



## Chapter 5: Structures and Institutions

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### News

New York Times — Representative Doug Collins, the face of President Trump's impeachment defense in the House, is quietly jockeying to persuade Georgia's Republican governor to appoint him to the state's soon-to-be-vacant Senate seat, according to interviews with Republican lawmakers, aides and political operatives.



Washington Post: "It was Trump who used a black Sharpie to mark up an official National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration map, which he displayed during an Oval Office briefing on Wednesday, according to a White House official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations." Said the official: "No one else writes like that on a map with a black Sharpie."

Tom LoBianco: "On the surface, Trump and Pence insist they have a great relationship and are working closer than ever to win reelection in 2020. (They've consistently beaten back rumors that former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley is in the running to replace Pence on the 2020 ticket.)" "But behind the scenes, tensions have been mounting among Trump, Pence and their top advisers ever since the GOP's resounding losses in the 2018 midterms. In the weeks afterward, Trump asked aides about replacing Pence on the ticket, and he asked again for their thoughts on Pence during his August vacation at his golf course in Bedminster, N.J., according to Trump advisers who spoke on condition of anonymity to talk about private discussions with the president."



First-term Rep. Jared Golden (D-ME) said he's not going to take sides in next year's U.S. Senate race, the Portland Press Herald reports. "Golden said he respects both U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, a Maine Republican, and the leading Democratic challenger, state House Speaker Sara Gideon, a Freeport Democrat." "But his rationale for steering clear of the race has less to do with his feelings about the candidates than it does with his commitment to maintaining a good working relationship with whomever wins in November 2020."

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### I Thought You Said There'd be a Revolution?

- When it came to predicting the future, Marx was not quite as successful as he was at critiquing capitalism.
- Many Marxist theorists since Marx have tried to explain why there was no collapse of the capitalist system.
- Perhaps the best explanation is collective action.
- As worker dissatisfaction and unrest threatened to grow into revolt, capitalists turned to government.
- At first force was used, but there is a limit to the effectiveness of force.
- Governments gradually adopted policies that gave the workers some of what they demanded, including limitations on the exploitation of labor.



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"There are no absolute rules of conduct, either in peace or war. Everything depends on circumstances." - Leon Trotsky

### Socialism

- Marx categorized political-economic systems according to who controlled the means of production.
- The means of production are the things necessary to transform labor into wealth.
- Under the feudal system land was the primary means of production, and the church, along with a hereditary elite, controlled the land.
- In a capitalist system, individuals control the means of production.
- Socialism is an economic system where society controls the means of production.

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### Socialism

- Pure socialism, just like pure capitalism, cannot work in practice.
- In fact, it has never even been tried on a large scale. Socialism is very good at distributing goods, but very inefficient at producing those goods.
- In his descriptions of socialism and the communist utopia Marx overestimated people's industriousness.
- Socialism is very inefficient because it is hard to motivate people to work and even harder to motivate people to seek efficiencies or get them to excel at their craft.




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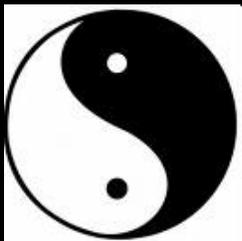
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### The Yin and Yang of Socialism and Capitalism



- When government regulates and polices the exploitation of labor, it uses principles of socialism to save capitalism.
- Think of the things government does to regulate the marketplace.
- All of today's functioning capitalist systems are mixtures of capitalism and socialism.
- They mix private and societal control of the means of production. The real question is not capitalism versus socialism, but what balance between the two systems is best.

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## Last Week Tonight



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## News



Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) announced he will not seek reelection. The Hill reports. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: "The 76-year-old congressman has long represented the GOP's geographic base in Wisconsin — the suburban, exurban and rural communities north and west of Milwaukee County that historically turn out in droves for Republican candidates and provide a large share of the party's activists and political leaders."

Joe Biden downplayed his recent verbal slip-ups in an interview with Stephen Colbert, saying they were not regarding the "substance" of his arguments for the presidency. Said Biden: "I think it's fair to go after a political figure for anything. Any gaffe that I have made — and I've made gaffes like every politician I know has — have been not about the substance of issue but about other — I'm trying to talk about what other people have done." Asked if he was "going nuts," Biden joked he wanted to go "on the Jimmy Kimmel show" to talk about his gaffes, referring to Colbert's late night competitor.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson suffered another big loss, with the House of Commons rejecting his motion calling for a general election by 298 to 56. Because many opposition MPs abstained, it did not receive the two thirds majority required to trigger national ballot. Axios: "It's a disastrous start for the new prime minister, who campaigned on a pledge to leave the EU on Oct. 31 with or without a deal. No prime minister has lost their first vote in office since 1783 — let alone their first 3."

