

# A DIFFERENT DEMOCRACY

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# A Different Democracy

American Government in a  
Thirty-One-Country  
Perspective



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Table 1.1: Thirty-One Democracies

	Population (2011)	HDI (2011)	Democratic Since
India	1,205,073,612	0.547	Third Wave
<b>United States</b>	<b>313,847,465</b>	<b>0.910</b>	<b>First Wave</b>
Brazil	205,716,890	0.718	Third Wave
Japan	127,368,088	0.901	Second Wave
Mexico	114,975,406	0.770	Third Wave
Germany	81,305,856	0.905	Second Wave
France	65,630,692	0.884	Second Wave
United Kingdom	63,047,162	0.863	First Wave
Italy	61,261,254	0.874	Second Wave
Korea	48,860,500	0.897	Third Wave
South Africa	48,810,427	0.619	Third Wave
Spain	47,042,984	0.878	Third Wave
Colombia	45,239,079	0.710	Second Wave
Argentina	42,192,494	0.797	Third Wave
Poland	38,415,284	0.813	Third Wave
Canada	34,300,083	0.908	First Wave
Australia	22,015,576	0.929	First Wave
Chile	17,067,369	0.805	Third Wave
Netherlands	16,730,632	0.910	Second Wave
Portugal	10,781,459	0.809	Third Wave
Greece	10,767,827	0.861	Third Wave
Belgium	10,438,353	0.886	Second Wave
Czech Republic	10,177,300	0.865	Third Wave
Hungary	9,958,453	0.816	Third Wave
Sweden	9,103,788	0.904	First Wave
Austria	8,219,743	0.885	Second Wave
Switzerland	7,655,628	0.903	First Wave
Israel	7,590,758	0.888	Second Wave
Denmark	5,543,453	0.895	Second Wave
Finland	5,262,930	0.882	First Wave
New Zealand	4,327,944	0.908	First Wave

# THE COMPARISON SET

The table identifies the countries, their population, Human Development Index, and which “wave” the country’s current democracy belongs to

First Wave=1828-1926, Second Wave=1943-1962, Third Wave=1974-onward.

Sources: Huntington 1991: 14-17 (and authors’ classifications), United Nations, and CIA World FactBook.

Table 5.4: Average Voter Turnout (as a Percentage of the Voting Age Population) in National Legislative or Presidential Elections<sup>1</sup> in 31 Democracies, 1990-2010

	Voter turnout (%)	Plurality elections	Compulsory voting
Italy	86.12		X <sup>2</sup>
Belgium	86.11		X
Greece	84.17		X
Australia	82.52		X
Denmark	82.36		
Sweden	80.69		
Brazil (pres.)	79.57		X
Finland (pres.)	78.59		
Korea (pres.)	78.14		
New Zealand	78.13		
Spain	77.91		
Argentina (pres.)	77.07		X
Israel	76.85		
Austria (legis.)	76.29		
Czech Republic	76.25		
Netherlands	74.72		
France (pres.)	72.98		
Germany	71.82		
Portugal (legis.)	71.68		
Chile (pres.)	69.06		X
South Africa	65.68		
Japan	65.07		
United Kingdom	64.34	X	
Mexico (pres.)	63.05		
India	61.33	X	
Hungary <sup>3</sup>	60.26		
Poland (pres.)	58.51		
<b>United States</b> (pres.)	<b>57.28</b>	X	
Canada	57.14	X	
Colombia (pres.)	44.61		
Switzerland	37.47		

Notes:

1. For countries with popular elections for both the first (or sole) chamber of the national legislature and the president, the higher of the two average turnout percentages is shown in the table and the type of election that resulted in the higher turnout is indicated in hypotheses behind the country's name.

2. Compulsory voting until 1994.

3. Data through 2006.

Source: Based on data collected by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in Stockholm ([www.idea.int/vt](http://www.idea.int/vt)).

