

Explain the difference
between
parliamentary and
presidential forms of
government...

[Government](#)



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My essay today will be focusing on the differences between the parliamentary and presidential forms of government. I will be looking at the characteristics of each. I will also be looking at the key differences between the two government systems and lastly the advantages of each system.

Characteristics of a Parliamentary Government

There are certain factors that are common to and define a parliamentary government. The source of parliamentary government is the British system which as it expanded its reach around the world, implanted its forms of government in various countries around the world.. I will be analyzing what the overall parliamentary key factors are. Douglas V. Verney illustrates the elements of a parliamentary system of government. I will also be using the work of Roland Young and John Carey and to further my discussion.

The most basic elements of a parliamentary system are that the assembly selects the executive and that the executive is subject to legislative confidence. (Carey)

A Parliamentary government is the majorly adopted type of government system. There are two main types of parliamentarian in practice currently in the world. These are the British parliamentary government and the continental parliamentary government. I will be focusing on the practices of the British parliamentarism (Verney)

A key factor of a parliamentary system is that it must have a Government that must consist of people elected from the Parliament. These Ministers must adhere to the direction and a degree of control by the parliament when doing their assigned tasks. The Government is responsible for dealing with

the administrative tasks of the country. Specifically dealing with public affairs. The relationship between the Government and Parliament is one in which the Government is required to manage and lead and the Parliament is to lend its support to but hold the government responsible for its actions.

The Government is unchallenged in certain areas such as public legislation however in other areas the parliament has certain control. The parliament is always able to provide criticism and influence to all government decision. Government should inform parliament first about all changes in policy and that parliament has to provide consent to changes in policy which may culminate in the enactment of new laws, subsidy laws and taxes. In limited causes however, Government may only officially inform Parliament of changes only once the changes have been implemented, thereby asserting a certain extent of authority. In cases that the Parliament response is obvious the process becomes purely ceremonial. (Young)

The first universal characteristic of a parliamentary system is the idea that the parliament is seen as ruler over all aspects of its structure. None of the basic elements of a parliamentary system has control over another of its parts. The structure is set up in such a way that each of the main sectors are dominated by another sector in order to ensure that there is a degree of control. The government itself depends on the assembly for backing and consequently the assembly is at the mercy of the government, which has the option to remove the assembly and request elections if necessary. More often than not the parliamentary systems have not succeeded because either the government or assembly strove to attain too much power over the

parliament. Additionally in many ways, parliamentary government applies by general democratic rules. (V. Verney, 33)

Characteristics of a Presidential Government

Arend Lijhart's study of a parliamentary and presidential government is useful in determining the characteristics that make up a presidential government. This will give an overall view as to how the presidential elements of government work. John Carey's works will also be used in order to further illustrate the characteristics of presidentialism.

Presidential Government is related with the theory of the separation of powers. This was a very popular ideology in the eighteenth century. John Locke first stated that the struggle between British monarchy and the House of Parliament could be ended by the separation of powers. This means that each boy of government could have its own sphere. A presidential system of government mainly separates three spheres: executive, legislature and judicial. Initially however this separation was meant for the monarchy to be the executive and the assembly to be the legislature. (Lijphart)

The nature of presidential theory can best be explained by applying certain political practices to presidential government. Unlike a parliamentary government, presidential theory requires that the assembly is separate body as opposed to being part of the government body. Unlike the monarchy often inherent in a parliamentary system, a presidential system requires an executive elected by the people. This prevents criticism of one separate executive. The president is elected for a set term and he cannot be forced into resignation unless he commits a serious crime. (Carey)

Presidentialism can be defined as a divided form of leadership, however this does not imply that it is a weak form of leadership. Because of the presidents ability to dominate the assembly in times of emergency, the presidential government is more likely than not, to survive crises. However this does leave open the option of dictatorship. (Lijphart)

Key differences between the two

In order to highlight the difference between parliamentary and presidential governments I will be using the works of Juan Linz.

