the Niger Delta
(MEND) and the
Movement for the
Survival of the Ogoni
People (MOSOP),
Niger Delta Avengers**
which have emerged to
advocate for the rights
of an ethnic minority or
protest against unjust
methods of extraction
and distribution of oil
in the Niger Delta
region
- **Boko Haram** in
Nigeria, attempting to
establish an Islamic
state in northern
Nigeria
- Domestic protests over
Russian state Duma's
passage of legislation
against same-sex
couples

Pluralist and Corporatist Interests •

Pluralism and corporatism are systems
of interest group
representation.

- **Pluralist systems:** promote
competition among
autonomous groups not linked
to the state, less state control
over civil society
- **Corporatist systems:**
government controls access to
policy making by relying on
state-sanctioned groups or
single peak associations (SPAs)
to represent labor, business, and
agricultural sectors. More state
control
- Interest group systems can
change over time, as
represented by Mexico's
moving from a corporatist
system toward a pluralist

system.