Table 6.1: Effective Numbers of Legislative Parties in the First (or Only) Chamber of National Legislatures and Effective Numbers of Electoral Parties in First (or Only) Chamber Elections in 31 Democracies, 1990-2010

	Effective number of legislative parties	Effective number of electoral parties	Electoral System
<b>United States</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>Plurality</b>
South Africa	2.11	2.13	PR
Australia	2.28	3.04	Alternative Vote
United Kingdom	2.32	3.38	Plurality
Greece	2.35	2.83	PR-bonus
Spain	2.54	3.11	PR-low M
Japan*	2.61	3.66	MMM
Portugal	2.64	3.16	PR
Korea	2.72	3.83	MMM
France	2.78	5.68	Majority-Plurality
Hungary	2.78	4.42	MMM
Canada	2.88	3.87	Plurality
Mexico	3.13	3.43	MMM
Argentina	3.31	4.06	PR-low M
New Zealand*	3.35	3.68	MMP
Austria	3.45	3.71	PR
Germany	3.70	4.20	MMP
Czech Republic	3.87	5.12	PR-high threshold
Italy**	4.07	4.76	PR-bonus
Sweden	4.15	4.45	PR
Colombia***	6.30	6.78	PR
Denmark	4.72	4.94	PR
Poland	4.73	6.90	PR-high threshold
Finland	5.06	5.82	PR
India	5.42	6.60	Plurality
Switzerland	5.48	6.22	PR
Netherlands	5.51	5.77	PR
Chile	5.97	6.85	PR-low M (M=2)
Israel	6.58	7.37	PR
Belgium	8.14	9.56	PR
Brazil	8.74	9.93	PR

Note: \* Current system since 1996 only; \*\* Current system, 2006 and 2008 only. \*\*\*Current system, 2006 and 2010 only.