Former Rep. Aaron Schock (R-IL) "will walk away from a public corruption case with no conviction, a federal judge ruled Wednesday at a hearing lasting just a few minutes," the Chicago Sun Times reports. "A 2016 indictment accused Schock of improperly using campaign and government funds for cars, mileage reimbursements, interior decorating, a charter plane flight to a Bears game and sports tickets he resold for profit." "Schock struck a deal with prosecutors in March, which put his case on hold for six months during which he was required to meet certain conditions and remain under court supervision."



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## Government Structures



- Government structures are the basic things that governments need to do in order to govern.
- For example, since all governments must establish the rules of acceptable behavior within the state, every government must have a legislative structure for creating laws.
- It may take many different forms, but it will always be there.
- Because laws and decisions must be implemented, every government must have an executive or a political structure that acts on behalf of the state, etc.

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## Structures or Institutions?

- Structures are generic while institutions are specific.
- A legislature is a political structure, while the British House of Commons is an institution.
- A judicial system is a political structure, while the U.S. Supreme Court is a political institution.
- Political institutions are the organizational structures through which political power is exercised.



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## Human Nature and Political Institutions



- A society's basic view of human nature is a reasonable place to start working on a general understanding political institutions.
- As James Madison put it, "But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?"
- Madison's view on human nature was quite pessimistic and that basic perspective is abundantly clear in basic construction of U.S. political institutions.
- The framers of the American constitution built a system based on a basic mistrust of human nature.
- They created a complex set of interlocking institutions with overlapping responsibilities that pitted separate portions of the government against itself.
- Each section jealously guarded its power and the power of those that supported it and it was this pursuit of selfish interests that kept the other sections honest.

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## Human Nature and Political Institutions

- The U.S. system's separation of powers is specifically designed to make it difficult for the government to infringe on citizens' rights.
- It prevents bad things from happening, but it also makes it hard to get much done at all.
- Taking a more positive view of humankind, other governments are more likely to have simpler systems that make it far easier to enact policy.
- For example, in some European democracies the winning party has a much freer hand in making changes.
- The ability to more easily enact policy comes at the cost of stability over time.
- Less-restrained governments also risk putting some at the mercy of the majority as they swiftly pass laws and make sudden changes to society's rules.
- It is in the details of the local context, the worldview of the people, and geographic and economic realities that institutions are created and later evolve.



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### Collective Action Costs

Two kinds of costs that are especially relevant for designing and evaluating institutions are:

- **Transaction Costs** - *the time, effort and resources required to make collective decisions.*
- **Conformity costs** - *The difference between what any one party prefers and what the collective body requires.*



Transaction costs can be particularly cumbersome with a large number of people. Sometimes transaction costs are intentionally included. The framers increased the transaction costs of changing the Constitution (two-thirds the membership of both houses of congress and three-fourths of the states).

Transaction and Conformity Costs are typically inversely related.

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### The Reality of Political Institutions



- Given the opportunity to craft ideal governmental institutions from scratch, we would all choose institutions we believe support our most important values and traditions
- Values like democracy, individual rights, and personal freedom can all be bolstered and protected, or weakened and repressed by the types of institutions a nation uses.
- Similarly, the personal wealth, power, and security of the leader are other values that can be bolstered or impeded by particular types of institutions.
- Given the personal nature of utopias and the variety of the people found in every governed society and the push for compromise quickly takes us away from anyone's ideal institutions.

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### Context, Evolution, and the Unbearable Weight of History



- Nations rarely have an opportunity to install their ideal institutions from scratch.
- Most government institutions are not designed or even intentionally created; they tend to evolve.
- Even when institutions are rationally and intentionally designed, nations seldom, if ever, have anything close to a blank page when they start creating a government.
- Almost every government's institutions carry the legacy of generations.

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### Context, Evolution, and the Unbearable Weight of History

- Even revolutions may not lead to dramatic changes in institutions.
- A nation's structures may have been imposed upon it by another source.
- Newly independent colonies often started with political institutions created by their former colonial masters.
- Even if a nation could plan its structures, it is not necessarily true that that which is planned will work as intended in the end.
- Government institutions are shaped by history, culture, necessity, and circumstance.
- They are always imperfect.



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### Failed Institutions



- Regardless of intentions, statements, and constitutions, institutions are not always what they appear to be, and they may not serve their original purposes.
- Institutions can be hijacked by those with less than noble intentions.
- Things can go horribly wrong.

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### Legitimacy, Information, and Human Nature

- Institutions can enhance the voluntary acceptance of decisions, policies, choices, or even the leadership as a whole.
- Governmental institutions can teach and shape public demands as much as they react to the public's wishes or enact policy.
- The types of institutions we utilize can shape our basic behavior in our day-to-day lives.
- Governments demanding citizen participation also demand that citizens be more aware.
- Governments acting paternally are likely to breed citizens dependent on strong leadership.
- Institutions that hunt down and punish dissent will generate fear, isolation, and atomization.