The best way to differentiate the two systems of government is to highlight the fact that while parliamentary governments allows flexibility and change to the political process, presidentialism has a strict and formally set way of running the democratic process. A parliamentary government will at any time change laws and basic regulations and constantly alters members of parliament. A presidential government will try to reinforce against instability and will therefore adhere to a rigid system. In a parliamentary system the government's authority is completely dependent on the will of the parliament itself. However in a presidential system the governments separate sectors are power unto themselves and as such have the ability and power to enforce what they see fit. (Linz) Advantages of Parliamentary

Keeping in mind that the disadvantages of a presidential government are consequently the advantages of a parliamentary government I will discuss the most prominent advantages of parliamentarism. The first advantage I will be discussing is the lack of an executive-legislative deadlock. The second is a parliamentary flexibly advantage. Furthermore I will be discussing the

convenience of passing legislation. I will be using the works of Lijphart and Young to illustrate my point.

The most prominent advantage of a parliamentary government is the lack of the potential problem of executive-legislature conflict. This is where two independent areas of government disagree on a certain issue with result being a deadlock in the decision making process. When this occurs there is no democratically way of resolving it. This does not happen within a parliamentary system as parliament generally provides a decree of legislature confidence over all decisions the government makes.

In order to prevent this occurrence completely the presidential government would be required to unbalance the powers, which would in fact be conforming to parliamentarism. The second advantage of parliamentarism is the flexibility of it. As a result of its ability to change office, a parliamentary government doesn't have the restriction of set or marked areas of time within which the government must adhere to very strict processes. Should the state require changing during a crisis a parliamentary government has the ability to do this without severe consequences to structure. (Lijphart)

A further advantage of a parliamentary system is the fact that it is quicker and easier to pass laws. This allows for change in a timely fashion when necessary. This is because the executive branch depends on support from the legislative, and as a result the executive would overall possess more votes in passing legislation. This is different from a presidential form of government in which the executive and legislative are separate entities which makes laws difficult to pass. (Young)

Advantages of Presidential

In the debate on the advantages of presidential governments certain arguments were more prominent than others. Lijphart's and Verney's works will be used in order to highlight these arguments. The advantages of executive constancy, a greater democracy and a more limited government are the three main advantages that arose. It must also be remembered that the advantages of a presidential government are also the disadvantages of a parliamentary government.

The first advantage I will cover is the advantage of a fixed executive that promotes stability. This is an advantage as it is based on the president's fixed term of office, which prevents constant changes in the executive. This means that, unlike in a parliamentary system the legislature does not possess the ability to take a vote of no confidence and disrupt the executive. The result of this is that a country will have a set political leader at its helm unless that leader commits an act worthy of him being removed from power. A cabinet's dependence on the legislature's confidence makes a cabinet unstable and creates insecurity. Cabinet instability becomes a problem when it is in its extreme situation, such as when the country is at war or large economic changes are occurring. Additionally because a presidential term is four years on average, while a parliamentary term can vary, there is a set amount of time where issues of the state are considered to be in elected representatives' hands. (Lijphart)

The second prominent advantage of presidential government is the fact that the presidential executive is a popularly elected representative. This is considered more democratic than the parliamentary system that is less

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formal and more subject to the will and changes of the state. A presidential government ensures that the most important executive are elected by the will of the people. This way the executive is not just a figurehead to represent the state but an active participant in achieving what the people require of him. Additionally the presidential system is considered more democratic as the legislature sector of the government is in fact its own. As a result the laws it decides to implement do not have to support other areas of the government, only the interests of the people. (Lijphart)

The third major advantage of the presidential government is the fact that the separation of powers implies a restricted governing body. This is a positive aspect of presidentialism as a more restricted government implies protection of individual freedoms from a government tyranny. This is a result of not requiring so many ministers and parliaments as a parliamentary government requires in order to oversee the running of a country (Verney)

Conclusion In conclusion I have used the works of Carey, Young, Verney, Lijphart and Linz in order to illustrate the main characteristics of both the presidential and the parliamentary forms of government. I have shown that the key factors of a parliamentary government are the facts that the assembly elects the executive and that no segment of the government has complete authority over itself. Conflictingly I have shown how in a presidential government the people elect the chief and that terms in power, electoral structure are fixed and that the structure is split into three main sectors. I have also shown the advantage of each system.

The advantages of the parliamentary system are its flexibility and the lack of a possible deadlock decision. The advantages of a presidential system are <https://assignbuster.com/explain-the-difference-between-parliamentary-and-presidential-forms-of-government/>

executive constancy, a greater democracy and a more limited government. Additionally I have highlighted the main differences between the parliamentary and presidential governments and commented on the functioning of each.