‘Effective’  
Number of  
Parties  
and the  
Electoral System

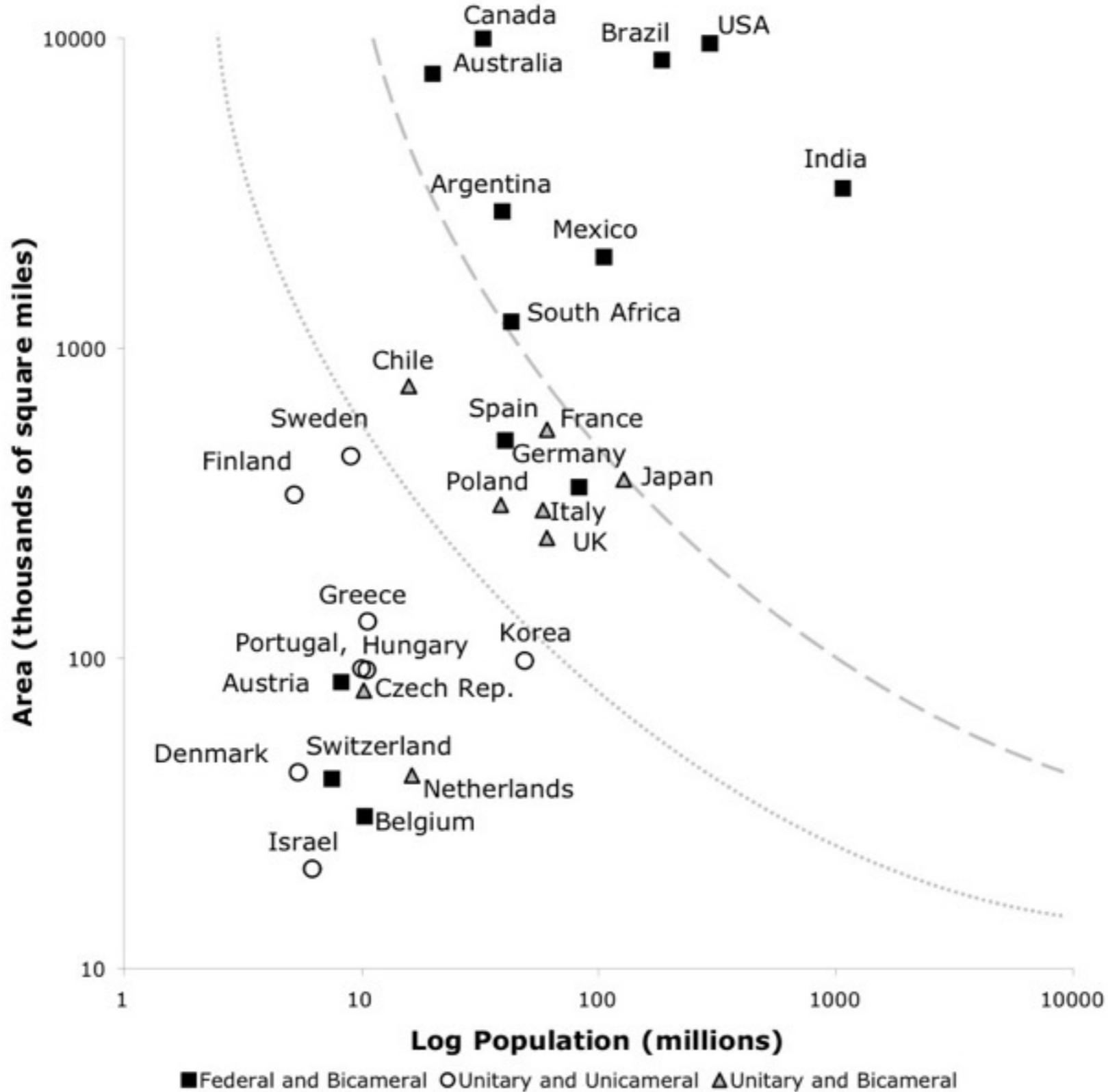
	Year of First Constitution	Years of Constitutionalism	Number of Constitutional Systems	Average Durability	Most Durable Constitutional System in Years
<b>United States</b>	<b>1789</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>218.00</b>	<b>218</b>
France	1791	216	15	14.40	49
Netherlands	1795	212	7	30.29	159
Switzerland	1798	209	7	29.86	125
Spain	1808	199	14	14.21	55
Sweden	1809	198	2	99.00	165
Mexico	1814	193	11	17.55	90
Argentina	1816	191	8	23.88	113
Chile	1818	189	8	23.63	92
Portugal	1822	185	6	30.83	95
Brazil	1824	183	8	22.88	67
Greece	1827	180	12	15.00	61
Colombia	1830	177	9	19.67	106
Belgium	1831	176	1	176.00	176
Italy	1848	159	2	79.50	82
Denmark	1849	158	4	39.50	54
Canada	1867	140	1	140.00	140
Japan	1889	118	2	59.00	61
Australia	1901	106	1	106.00	106
South Africa	1910	97	5	19.40	51
Hungary	1919	88	4	22.00	58
Poland	1919	88	9	9.78	24
Finland	1919	88	2	44.00	80
Austria	1920	87	3	29.00	62
Israel	1948	59	1	59.00	59
Korea	1948	59	1	59.00	59
Germany	1949	58	1	58.00	48
India	1949	58	1	58.00	58
Czech Rep	1993	14	1	14.00	14

## Historical constitutionalism in 29 democracies

# THE KEY INNOVATIONS

- At the Constitutional Convention:
  - Presidentialism
  - Federalism
  - Bicameralism, of a specific form
- These, we argue, have consequences for the evolution of US democracy, whereas other (later originating) democratic systems made conscious choices on other dimensions, such as the electoral system

