

President v. Prime Minister

The Ideal Models for Government?
Presidential v. Parliamentary Model

Prime Minister model

- British Model: Canada, Australia, Nepal, Japan, Spain, Greenland
- Mixed: India, Nigeria, Eastern Europe, Iraq, Israel

Prime Minister Model

- English becoming dissatisfied with monarchs and increasingly looking for self-government
 - King George (German, Queen Anne's husband)
 - Robert Walpole 1721 de facto Prime Minister 21 years (developed cabinet solidarity), but not written into a constitution
 - Modern Prime Minister: Benjamin Disraeli (1868) (1874-1880)
 - Official title given beginning in 1905

Presidential Model

- Most of the Americas and emerging countries in Africa adapting Presidential model
- Origins begin with the American Constitution
 - **Alexander Hamilton** wanted to give president institutional powers (meaning Washington)
 - **Federalist 69**: 4 year terms, elected, limited length, removed by impeachment, Congress override veto, Commander in Chief, can't dissolve Congress, treaties approved by Senate

	Presidential Model	Parliamentary Model
Legislative	Congress chosen by voters, president chosen by voters	Parliament elected by voters, majority party winner chooses Prime Minister
Chief Executive	President chooses Cabinet with approval and can be "fired" by him	Prime Minister heads council of ministers or Cabinet selected by him
Head of State	Is the head of state	Constitutional Monarchy, sometimes chooses president as head of state
Elections	Fixed intervals	Prime Minister calls for new elections after a vote of no confidence
Political Parties	2 party systems with 3 parties holding marginal power	Ideological parties and government formed by ruling coalition of parties
Examples	US, Mexico, Brazil	Israel, Great Britain, former colonies, India

Presidential Model

Advantages

- Separation of Powers
- Checks and Balances
- Direct Mandate
- Executive authority
- Stability
- Founding Fathers intentionally established an ineffectual government to keep someone from having too much power

Disadvantages

- Independent power leads to authoritarianism
- Separation of Power/ gridlock
- Difficulty in leadership change

Parliamentary Model

Advantages

- Quicker legislative action
- Collective Cabinet Authority
- Flexibility in change of power-votes of no confidence
- Resistance to authoritarianism

Disadvantages

- Indirect election of Prime Minister
- No separation of powers-executive authority less checked
- No single executive-first among equals
- 1 party dominance
- Potential instability

- The post of prime minister may be encountered both in constitutional monarchies (such as, Japan, Malaysia, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom), and in republics in which the head of state is an elected official (such as France, Germany, India, Ireland, with varying degrees of real power.
- This contrasts with the presidential system, in which the president (or equivalent) is both the head of state and the head of the government.
- In some presidential or semi-presidential systems, such as those of France and Russia the prime minister is an official generally appointed by the president but usually approved by the legislature and responsible for carrying out the directives of the president and managing the civil service. (The premier of the Republic of China is also appointed by the president, but requires no approval by the legislature.)