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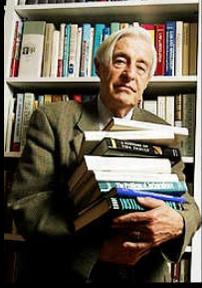
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## Choosing Institutions: Picking a Terrain



- The structures that are put into place will be affected by the basic political culture.
- According to Sidney Verba, a nation's political culture is comprised of "the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values, which defines the situation in which political action takes place."
- This political culture can involve religious values, expectations, morals, ethics, and traditions.

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## Choosing Institutions: Selecting a Basic Form

- Aristotle identified six basic types of government.
- He noted three *good* forms and three *perverted* forms.
- If the government worked for the benefit of all of its citizens, Aristotle called it good.
- If it benefited only the ruling class, Aristotle labeled it a perverted type.
- The other major distinction Aristotle drew among the governments was the size of the group in charge.
- A nation led by one person could be either a monarchy (good form) or a dictatorship (perverted form).
- A government ruled by a few could be either an aristocracy (good form) or an oligarchy (perverted form).
- A government led by the many could be either a polity (good form) or a democracy (bad form).



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## Choosing Institutions: Selecting a Basic Form



- In Aristotle's day democracy was synonymous with mob rule, that is, everyone acting in her or his own best interest with little or no regard for the community.
- Some countries that have monarchs do not actually give them much power.
- A country that does not have a monarch is, according to one very basic definition, a republic.
- Aristocracy is actually a common feature of democratic governments, e.g., constitutional courts.
- Democracy is not the only alternative to monarchy and aristocracy; there are mixed systems.
- Those countries that many think of as democracies also have some very undemocratic elements involved with them.

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### Choosing Institutions: Connect Your Government

- There are essentially three systems through which the relationship can be ordered; the unitary system, the federal system, and the confederal system.
- Most nations don't *choose* to have one or the other.
- The makeup of the nation, its history, its culture, and its geography tends to determine the type of structure.
- A *unitary system* is one where sovereignty rests quite clearly on the shoulders of the national government.
- Laws apply to everyone regardless of where they live in the country, everyone shares all governmental benefits equally, and there is no redundancy in services.
- The central national government may allow some local governing boards to have a say.
- The ability to make these decisions is at the mercy of the national government



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### Choosing Institutions: Connect Your Government



- Systems where the final authority for at least some aspects of government is left to the local or subnational level are called federal systems.
- In a *federal system* sovereignty is, at least theoretically, shared between the national and the local government units.
- Federal systems work well in diverse countries, where variations in local conditions, economies, or cultures make it impractical or inefficient to try to impose a single system, or make it difficult to make decisions from a central location.

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### Choosing Institutions: Connect Your Government



- The least commonly used form is the confederal system.
- In a confederal system the local government units that have the real power; they have sovereignty.
- The key to the confederal system is that the individual units within it can defy the national or galactic level of government.
- They can even leave the system at any time they wish.
- Because the national government must maintain the continued willingness of all local units to be a part of the confederation, every single local unit effectively has the power to veto any national level policy.

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### Choosing Institutions: Connect Your Government

In reality, nations opt for either a federal or unitary system. Each system has its benefits and its drawbacks. Federal systems are more appropriate in large countries and with countries that have geographically diverse populations. Federalism allows for differences among the local government units that can reflect differing cultures or traditions. Federal systems also:

- are more appropriate for large countries that want democratic systems; people are more likely to have a noticeable influence on their representatives in smaller units.
- allow local governments to act as laboratories for the trial of policies before they are used at the national level.
- offer citizens more choices about the governmental institutions that fit them best.
  - Citizens can theoretically choose the local government they would like to live in and move there.
- fit in well in capitalist countries, because both people and *businesses* have the capacity to move; local governments must compete to keep people and jobs within their borders.

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### Choosing Institutions: Connect Your Government

Unitary systems also have their benefits.

In unitary systems the governmental structure is much easier to understand.

Citizens do not have to worry about who is responsible for carrying out policies.

Furthermore, they do not have to worry about elections for multiple offices.

Every citizen in the country is entitled to the same rights and benefits.

Unitary systems make it easier to maintain a sense of national identity.

Unitary systems tend to run more smoothly because policy is easier to implement and less effort is spent sorting out who should do what.

Regulatory consistency across a larger entity also has economic benefits, since one product can be sold across the whole nation and efficiencies of scale can be more easily capitalized upon.



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### Conclusion



Questions? Concerns? Angry Rants?

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