### Population, Area, and the Division of Powers



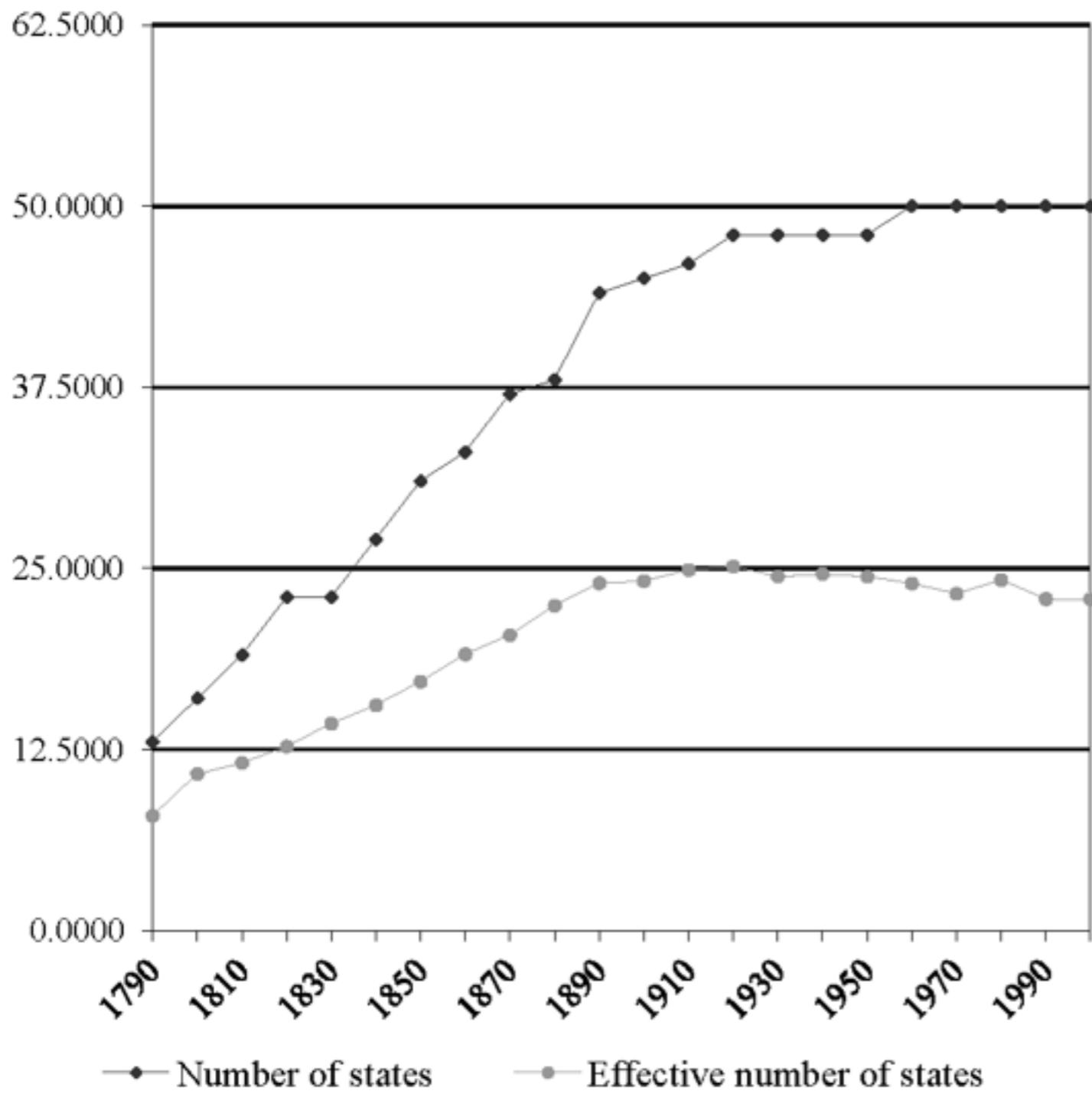
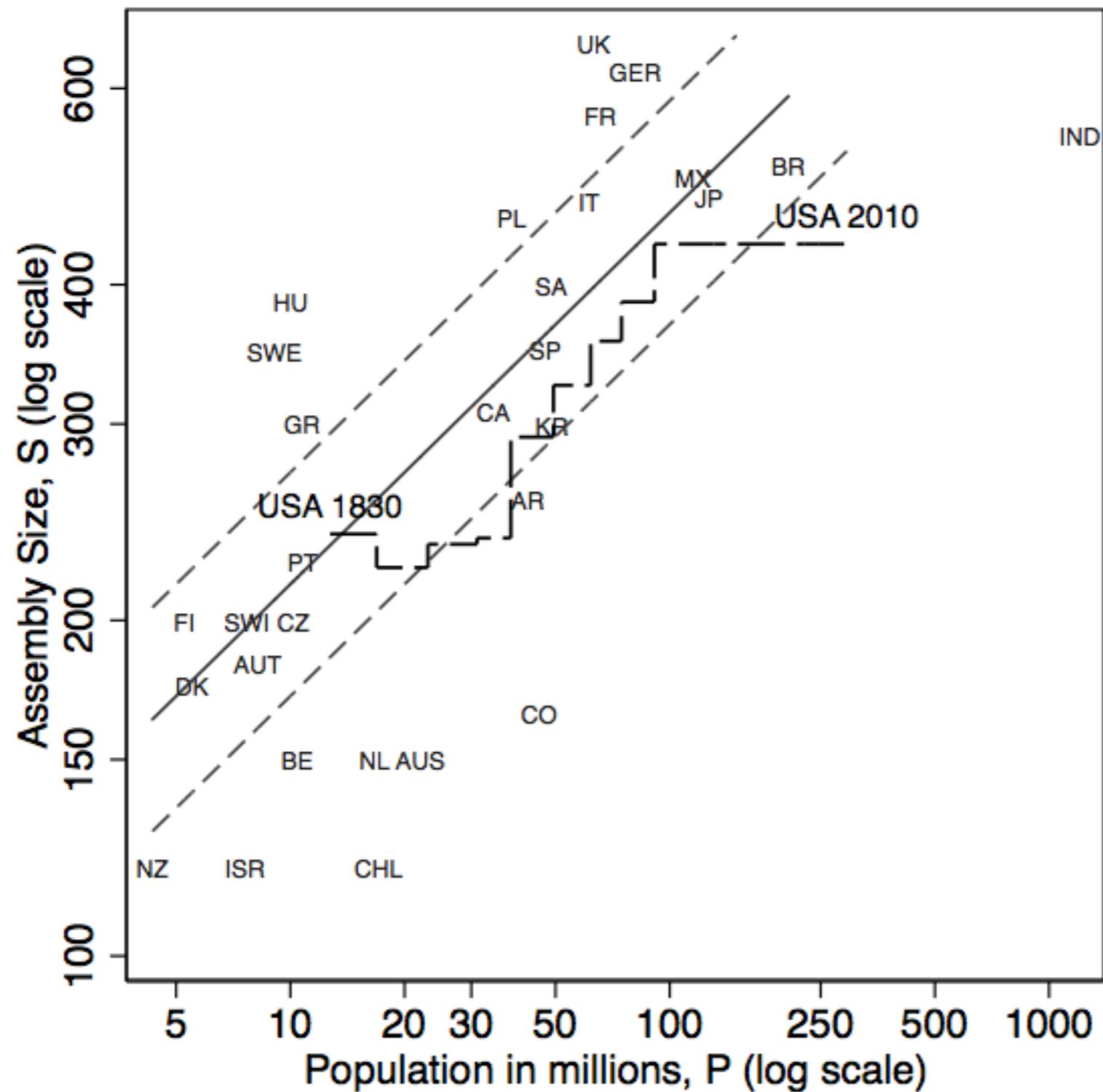


Figure 4.4:  
Actual and effective  
number of US states  
over time

# Population and Assembly Size



Graph is of first chambers only.

# KEY ANALOGY: DEMOCRACY AS

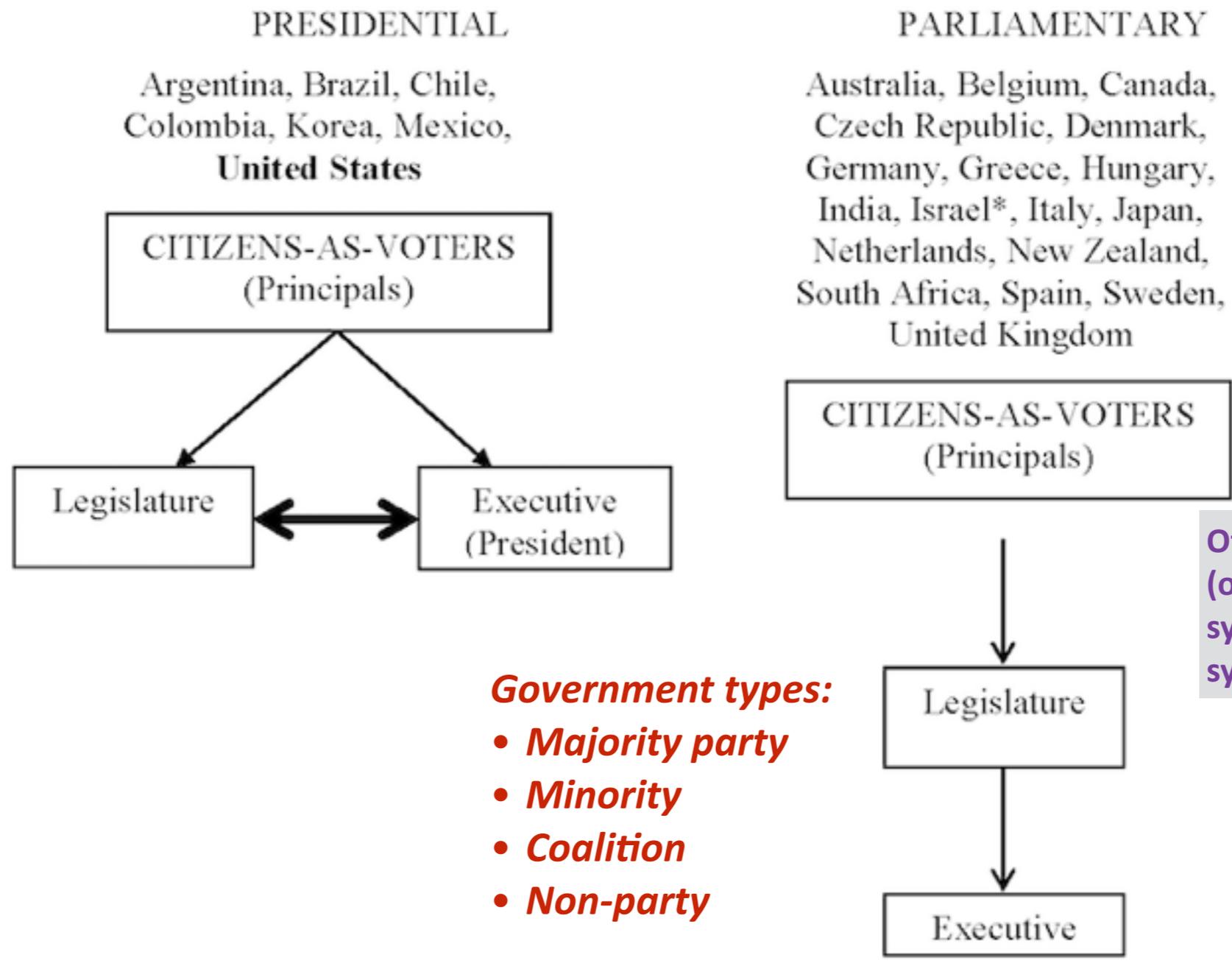
CITIZENRY (Principals)(of which a subset are eligible to vote, and a subset of those actually vote)

POLITICIANS (Agents and Principals)  
(elected by voters to positions in...)  
GOVERNMENT (Agents and Principals)

BUREAUCRATS (Agents)  
(specialists who implement policies of government)



# Pure Types: Presidential and parliamentary



Three veto gates (two if unicameral legislature)

Often one veto gate (only a few parl. systems have fully symmetric bicam.)

Separate origin and survival vs. Fused origin and survival

Country	Coalitions	Minority governments	Mean number of parties in cabinet
Denmark	100.0%	100.0%	2.33
Belgium	100.0%	71.4%	4.70
Finland #	100.0%	40.0%	4.10
Netherlands	100.0%	16.7%	2.83
Israel ^	100.0%	7.7%	5.42
Germany	100.0%	0.0%	2.00
Italy	100.0%	0.0%	4.10
<u>Brazil</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	==	==
<u>Chile</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	==	==
<u>Colombia</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	==	==
Switzerland ^	100.0%	--	
France #	90.9%	9.1%	2.09
Hungary	88.9%	22.2%	2.10
Austria #	88.9%	11.1%	1.89
Poland #	85.7%	28.6%	2.57
Czech Republic	81.8%	36.4%	2.64
India	80.0%	90.0%	--
New Zealand 2 (from 1996)	71.4%	71.4%	1.71
Japan	66.7%	33.3%	1.93
Sweden	42.9%	85.7%	2.29
Portugal #	37.5%	37.5%	1.38
South Africa	20.0%	0.0%	1.20
United Kingdom	16.7%	0.0%	1.17
<u>Korea</u>	<u>12.5%</u>	==	==
Spain	0.0%	80.0%	1.00
Canada	0.0%	37.5%	1.00
Greece	0.0%	12.5%	1.00
Australia	0.0%	10.0%	1.00
New Zealand 1 (to 1993)	0.0%	0.0%	1.00
<u>Argentina</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	==	==
<u>Mexico</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	==	==
<u>United States</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	==	==
<u>median (parliamentary)</u>	<u>71.4%</u>	<u>22.2%</u>	<u>1.97</u>
<u>median (all)</u>	<u>80.9%</u>		

Table 8.3. Types of Cabinets

Presidential systems underlined

# Semi-presidential

^ Other hybrid

Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The oldest, continually functioning constitution.</li> <li>-One of the shortest (only ~8,000 words).</li> <li>-An early democratizing state (early First Wave)</li> <li>-Achieved full universal suffrage late (1965).</li> <li>-A difficult to amend constitution (one of the most difficult).</li> </ul>
Division of Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-A federal state: not unusual (12 other federal cases in the study).</li> </ul>
Electoral System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Majoritarian electoral system (single seat plurality) for Congress (only five other majoritarian cases in the study, and only three of those use plurality rules).</li> <li>-Electoral college to elect the President (unique in this regard).</li> </ul>
Party System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-An unusually strict two-party system.</li> <li>-System-wide, long-term usage of primaries to nominate candidates.</li> </ul>
Interest Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pluralistic Interest group system (not unusual).</li> </ul>
Legislative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bicameral with strong legislative symmetry (only 7 other cases).</li> <li>-Some asymmetry favoring the second chamber (i.e., Senate's advice and consent powers).</li> <li>-Rules of second chamber highly favor the minority party.</li> <li>-Fixed size for the first chamber.</li> <li>-Short term (two years) for first chamber (unique).</li> </ul>
Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Only five other pure presidential systems in the study.</li> </ul>
Judicial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strong judicial review (although judicial review was common across cases).</li> <li>-Only four other common law systems in the study.</li> </ul>

## Basic differences